

23 February 2021

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY ADOPTED AT SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

At the meeting tonight, Council adopted the Community Engagement Policy (Policy), part of the Hepburn Together project. The Policy was drafted after significant input and feedback from the community.

Following analysis of the engagement findings, ten recommendations were developed and used to inform the Policy and future engagement practices. Key areas considered included Planning, Communication, Continuous Improvement/Reporting, Transparency and Consistent Engagement. The detailed recommendations for each section are contained in the Hepburn Together Engagement Summary Report available on Council's Participate Hepburn website. Council have accepted all recommendations and have undertaken to implement them all.

Mayor, Cr Lesley Hewitt, said the policy is the first step in improving the way Council engages with the community.

"We've heard loud and clear from the community that they want more meaningful engagement. This Policy reflects community aspirations for community engagement and will set clear processes for what sort of engagement should be undertaken, depending on a project's complexity, impact, budget and other factors."

"Council consulted widely with our community prior to drafting the policy. We are very pleased that over 300 community members took the time to provide feedback on the Policy through our pop-up sessions across the Shire and the online survey. This is significant and we've embraced the community feedback which drove the development of the Policy," said Cr Hewitt.

Council is committed to improving our community engagement practices and over the coming months will establish a regular email newsletter to keep residents updated on projects and key issues impacting the Shire, and will reinstate the popular 'Listening Posts' program in each ward.

For more on the Community Engagement Policy and the Hepburn Together project visit  
<https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/>.

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