

Draft Community Engagement Policy

Consultation Summary Report

Introduction

This report summarises what we heard from the community. The aim of the consultation was to gather community feedback on the Draft Community Engagement Policy. While the Policy reflects the requirements of the legislated Community Engagement Charter and limits the scope for substantive amendment, the consultation provided an opportunity to inform how Council implements the Policy in practice, including:

- How Council communicates about community engagement projects
- How community feedback is provided, considered and shared
- How engagement can be more inclusive and accessible.

Engagement Overview

Consultation commenced on 26 June 2026 and concluded on 16 July 2026. A total of 50 people participated in this consultation. Of these:

- 49 responded via Your Say Unley
- 1 responded via hard copy survey.

Hard copy surveys were made available at Council's Libraries, Community Centres and Civic Centre. The consultation was promoted via:

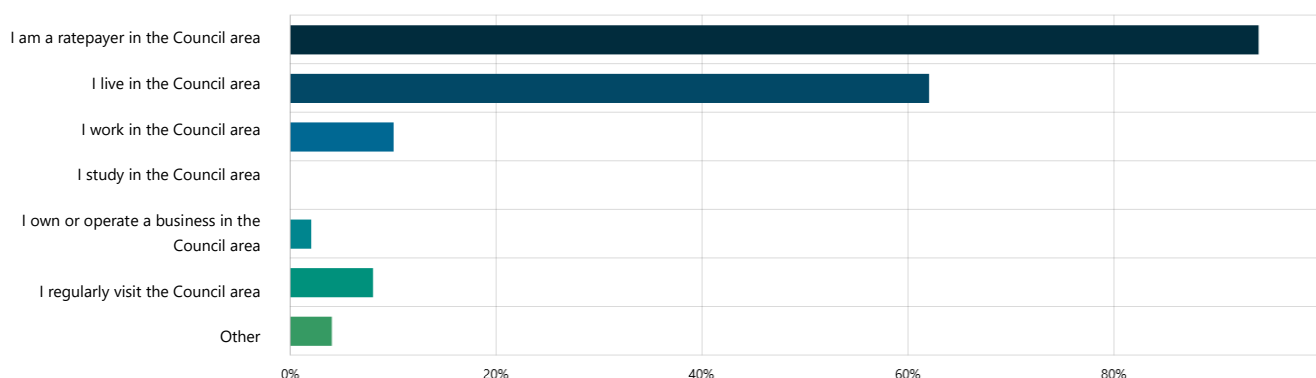
- 2 e-newsletters via the Your Say Unley database
- 6 posts across Council's social media channels
- Posters on display at Council Facilities.

Findings

Unley Connection

We asked, 'What is your connection to the City of Unley?':

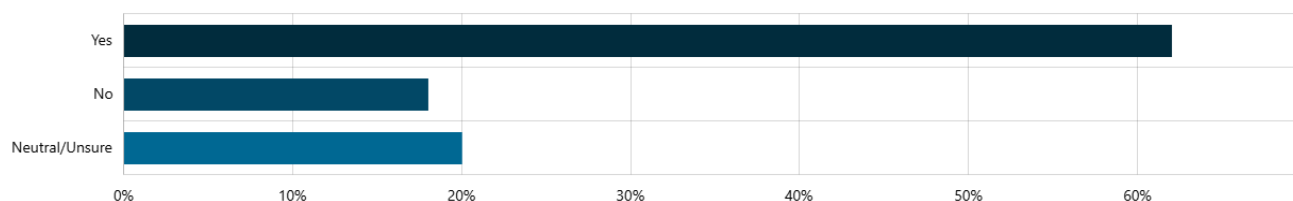
- 94% of respondents indicated they were ratepayers within the City of Unley
- 62% indicated that they lived in the Council area, and
- 10% selected that they worked in the City of Unley.



(Other – volunteer in the area, member of a local sports club)

Draft Policy language

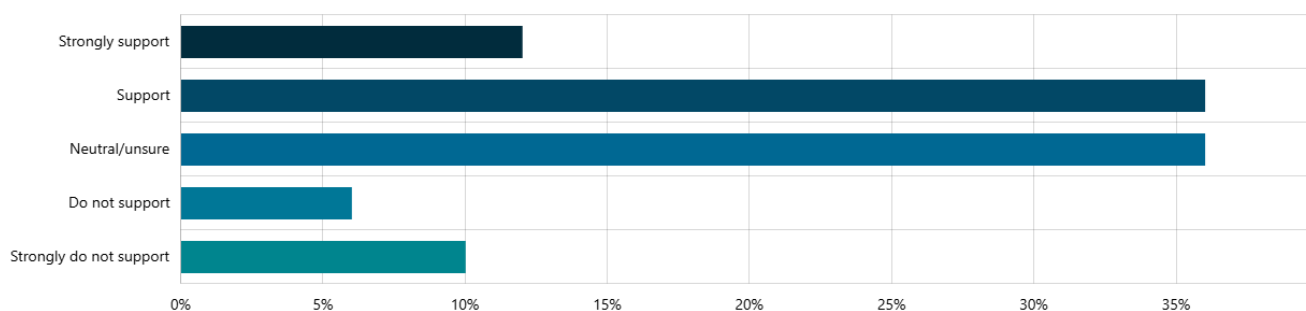
Of the 50 respondents, 62% agreed that the language used in the Draft Policy simple and easy to understand.



Levels of support

Regarding support for the Policy overall:

- 48% supported the Draft Community Engagement Policy overall (12% strongly supported / 36% supported)
- 36% were neutral or unsure
- 16% did not support the policy overall (6% do not support / 10% strongly do not support).



Support Themes/Concerns

Feedback indicated that support, neutral and non-support responses were often influenced by respondents' views of past engagement experiences and expectations regarding implementation of the Policy.

We asked, **'What factors influenced your rating?'** (38 respondents for this question)

Those who expressed **strong support or support for the Policy overall**, broadly endorse the policy.

Support themes:

- Commitment to community consultation and participation
- Transparency and openness in decision-making
- Inclusive and accessible engagement practices
- A clear and consistent engagement framework
- Meaningful two-way communication with residents.

Those who selected **neutral or unsure for the Policy overall** primarily raised concerns regarding implementation, communication and confidence that engagement commitments would be delivered in practice.

Neutral themes:

- Questions about Council genuinely acting on community feedback
- Concerns that engagement opportunities are promoted broadly enough
- Difficulty understanding the policy due to complexity and length
- Desire for longer engagement periods
- Underlying concerns about trust and confidence in Council's engagement practices.

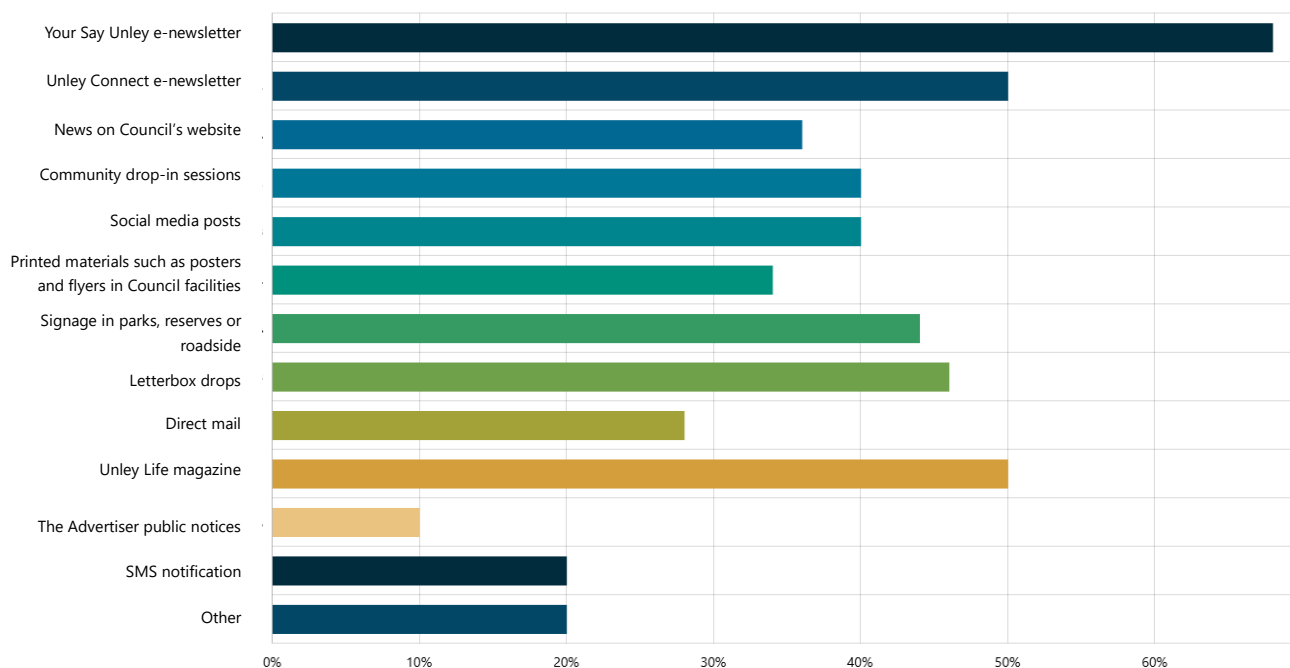
Those who expressed that they did **not support the Policy overall**, (do not support / strongly do not support) said they were influenced by their concerns that the Draft Policy does not sufficiently guarantee meaningful, transparent and accountable engagement.

Non-support concerns:

- The policy does not reflect community engagement best practice
- Accountability for how community feedback influences decisions
- Lack of transparency regarding engagement outcomes and feedback
- Requests to prioritise and weight feedback from residents, ratepayers and directly affected stakeholders
- The policy allows too much discretion and could enable "tick-the-box" consultation.

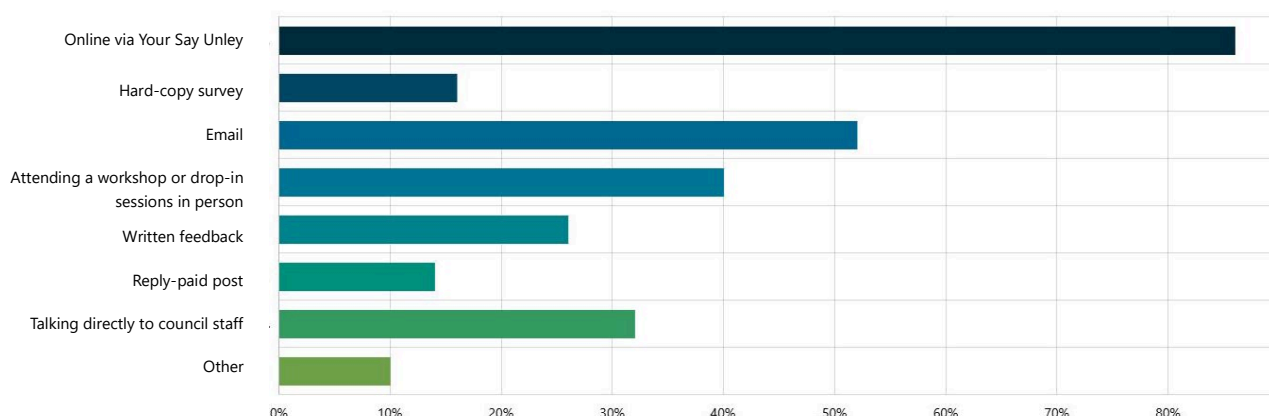
How Council Engages

We asked, '**How would you like to find out about community consultations?**' (select all that apply)
(50 respondents for this question)



(Other includes – shopping centre displays, other than smart-screens, third party surveys, council meetings)

We asked, **‘How do you prefer to provide your feedback on a consultation?’** (select all that apply) (50 respondents for this question)



(Other includes – community meetings, presentations)

We asked, **‘When we put this policy into practice and consult with the community, what is important to you that we do well?’** (41 respondents for this question)

While respondents raised a wide range of suggestions, there was strong consistency around several key expectations for how Council should undertake community engagement in practice.

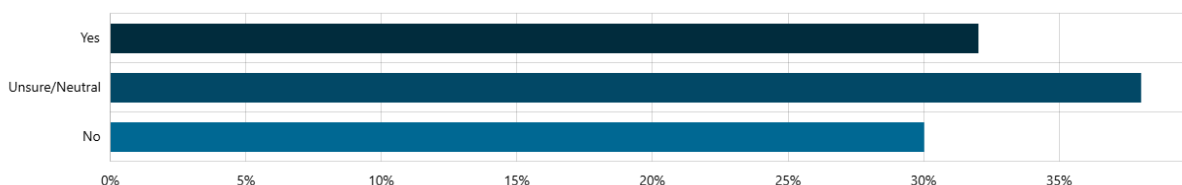
The feedback suggests that the primary concern is not whether consultation occurs, but whether it is meaningful, transparent, inclusive and influential.

Across all responses, there were four dominant expectations:

1. Listen and act on community feedback – respondents want assurance that engagement genuinely influences decisions.
2. Be transparent – respondents want clear visibility of feedback received, how decisions are made, and how community views were considered.
3. Reach more people – respondents want broader awareness of consultation opportunities through multiple communication channels and targeted outreach.
4. Close the loop – respondents want Council to report back, explain outcomes and maintain communication throughout the life of a project.

Accessibility & Inclusion

We asked, **‘Do you think this policy enables all members of the community to participate?’** (50 respondents for this question)



We asked, **‘How could Council make engagement more accessible or inclusive?’**

(34 respondents for this question)

While some respondents felt existing engagement practices were generally accessible, several common suggestions emerged regarding how engagement could be made more accessible and inclusive. The most frequent suggestions were:

- Increase awareness through communication methods such as mailouts, letterbox drops, rates notices, newsletters and community-based promotion.
- Offer more face-to-face engagement opportunities at times that benefit the community.
- Reduce reliance on digital channels.
- Better engage underrepresented groups - particularly CALD communities, people with disabilities, older residents, younger people and busy families.
- Give people more time to participate through longer and more flexible consultation periods.

We asked **‘Are you aware of any groups who want to participate in community consultations, but find it hard to do so? If so, what could we do to make it easier for these groups to engage with Council?’** *(22 respondents for this question)*

Although many respondents did not complete this question, or were not aware of specific groups facing barriers to participation, the responses that were provided consistently pointed to three groups that may require additional support:

- Older residents, particularly those who are not online.
- Working people and parents who are time poor.
- Residents directly affected by Council projects and decisions.

Across these groups, the most common suggestions were to:

- Increase use of direct communication methods such as mail, SMS and phone contact.
- Reduce reliance on digital-only engagement.
- Improve awareness of consultation opportunities.
- Offer simpler and more flexible ways to participate.

We asked, **‘Do you have other feedback on the Draft Community Engagement Policy?’**

(22 respondents for this question)

Responses to this question largely reinforced earlier findings:

- community confidence is less about the policy itself and more about Council’s actions and
- whether Council can demonstrate that engagement is genuine, transparent and influential in decision-making.

Operational Opportunities for Continuous Improvement

While feedback on the Policy varied, respondents identified several opportunities that Administration may consider when implementing the Policy and continuing to develop Council's community engagement practices.

1. Improve awareness of consultation opportunities by increasing visibility of engagement activities through multiple communication channels.
2. Strengthen “progress updating” and “closing the loop” practices by providing better feedback after participating in consultations, communicating reasons why particular suggestions were adopted or not adopted.
3. Expand face-to-face engagement opportunities. Many respondents expressed a preference for direct engagement alongside digital methods.
4. Provide more inclusive engagement options appropriate for diverse groups.
5. Continue engagement throughout project lifecycles, beyond the initial concept stage.
6. Demonstrate how decisions are informed by community feedback to enhance transparency around Council decision-making processes.
7. Review and adapt consultation time frames.

Closing Summary

Consultation responses indicate support for the Draft Community Engagement Policy and its underlying principles, with 48% of respondents indicating support or strong support, 36% neutral or unsure, and 16% indicating they did not support the Policy.

The consultation highlights an expectation that Council will demonstrate the policy's effectiveness through improved engagement practices, transparency and accountability.

Community feedback also identified several opportunities that Administration can consider when implementing the Policy and reviewing engagement practices over time. These opportunities relate primarily to communication, accessibility, transparency and reporting, and will inform ongoing operational improvements to Council's community engagement activities.

These opportunities will be considered by Administration as part of its obligations under the Community Engagement Charter, its operational strategies and actions in relation to community engagement, and to support its ongoing commitment to continuously improve community engagement practices.