POLICY TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: IRC/STAT-016

CATEGORY: COUNCIL POLICY

CLASSIFICATION: STATUTORY

CORPORATE PLAN REFERENCE:

.

STATUS TABLE:

Approved by Council		Meeting number and date	
		March 22, 2011	
		Resolution number	
		2652	
Approval by CEO			
Effective date		Review date	
1 April 2011		1 April 2013	
Policy Author			
Kylie Delrayne			
Endorsed by			
Mark Crawley, Chief Executive Officer			
Responsible Position			
Manager Governance and Public Relations			
Current incumbent	Contact number	Email address	
Kylie Delrayne	49414511	kylie.delrayne@isaac.qld.gov.au	

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The *Local Government Act 2009* drives local government planning and decision-making through five principles. The Act's third principle requires local governments to provide 'democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.' Isaac Regional Council's Community Engagement Policy is based on Council's commitment to this principle.

Isaac Regional Council (IRC) recognises effective engagement generates better decisions in delivering sustainable environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits. To achieve Council vision and mission this policy is a vital element in guaranteeing transparency for more inclusive and sustainable communities. Councillors and Council officers engage with community members and stakeholders as part of the organisation's day-to-day business. However, this policy is concerned with engaging the community in more formal processes and across strategic decisions which may impact on the future of Isaac communities.

Community engagement, or public participation as it is often referred to, is defined by the International Association of Public Participation as 'any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making, and that uses public input to make better decisions' (International Association for Public Participation (2002). This includes decisions which directly impact upon how people within Isaac live, work and play; use services and do business.

Council principles for directing the engagement process:
   a. Respect for our diversity: IRC is defined by its diversity. The region has a diverse geographic reality but also a diverse economic and social reality. To be able to engage with Isaac's communities Council needs to understand and respect this diversity.

   b. Establish a two way process: Council asks the community to participate using many different tools for example: Council's website, Round Table Meetings and Councillor Conversations. Council's engagement activities are largely supported by Place Officers, Council's Community Engagement Officer and Social Planner and other staff on a day-to-day basis.

Isaac Regional Council began its community engagement program through the development of *Isaac's 2020 Vision Community Plan*. This Plan was validated by the community and Council in 2010 and will be reviewed every two years to ensure the aspirations of Isaac communities continue to direct Council's long term planning.

At this same time Council committed to meeting with its communities regularly via the Round Tables, Councillor Conversations, Mayoral and CEO Friday visits and through the provision of Place Officers.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure IRC engages effectively with its community. This policy enables the community to be informed about actions and activities and participate in Council planning and decision making.

This policy applies to elected members, employees and contractors or consultants working on behalf of IRC.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy IRC chooses to work with the Public Participation Spectrum definitions namely: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. This model was developed by the International Association for Public Participation and is largely accepted as best practice.

The table below, IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, outlines the core goals, promises and tools Isaac Regional Council will identify within any engagement activity it undertakes.

| IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum Developed by the International Association for Public Participation				
GOALS				
INFORM	**CONSULT**	**INVOLVE**	**COLLABORATE**	**EMPOWER**
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC				
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum possible extent.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS				
o Fact sheets o Web sites o Open houses	o Public comment o Focus groups o Surveys o Public meetings	o Workshops o Deliberative polling	o Citizen advisory committees o Consensus building o Participatory decision-making	o Citizen juries o Ballots o Delegated decisions

Reference: *International Association for Public Participation (2002)*

Organic Visioning Methodology:
While Council uses the definitions, goals and tools provided by the International Association for Public Participation these are used in conjunction with Council's own Organic Visioning Methodology. This methodology acknowledges that not all engagement will follow a linear process to achieve the IAP2 goals.

Inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower are not isolated principles. They act on each other and affect each other mutually. By doing this, these principles promote change within the engagement process and the community. The communities' local knowledge changes and grows. Therefore, IRC's Organic Visioning Model (see Diagram 1 below) represents engagement as a more dynamic process overcoming any linear limitations.

Diagram 1 IRC Organic Visioning Model
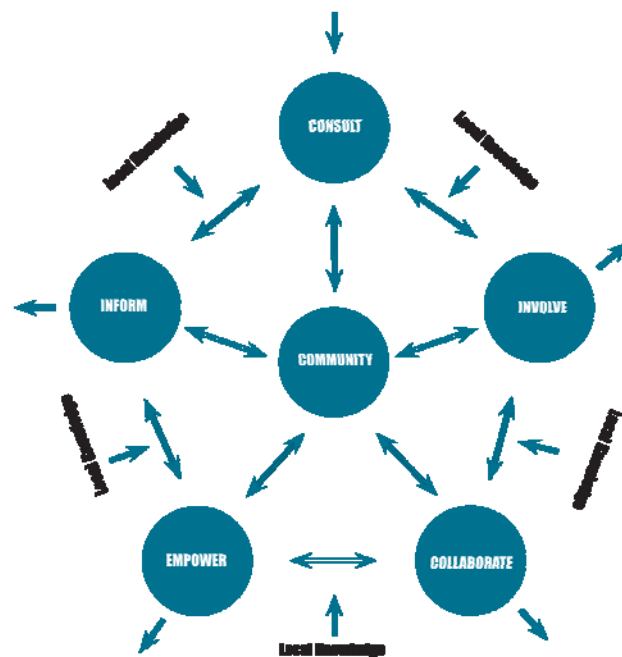
This Model is organic, not linear, because the principles interact and impact on each other as the different organs in the 'social body'. It is dynamic, because by interacting and impacting on each other the principles promote change on the 'social body' and its local knowledge. And by being organic and dynamic it constitutes a process (see Diagram 2 below):

Diagram 2 IRC's Engagement Process

IRC will use the Organic Visioning Model at the beginning of any engagement process. To facilitate the process Isaac has developed a range of tools responsible for achieving the

goals of inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower (the Round Tables being a very good example of the organic nature of the process). By doing this Council promotes change in its community and, a more engaged community asks for more involvement and participation in Council activities, planning and decision making processes. As the process is cyclical the engagement then becomes a permanent process promoting change and growth on Council and its community.

4. POLICY PROVISIONS

4.1 IRC will use the following criteria to assess the need for any community engagement activity:

a) Issues or projects which are likely to generate strong interest or concern from the community.
b) Planning or proposals which may significantly affect the liveability, environment or economy of the region and / or residents.
c) Planning which may impact significant land use areas.
d) Planning or proposals which may require a significant change of use to rate-payer revenue.
e) Regular reviews of the Community Plan and / or to allow Councillors and Council staff to identify and prioritise community needs and aspirations.
f) Where Council is required to undertake statutory engagement activities.
g) Where Council believes there is a genuine need.

4.2 IRC considers the following key stakeholders to be instrumental in the engagement process. These larger groups may be broken down to reflect smaller groups within and outside of Isaac communities:

a) Internal community (Councillors, Council staff, contractors)
b) Industries
c) Small business
d) Associations and Organisations
e) Isaac communities and residents
f) State and Federal Government and other local governments
g) Communities of interest

4.3 The table below outlines some of the IAP2 goals, key stakeholder groups and tools available for engagement at IRC.

Strategies for Isaac Regional Council Community Engagement		
IAP2 Spectrum Goals	Stakeholders Refer 4.2	Tools
Inform	a, e, g	Councillor liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Community newsletter - Isaac News
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Staff newsletter
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Isaac website
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Media liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Regular meetings
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Place Officer liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Council Officer liaison
Consult	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Isaac website – surveys, online feedback
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Community Plan validation and review
	b, c, d, e, g	Round Table Meetings

	b, c, d, e, g	Councillor Conversations
	b, c, d, e, g	Mayor and CEO Friday visits
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Place Officer liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Council Officer liaison
Involve	b, c, d, e, g	Regular meetings
	a, b, c, d, e, f, g	Events
	b, c, d, e, g	Round Table Meetings
	b, c, d, e, g	Councillor Conversations
	b, c, d, e, g	Mayor and CEO Friday visits
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Place Officer liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Council Officer liaison
Collaborate	b, c, d, e, g	Round Table Meetings
	b, c, d, e, g	Councillor Conversations
	b, c, d, e, g	Mayor and CEO Friday visits
Empower	a, b, c, d, e, g	Community Plan validation and review
	b, c, d, e, g	Round Table Meetings
	b, c, d, e, g	Councillor Conversations
	b, c, d, e, g	Mayor and CEO Friday visits
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Place Officer liaison
	a, b, c, d, e, g	Council Officer liaison

4.4 Council will follow the process below in order to identify, design and undertake community engagement:

4.4.1 Identify possible issue / concern using the criteria in 4.1 of this policy.

4.4.2 Use the Community Engagement Process Flowchart to guide the community engagement activity (see Appendix 1).

4.4.3 Develop an Engagement Strategy for the activity / project to ensure genuine community engagement using the IAP2 goals and Isaac's Organic Visioning Methodology. An Engagement Strategy template is located in Council's information management system (see Appendix 2 – Engagement Strategy Template) The strategy will be the responsibility of:

a) The CEO, Executive Director or delegated officer, or
b) Place Officer, or
c) Community Engagement Team

The strategy will identify and inform Council of the:
a) Engagement project name
b) Engagement background information
c) Match the aspirations and goals set in Council's core strategic planning documents namely; the Community, Corporate and Operational Plans and long term Financial and Asset Management Plans.
d) Engagement timeframe
e) Engagement location and targeted population
f) Engagement random sample calculator
g) Engagement goals using the IAP2 Spectrum
h) Engagement project managers, officers, Councillors and partners
i) Engagement internal and external stakeholders
j) Engagement activities / tools

k) Communication / Media considerations
l) Reference documents

4.4.4 Council Engagement Strategies are to be assessed and approved by the appropriate officer / working group involved with the activity (see Appendix 1). Council Engagement Strategies can also be forwarded through the Governance area for comment and gap analysis. All Strategies should be approved prior to engagement activity beginning to ensure a meaningful engagement activity.

4.4.5 Where an engagement activity is deemed to be particularly sensitive the matter should be referenced against Council's *Media Policy and Internal and External Communication Strategy* for guidance and liaise with the Media department for advice and assistance.

4.4.6 The Engagement Strategy should be regularly reviewed throughout the activity's duration to ensure appropriateness and goals can be achieved.

4.4.7 At the conclusion of the community engagement activity the outcome of engagement must be reported. Depending on the nature of the engagement and the outcome this may result in an Action Learning Report – for continuous improvement purposes or a more formal Council report describing the outcome or to request a decision. Regardless of the report submitted the number of stakeholders engaged must be reported. Reports should include:

a) The number of direct and indirect contact with stakeholders
b) Who the stakeholders were
c) When the stakeholders were engaged
d) How they were engaged

Submitting the reviewed Engagement Strategy developed at the beginning of the process with the appropriate report will provide much of the information required.

4.4.8 Council will undertake all engagement activities in accordance with its obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. Council will collect, store, use, amend and provide access to personal information according to the Information Privacy Principles. The collection of personal information from community engagement activities for Council's promotional use (including, but not limited to, photographs, names, and address details) must be clearly noted on an approved form. Contact the Information Privacy Officer – Manager Governance and Public Relations, for advice.

5   REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 2009
Information Privacy Act 2009
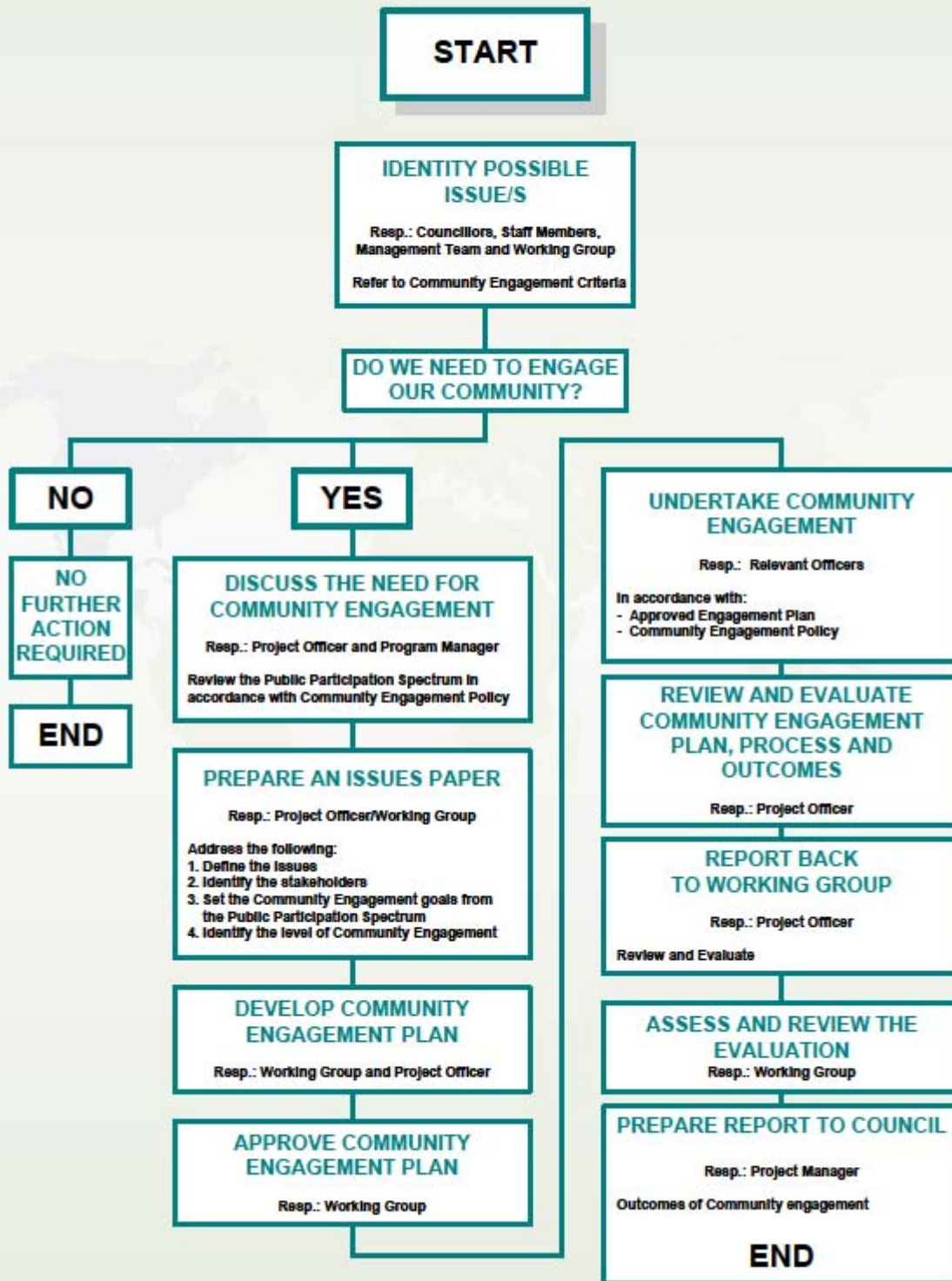Isaac's 2020 Vision Community Plan
IRC Media Policy
IRC Internal and External Communication Strategy
IRC Information Privacy Policy
Appendix 1 Community Engagement Process Flowchart

Community Engagement Process

START

IDENTITY POSSIBLE ISSUE/S

Resp.: Councillors, Staff Members, Management Team and Working Group

Refer to Community Engagement Criteria

DO WE NEED TO ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY?

NO

NO FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED

END

YES

DISCUSS THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Resp.: Project Officer and Program Manager

Review the Public Participation Spectrum in accordance with Community Engagement Policy

PREPARE AN ISSUES PAPER

Resp.: Project Officer/Working Group

Address the following:
1. Define the Issues
2. Identify the stakeholders
3. Set the Community Engagement goals from the Public Participation Spectrum
4. Identify the level of Community Engagement

DEVELOP COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Resp.: Working Group and Project Officer

APPROVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Resp.: Working Group

UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Resp.: Relevant Officers

In accordance with:
- Approved Engagement Plan
- Community Engagement Policy

REVIEW AND EVALUATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN, PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

Resp.: Project Officer

REPORT BACK TO WORKING GROUP

Resp.: Project Officer

Review and Evaluate

ASSESS AND REVIEW THE EVALUATION
Resp.: Working Group

PREPARE REPORT TO COUNCIL

Resp.: Project Manager

Outcomes of Community engagement

END

Appendix 2 Engagement Strategy Template

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Community Engagement Goal:
Isaac Regional Council is committed to facilitating genuine community engagement opportunities within the local government area. Council references the *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum* and uses its own Organic Visioning Engagement Methodology to ensure genuine engagement opportunities. Council's *Community Engagement Policy* can be referred to in order to better understand Council processes and committed to engagement.

The following shaded areas of the IAP2 *Public Participation Spectrum* are goals of this engagement project.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and / or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and or / decisions.	To work directly with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Engagement Project
[Name of the engagement project]

Engagement Location and Demographic Consideration:
[Provide location i.e. town name.]
[Provide population being engaged.]

Based on the *Survey Random Sample Calculator* (http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp) the following statistical coverage is provided to ensure genuine engagement and validation of the Dysart Town Entry Feature and Upgrade of Works concept:

[Visit the link above and enter details into calculator. Provide a screen shot / dump of the results in this space.]

Engagement Commencement Date:
[Enter start date.]

Engagement End Date:
[Enter end date.]

Background Information:
[Provide information relating to the engagement project:
- *what does it involve*
- *who does it involve*
- *why is it important*
- *how does it link to Council's strategic planning documents: Community, Corporate and Operational Plans]*

IRC-Directorate Code-Form #-Version # e.g. IRC-CorpS-001-V.01
PO Box 97, MORANBAH QLD 4744
P: 1300 ISAACS (1300 472227)

Engagement Team Roles and Responsibilities:

Title / Name	Organisation	Role and responsibilities
E.g. Place Officer – Dysart	*IRC*	*Project Coordinator*

Council support:

{Provide reference to Council approval / endorsement eg resolution number.]

Key Stakeholders:

Internal

[List the key stakeholders who are required to be aware of this process and project.]

Media and PR

External

[List all external stakeholders who should be the focus of the engagement project.]

Engagement Activities

Activity Description	Responsible officer
- promote at the Dysart Round Table: February 8, 2011	*Mayor and Council*
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	

Communication/Media Strategy:

[How will this activity be promoted within the target location / group?]

Officers should refer to Council's *Internal and External Communication Strategy* for alternative options and tools.

Reference Documents:

[Refer to any reference documents which may assist in the engagement process. Include InfoXpert ID numbers where appropriate.]