

OBERON COUNCIL'S  
ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABLE  
ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement  
Framework & Strategy  
April 2018



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**OBERON COUNCIL**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Roadmap to sustainable engagement

Oberon Council is embarking on a new and exciting path of community engagement. This is marked by the introduction of a new Community Engagement Framework and Strategy which will assist transition Oberon Council through to a new future strategic direction. To achieve this new direction, Oberon Council has established a road map which includes a number of phases, each building and enhancing community participation.

Oberon Council has a long history of engaging with our community. This is evident in the quality delivery of services, facilities and infrastructure across the region. Oberon Council wants to continue to build collaborative relationships that recognise and value continuous improvement to ensure the long-term vision and sustainability for Oberon.

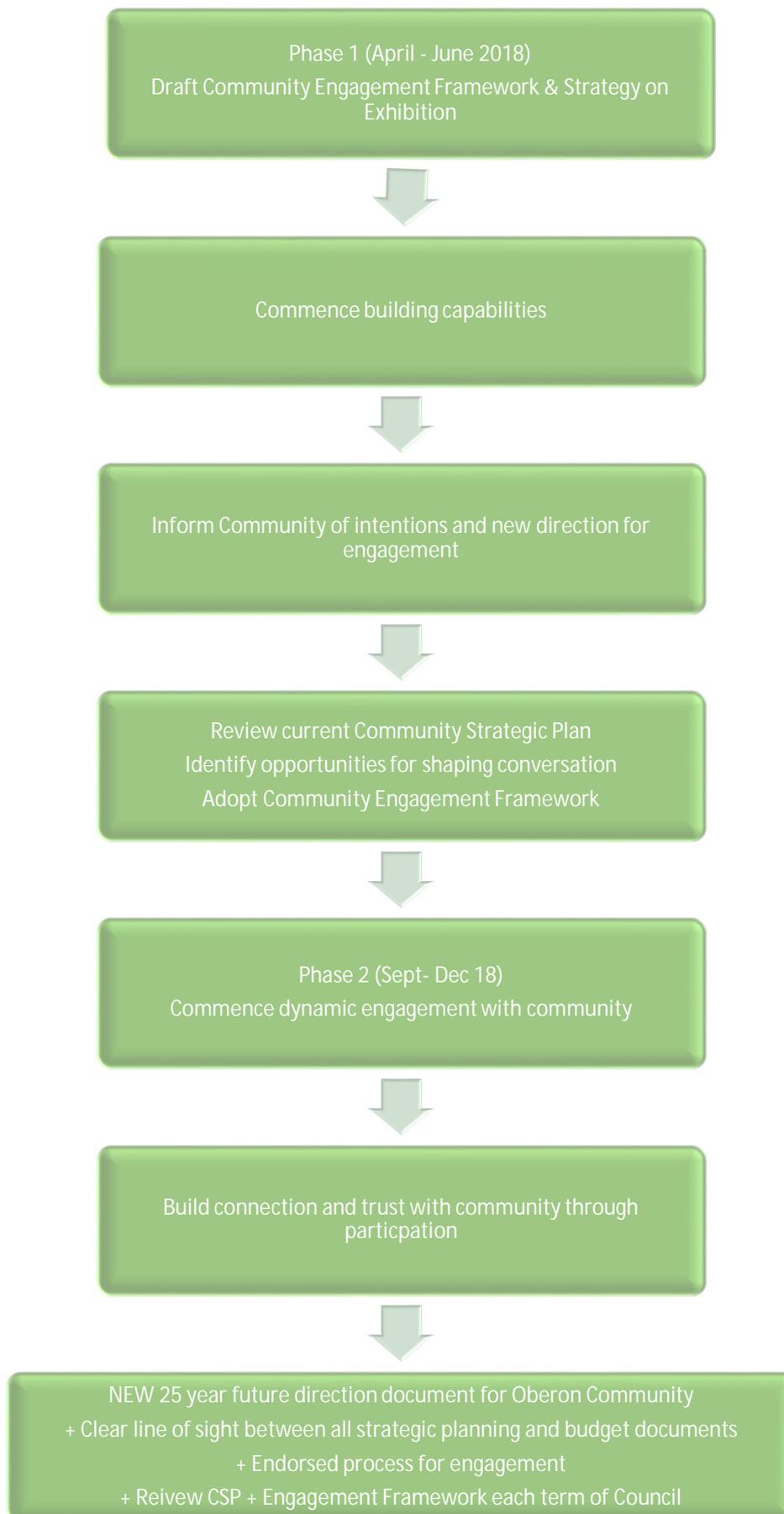
Community engagement is an evolving field of practice - one that needs to remain contemporary and agile as community needs change throughout a lifetime. Community engagement is a core function of council, strengthened recently in amendments made to the NSW Local Government Act by the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016. There are new provisions for engagement:

### *402A Community engagement strategy*

*A council must establish and implement a strategy (called its community engagement strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).*

This amendment to the Act is yet to be proclaimed however this Oberon Engagement Framework and Strategy is written to comply with these changes. If any further amendment or change to relevant acts are introduced this framework and strategy will be reviewed to ensure compliance.

The diagram on the next page graphically depicts the key steps to establishing the foundation for long term sustainable engagement that is contextually sensitive and appropriate to the Oberon Community.



## 2. WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is the process by which the Oberon community can participate in and inform, influence and shape decision making that impacts our community. Effective community engagement is underpinned by social justice principles of access, equity, rights and participation to ensure all parts of the community have an equal opportunity for input.

In addition, Oberon Council is committed to the following underpinning principles that will shape and guide the community engagement framework practices:

### PLANNED

Oberon Council will carefully consider and plan community engagement to ensure quality outcomes and meaningful engagement is achieved.

### CONSISTENCY

Whilst processes may be tailored to suit the project / program, the council will ensure a consistent approach to providing information and feedback.

### RESPECT

Council values all contributions and will treat participants with respect

### INCLUSIVE

Stakeholders will be identified and creative methods of engagement will be delivered to maximise the value and range of feedback from our constituents and stakeholders.

The benefits of effective community engagement include:

### *BETTER OUTCOMES*

- ü Input from diverse views achieving better outcomes that the community feel connected to.

### *INCREASED COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION*

- ü developing on-going community partnerships, shared vision and responsibility

### *HIGHER LEVELS OF TRUST*

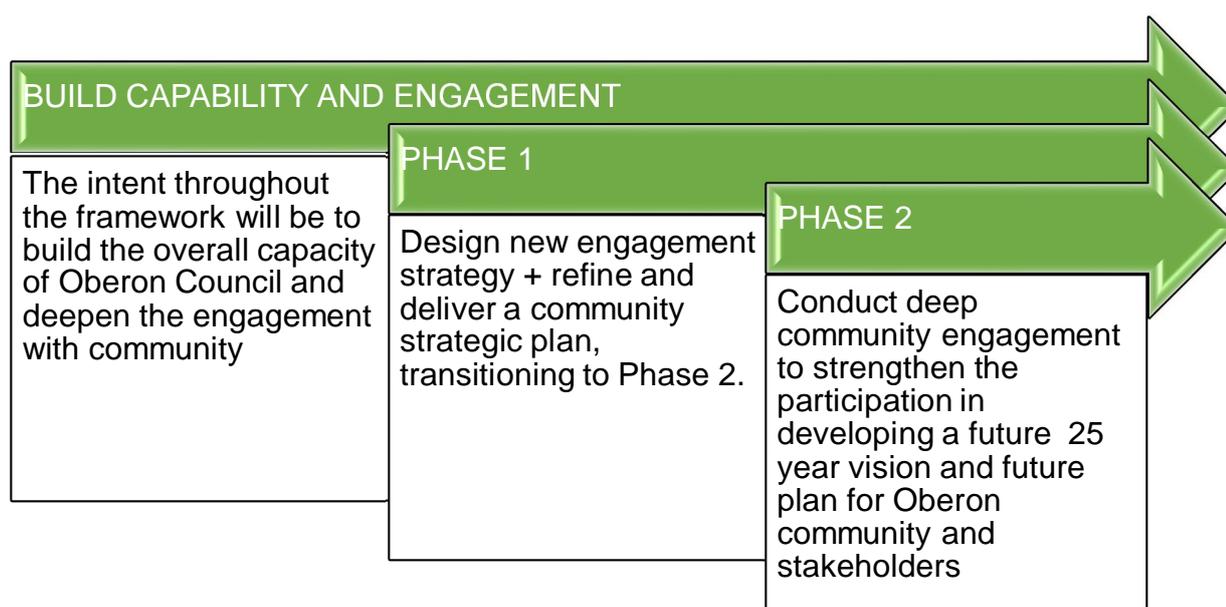
- ü Through transparency and participation in decision making.

### *CLEAR EXPECTATIONS*

- ü clear direction for staff and community on how to conduct meaningful and appropriate levels of engagement. Identifying and confirming community views on local priorities, opportunities and challenges.

### 3. THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

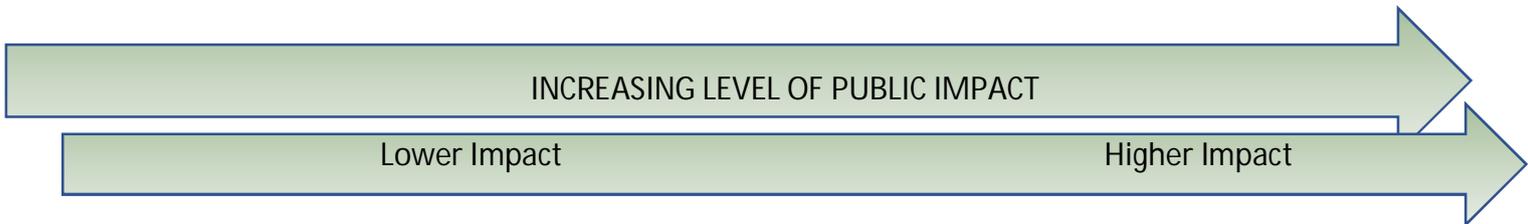
The purpose of the Community Engagement Framework (CEF) is to provide a clear and concise outline of Oberon Councils commitment to public participation and what to expect across the range of Council activities. The framework has an underpinning objective of building Oberon Council’s capability (internally and externally) to strengthen the community engagement processes and practices. The phased approach in the diagram below is designed to build and broaden engagement with the overall objective of achieving



a new 25 year vision for Oberon.

This Framework and Strategy is informed by the internationally recognised “*Public Participation Spectrum*” developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) which outlines five levels of public participation. The recommended levels of participation coincide with the level of public impact from a project moving from inform through to higher levels of engagement – collaborate & empower. It is important to note that within a local government context and associated legislative framework the empower level can be difficult to achieve.

The level of impact is determined by how many people a decision will affect. For example- a rate increase will impact all rate payers therefore the level of engagement needs to be greater than that of a localised project.



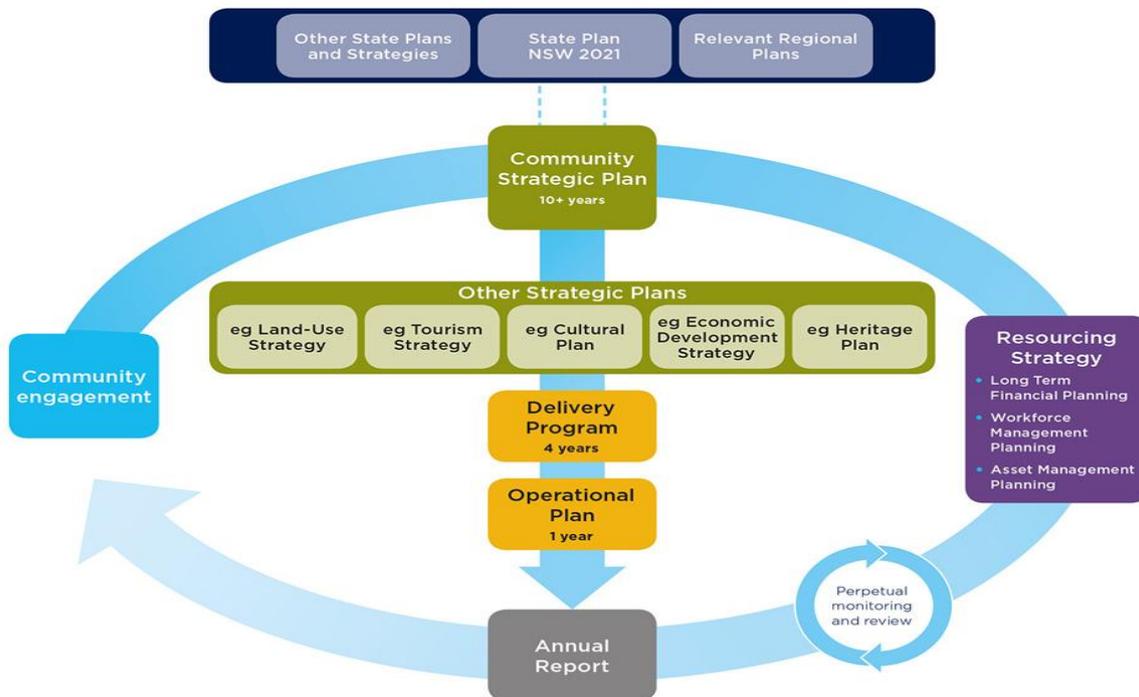
(Source - based on IAP2)

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
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Goal –	Provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner	To obtain public feedback on decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure public's concerns and aspirations consistently understood	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision making process.	Place final decision in the hands of the public
Promise from Council	The council will keep the community informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns. Provide feedback	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decision made	We will work together with you in the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide
Examples of Engagement methodologies	Social media campaign Website Inclusion in newsletter Special newsletter Displays	Focus groups World café style open house Reference or leaders groups Surveys	Workshops Polling	Participatory decision making Advisory boards / committees	Citizen jury Voting – elections

## 4. INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK



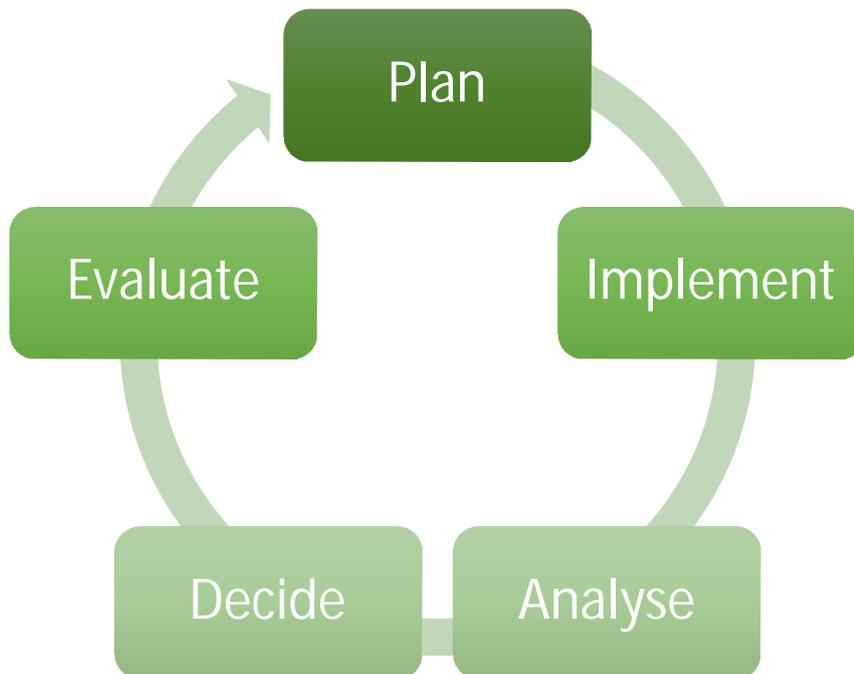
The Local Government Act sets out requirements for all Councils to implement the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. The intent of this framework allows councils to build plans of appropriate size, scale and content for their communities. It sets future direction and outlines how Council will achieve the strategies and actions from the future plans.

The most important thing is that the Community Strategic Plan, and the implementation structures that support it, are fit for purpose and appropriate to their communities. In this case – that they fit the needs and purpose of the Oberon LGA.

This proposed Community Engagement Framework and Strategy is a key element of the IP&R framework. It is only with robust, transparent and well considered community input and engagement that the vision for the future of the Oberon council area can be designed.

Whilst the Engagement strategies outlined for the review of the current Community Strategic Plan (Section 9) the overall intent of the community engagement framework is that it sets out the way in which council will engage with community in any matters relating to them.

## 5. THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT



PLAN	<p>Carefully plan your strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Know your project and the level of impact and links to other projects &amp; programs.</li> <li>- Determine level of participation</li> <li>- Determine who should be involved in engagement internally</li> <li>- Identify stakeholders</li> <li>- Develop engagement strategy – timeframes, resources</li> <li>- Consider all statutory requirements and legalities that impact project</li> </ul>
IMPLEMENT	<p>Deliver engagement program Be adaptive if strategy methodologies are not meeting expectations</p>
ANALYSE	<p>Collect and collate data gathered through implementation Analysis input, assess themes Determine if sufficient data has been gathered to inform decision Capture in outcomes report / paper</p>
DECIDE	<p>Prepare decision paper / report for council (including feedback on process undertaken and outcomes) Inform all participants of decision and next steps (including when council will consider)</p>
EVALUATE	<p>Debrief in process, discuss learnings or areas for improvement, capture wrap up and learnings for next program</p>

## 6. ABOUT OBERON & OUR COMMUNITY

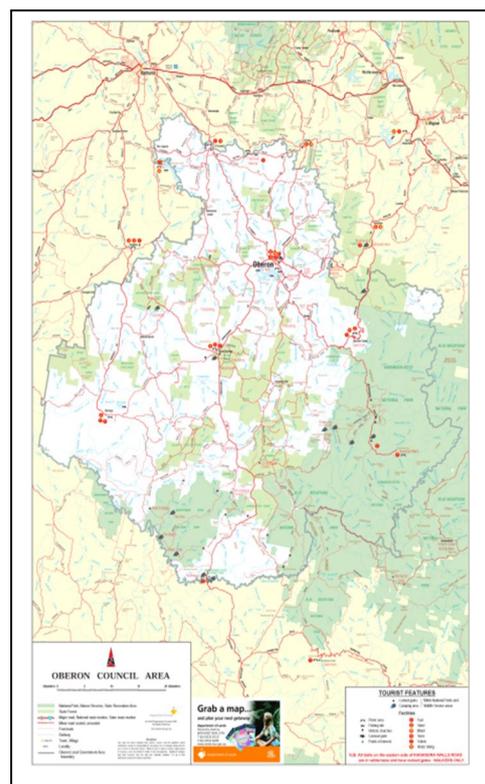
The Oberon Local Government Area (LGA) is located adjacent to the Blue Mountains of New South Wales on the Great Dividing Range, 196 km west (two-hour drive) of Sydney. Much of the area is considered to be sub-alpine with the Oberon township 1,113 metres above sea level.

Within the LGA is the town of Oberon and the villages of Black Springs, Burruga, Edith, Mount David, O'Connell, and Shooters Hill. The LGA neighbours include Bathurst Regional, Blue Mountains City, Upper Lachlan Shire, Lithgow City and Wollondilly Shire.

The total land area of the LGA is 3660 square km. This area includes the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, which is approximately 180,000 hectares, and the Jenolan Caves Reserve which is World Heritage listed and a major attraction for visitors to the area.

 <b>PEOPLE</b>	The Oberon Local Government Area has a population of 5301. This is comprised of 52% male/48% female and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 3.4% of the population	
	Children up to 15 years of age	17.5%
	People over the age of 65 years	22.1%
 <b>FAMILIES</b>	There are 1345 families in Oberon – of this 37.5% are couple families with children, 46.9% are couple families without children and 15.3% were one parent families.	
 <b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years or older is \$611. The median household income is \$1239 per week.	
 <b>EDUCATION</b>	In Oberon people over the age of 15 11.9% have completed Year 12 level, 18.4% have completed to certificate III or IV level and 6.5% have completed to Diploma level.	
 <b>INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT</b>	Of the 2384 people who report being in the labour force 59.5% are employed full time, 29.1% work part time and 5.7% are unemployed.	
	The most common industries are cattle and sheep farming (7.7%) log sawmilling (4.9%), Road Freight (3.1%) and government (3.4%)	

(Source: 2016 ABS Census Data)



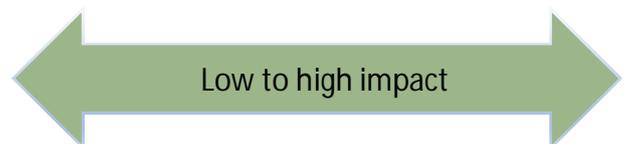
## 7. HOW WE WILL ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

Oberon Council will endeavour to use the appropriate methods of engagement in their engagement design to ensure the people most impacted by a decision have the information they need to be able to inform and influence the outcome. A combination of the following methods can be used depending on the project or purpose for engaging.

### Methods will include -

- ü Formal submission and Public Exhibition Processes
- ü Letter box drops
- ü Social media – giving due consideration to the percentage of users with the region
- ü Advertising – this may be linked to promotional material about local events or on rate notices
- ü Regular newsletters
- ü e-newsletter
- ü Print media in local paper(s)
- ü Attendance at local group meetings – for example the local social, sports, interest groups
- ü Collaborate with the schools and their events
- ü Posters
- ü Webpage
- ü Drop in sessions or pop up sessions in local towns and villages
- ü Workshops
- ü Displays
- ü Meetings
- ü Focus groups

The matrix outlined below shows the spectrum of engagement and how the above tools / methods may be tailored depending on the purpose for the engagement. Budgets and resources are key considerations for Council when determining their strategies.



METHODS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Formal submission and Public Exhibition Processes	ü				
Letter box drops	ü				
Social media – however consideration will be given to the percentage of users with the region	ü	ü	ü		
Advertising – this may be linked to promotional material about local events or on rate notices	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Regular newsletters	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
e-newsletter	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Print media in local paper	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Attend a local group meetings – eg local social, sports, interest groups	ü	ü	ü	ü	
Collaborate with the schools and their events	ü	ü	ü	ü	
Webpage	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Drop in sessions or pop up sessions in local towns and villages	ü	ü	ü		
Workshops	ü	ü	ü	ü	
Displays	ü				
Special Meetings	ü	ü	ü		
Focus groups		ü		ü	ü

## 8. EVALUATION OF ENGAGEMENT

Successful engagement for Oberon council will be characterised by:

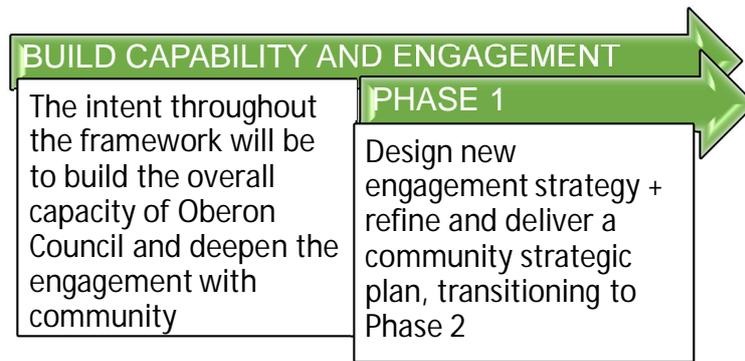
- ü Good planning of the engagement processes
- ü A clear purpose that is communicated to all
- ü Relevant target audiences are identified and input is positive
- ü Effective two-way communication with clear and relevant information
- ü Transparency of both the engagement and decision-making processes
- ü Shared values
- ü Multiple options to participate in the engagement processes
- ü Feedback is given on the outcomes of the engagement processes and on how these influenced the decision-making process
- ü Timely engagement that enables fair and reasonable opportunity for the community to give input to the engagement processes

The Engagement Framework and Strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it still meets the needs of the Oberon Community.

## 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### Phase 1 *(April to June 2018)*

Consistent with the roadmap outlined on page 6 this phase is outlined below with the underpinning objective of building internal and external capabilities for engagement.



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### Outline

#### *Purpose:*

The purpose of this engagement phase is to inform the community of the CSP direction and engagement activities to seek comment on the current Future Directions and Strategic Outcomes. The Engagement during this stage will be limited but will be designed to promote and outline what to expect in phased engagement over later part of 2018.

#### *Scope:*

- I. Draft Engagement Framework and CSP Future Directions & Strategic Outcomes are placed on exhibition for comment.
- II. Targeted engagement to update CSP and adopt final suite of plans by June.
- III. Updated suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting Plans

#### *Level:*

Consistent with inform & consultation

#### *Methodologies:*

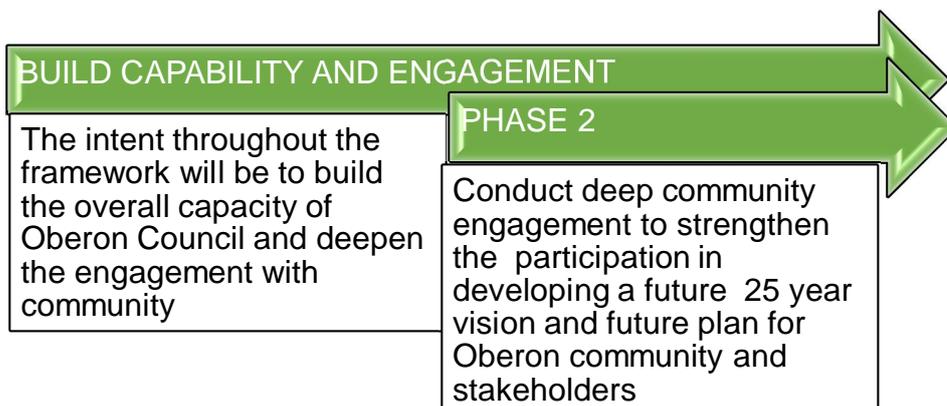
- Community awareness campaign - newsletters, media (print & social) (April – June)

- Public exhibition seeking public comment (April for strategy and framework, May for IP&R suite of plans including Community Strategic Plan)
- Targeted face to face workshops (24 April 2018) – community representatives as well as a Councillor workshop
- Town meetings dovetailing in with Delivery Plan & Operational Plan consultation (during April – dates TBC)

*Timelines:*

- Draft engagement framework and CSP key directions to council 20 March
- Exhibition of above through to end April
- Targeted community engagement activities during April
- Draft CSP back to Council for adoption 17 May

## Phase 2 – (September – December 2018)



## Engagement Outline

*Purpose:*

The purpose of this phase is to conduct deep community engagement to strengthen the participation in developing a future 25 year vision and future plan for Oberon community and stakeholders. The Engagement opportunities will be much broader and more inclusive than Phase 1.

*Scope:*

- I. Design and conduct an engagement strategy to develop a new Future Plan through quality conversations with the Oberon community and stakeholders
- II. Develop a new vision and values statements that represent Oberon area
- III. Capability development of Oberon staff in community engagement, strategy and planning skills

*Level:*

Consistent with inform, consult, involve and collaborate

*Methodologies:*

- Community awareness campaign - newsletters, media (print & social) (April – June)
- Targeted face to face events involving the broader Oberon LGA communities (Sept/Oct 18)

*Timelines:*

- Agree on final scope and engagement methodologies and activities (August)
- Capability development training on engagement principles (key Council staff and community members) (September)
- Engagement Period – range of activities and information sharing (October)
- Draft Futures Plan and Vision statements developed and considered by Council for adoption) November

