



Brimbank City Council

Community Engagement Policy Review – Brimbank Community Voice Workshop

Session outputs

3 October 2023

About the workshop

On Tues 3 October 2023, members of the Brimbank Community Voice attended a 3-hour workshop to learn about and discuss the Draft Revised Community Engagement Policy 2021 (revised December 2022).

The workshop gave members of the Brimbank community an opportunity to:

- learn about Council's approach to community engagement,
- discuss the draft Community Engagement Policy and consider questions for Council,
- share ideas for the future of community engagement at Brimbank.

Participants

In total, 28 people members of Brimbank Community Voice attended the workshop.

Brimbank City Council staff

Michelle Welsby - Coordinator Community Engagement

Kate Van Lierop - Community Engagement Lead

Simone Kemp – Acting Manager Communications and Community Engagement

MosaicLab facilitators

Naomi Oosting – Senior Facilitator

Jody Kingston - Facilitator

Questions for clarity

In small groups, participants were invited to read a section of the policy and discuss their initial insights. Then, in another small group the participants shared their understanding of the material and gathered questions for council staff, to increase their understanding of the policy.

The following questions were shared with the whole group in the session, with brief responses provided by the Community Engagement team:

- How do you provide follow-up to ideas, feedback, issues raised during participation?
- How do you choose projects that you will bring forward to the community for engagement?
- In the engagement process where will the Council share the feedback of the public to the stakeholders?
- In regard to transparency and integrity (on page 7) – what are the bodies involved in the process?
- Is it the intention to use this process for all decision making at council?
- Can Council be more specific about how feedback will influence decision making?
- Does this policy include day-to-day engagement (outside of projects)? Where does this fit?
- How will council make sure that the community engagement policy is not just a checklist process? How will Council be in accountable to the process?
- How can we be assured that the community engagement policy will not just be revenue driven?
- How do you ensure you engage with enough community members?
- If someone is left out of the engagement process, are they able to request a review? What is the process for this? (not in policy)
- How will the community engagement policy handle all the different views across all criteria of involvement?
- The definition of what this community group is. What is going to be considered about what people are saying in this group?
- Do the Council take feedback from residents in regard to giving permits to companies e.g. landfill?
- Why does the Council not update residents in the area of recent developments? Example: Kelaba Aged Care

Hopes for the future of engagement at Brimbank

Participants worked in small groups to come up their hopes for the future of community engagement. The groups captured their collective ideas, providing a statement of their hope, a description (how it will look and feel) and a rationale (the reasons why it's important), as follows:

Engagement makes a difference

Our hope	➤ That community engagement makes a real difference in people's lives at Brimbank.
How it looks & feels	➤ Explanations about decisions draw upon or reference community engagement inputs/feedback and where community engagement must be set aside, that council gives reasons.
Why it's important	➤ Our communities and people benefit and our lives improve.

Community feels involved

Our hope	➤ To implement the [IAP2] spectrum successfully. ➤ To have deep involvement of the residents of Brimbank. ➤ Youth to be more involved.
How it looks & feels	➤ Involvement. ➤ Brimbank a better place to live. ➤ Satisfied residents.
Why it's important	➤ For a safe and happy community.

Diverse communities are engaged

Our hope	➤ More multicultural projects.
How it looks & feels	➤ Council being more involved in the community.
Why it's important	➤ Residents feel part of the community.

Engagement leads to better decisions

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ That this policy is taken seriously. ➤ That this policy is extended to include whole of community engagement with council, i.e. councillor engagement that the whole community can engage i.e. non-digital/language barriers.
How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community engagement consultation actually translates into decisions. ➤ Raised confidence among community that council represents their interests as a priority. ➤ Feels like council engages more with community. ➤ Less depressed citizens in the council. ➤ Happier citizens with better engagement and brighter future, more jobs, better parks, caring council.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Because we are a community with dynamic and diverse needs. As one of the most disadvantaged LGAs, people need to feel the right decisions are being made for the whole community.

Council engages on difficult issues

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [to] be able to tackle difficult issues i.e. youth crime/public safety. ➤ Effective solutions that are not put in the too hard basket.
How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youth community centre and services made more accessible.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [blank]

Community feels valued

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Easy process to ensure our voice is heard. ➤ Feedback provided in many languages and easy to understand.
How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community feels valued and included. ➤ Community support and buy-in of council decisions. ➤ A safe and clean environment.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ So that we can be proud of <u>Brimbank</u>!

Council works together with community

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A real increase in participation. ➤ Giving people the opportunity to have meaningful involvement in community. ➤ That it will lead to positive outcomes for folk living in Brimbank. ➤ That Brimbank will be seen as a desirable place to live, work, [for] recreation, [to] socialise.
How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better designed facilities ➔ happy community. ➤ Council and community working together. ➤ Projects are more accessible and utilised. ➤ Harmonious community. ➤ Multicultural communities leading conversations.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Because West is Best, now let's show the rest! ➤ Because it's our home. ➤ It could be better. ➤ It develops a strategy for us to move forward. ➤ So Brimbank can lead by example, let us set the example.

Engagement is transparent and accessible

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transparent and accessible to all Brimbank residents.
How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholders are easily kept informed for the entire project process e.g. engagement at the start, summary of project end.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better perception that Council is working for the community, more importantly for all.

Engagement builds trust in decision-making

Our hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The process ensures the information provided is taken seriously and people are able to understand or find out. ➤ The policy isn't just a tick-box exercise or to meet legal requirements. ➤ <u>Listen</u> to the community.
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How it looks & feels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Using different ways to engage, not just using computers/websites. ➤ Community feel valued – visible engagement, not just website → schools, train stations, parks. ➤ Community <u>trusts</u> the process.
Why it's important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We live in Brimbank, we should be pivotal in decision making.

Reflections – Like Wish Wonder

The workshop closed with an opportunity for participants to share their reflections on the session as one thing they liked, one thing they wished for and one thing they were left wondering.

I like...	I wish...	I wonder...
Our involvement and sharing ideas.	To contribute more to community engagement.	If we can do these activities more.
The format and casualness of the process and meeting. The facilitators and council staff.	We had time to further explore and discuss the subject matter. That a sitting councillor could have been here.	How I could have participated better and how will our deliberation will be taken by council.
Meeting good people like this group, vibrant.	The voice group will be here for a while.	When is the next one. All facilitators are good, staff of the council are doing their best. Thank you for tonight.
The presentation was progressive and sound.	That this is not just words.	Have we gone far enough?
The way it is constructed. Really engaged. Well done! Community engagement team is doing great work.	There was no questions directed at the team.	If it can be avoided - in case those [questions] were for Council in general and not for this team.
People involved sharing their issues.	It was about the benefit of all.	How much the council will benefit from this.
The information provided at the engagement policy review. The transparency of the information. Talking to the staff at Brimbank. The enthusiasm of the facilitators.	More open discussions. Not so much group work. Different ranges of all ages.	What can I be involved in in the future. Now my feedback will be implemented.

I like...	I wish...	I wonder...
Being involved.	To make a difference.	If good things will come out of this program.
Sharing ideas/comments/issues etc to other people. Discussing about Brimbank policies.	For our voices to be heard. For the community engagement to continue on. For more engagements in public.	If we will meet a councillor in the engagement session sometimes. If any projects by the council are being done backward just to tick all the boxes.
Engagement and organisation of the event.	I could have more impact in the community.	About the future development of Sunshine / Brimbank.
The information is put on paper, lots of topics to explore. The facilitators are patient with our questions. Happy environment	We could have these information sessions on yearly repetition.	If what we contribute with information will be attained.
Seeing the community involved with council discussions.	This session to happen again with improvement every time.	If any of our input discussion actually matters or will make a difference in the future.
The opportunity given to raise a voice.	We could review the outcome of today's workshop.	Where this program will take, hopefully taken seriously.
Meeting and hearing from all the different people.	That this sort of community engagement continues.	What challenges might be ahead which could mean not as much community engagement is possible.
Council staff answering questions transparently.	Majority of community can access forms like this regardless of age or language barriers.	How this feedback will be used and if it will have any influence. Who writes policies and why are they so difficult to understand.
The engagement process. It was informative and tailored in a way to keep on scope of the workshop objective.	People were more reflective of the community makeup, not many use or particular backgrounds. Participants were more informed prior to the session.	If the workshop will result in better outcomes.
The level of participation, lots of good discussion.	That the spectrum had been better explained. It is important for us to know what can be influenced.	If things will change and Brimbank will prosper.
Being able to discuss with others in small groups.	For feedback on what effect our input has had. And hope it becomes a living document.	What difference this policy will make to the average resident - will they notice.
The group community engagement. Beautiful approach to get the community voice. Very well organised.	We can include more points of view to the group to be heard.	We can have more community engagement groups more frequently, more topics of council engagement.

I like...	I wish...	I wonder...
The passion of the group and council's desire to consult and implement where possible.	We could get back to basics, delivering better management of waste, litter, local roads.	If Brimbank residents could become the most engaged community at council level.
The session was face to face.	We were provided with more detail on the engagement process (maybe the toolkit).	If this session was designed to inform or actually consult on the policy?
The opportunity to take part.	That the solution was more simple.	If this will help people to take more notice and improve things.
The initiative of creating the community voice and connecting us in this process.	Our feedback is heard.	What's next for us? How will we contribute to shape the future of Brimbank.
How positive people were in trying to improve Brimbank.	We can lead a movement to bring about change.	If things will really change and Brimbank will evolve into a better place.
The positivity generated by the staff and group.	That all that is projected comes through in action and will benefit all in Brimbank.	If everyone in Brimbank council will embrace their community engagement policy.
The engagement with other members of the community and facilitation.	That this policy is expanded to cover all community engagement, not just projects.	Why this policy is not called Community Project Engagement Policy.