



Ashfield Council

Notifications Policy

This policy will be reviewed triennially by:
Corporate Governance
Next review date: January 2019

Title:	Notifications Policy
Summary:	To provide a public notification policy for matters of public interest which are not covered through the development application (DA) or land management process of Ashfield Council.
TRIM Record Number:	14/16499
Date of Issue:	January 2016
Approval:	8 July 2014; (Reviewed January 2016)
Version Control:	V1
Contact Officer:	Manager Corporate Governance
Relevant References:	
Main Legislative or Regulatory References:	Local Government Act 1993 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
Applicable Delegation of Authority:	As per directorate delegations schedules As per delegations for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and General Manager as applied.
Related Ashfield Council Policy:	Ashfield Interim Development Assessment Policy 2013, Part C12, <i>Public Notification in the Planning Process and all aspects of Land Management</i> . Ashfield Privacy Management Plan Social Media Policy
Related Ashfield Council Procedure:	Public Policy Exhibition Procedure

Policy Background

Public notification is the process of providing information to the community about major developments or proposals and matters of public importance to the Ashfield community. The key principle is to involve the community in the decision making or consultation process to assist Council to make choices on behalf of its residents and in the best interest of the community.

Policy Purpose

This policy is specifically focussed on a notification process for issues of public importance to the Ashfield community such as State Government proposals affecting the Ashfield LGA (examples include changes to local government processes or structures, major transport infrastructure developments or legislative reforms with a wide impact) or Council policies/programs which have effect across the LGA (such as a resident parking scheme or other major Council service changes).

The policy is complimentary to the process used for the notification of development applications and land management proposals outlined in the Ashfield Interim Development Assessment Policy 2013 (*Part C12 Public Notification in the Planning Process and all aspects of Land Management*). This policy does not apply to Development Applications which are submitted to Council for determination and approval.

Policy Objectives

- To recognise the need for community to be informed, consulted and included in decision making for proposals which have a wide impact across part or the whole of the Ashfield Local Government Area.
- To support a process to seek and obtain community input on issues of public importance to the Ashfield community.
- To enable public notice to be given on matters of major public importance or planning issues (such as major transport proposals from other tiers of Government) where Council is not the decision maker in the same way as for those where Council makes the final decision.

Implementation and access

In order to ensure a systematic approach is taken for notifications for major issues of community significance, a notifications/communications checklist should be followed as shown in Appendix A.

Issues for Notification

Notification of matters will be undertaken based on a range of criteria including but not limited to the following:

- A significant change in policy
- A significant change in service provision
- Change of use and/or long term use of an asset
- Impact on amenity and quality of community life
- Heritage or local significance of a place
- Social factors for the Ashfield community
- Matters of public importance affecting the wider Ashfield community.

Methods of notification

The method of notification to the Ashfield community may take the form of several methods and it is expected that some or all of the communication methods below could be used depending on the importance and complexity of the issue:

- a) Writing a formal letter(s) to all affected residents, business owners and/or staff.
- b) Use of survey(s) of affected residents.
- c) Issuing a media release and publishing information in the media.
- d) Publishing a fact sheet translated into several languages.
- e) Commissioning advertising in the media.
- f) Holding a public open house, forum or meeting for community input.
- g) Enabling public exhibition of policies, plans, proposals and issues.
- h) Placing information on the Council website.
- i) Sending communications via electronic media (e-mail, facsimile, social media).
- j) Visible notices placed on noticeboard or sandwich boards in the Ashfield Civic Centre or other council properties.

Timeframe for Notifications

The timeframe for notifications may vary according to the matter to be considered. As a minimum 14 days should be considered standard with shorter timeframes for urgent issues. For matters where the lead-time for longer community consultation is possible, a 28 day period may be followed similar to the timeframe required for Plans of Management and Community Strategic Plans.

Principles for notification

The method of notification used will be based on various principles depending on the level and complexity of issue. Principles to consider when deciding on the notification include:

- Breadth of the issue.
- Depth and impact of the issue.
- Access and equity for the Ashfield community.
- Opportunity for the community to participate.

Exhibition of Proposals and Plans

Where Council has access to documents associated with this notification policy, these will be made available and/or exhibited at Council's offices at the Ashfield Civic Centre, Customer Service Centre, ground floor, 260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield, NSW 2131.

Petitions

Where a petition is received in response to a notification, only the Head Petitioner (or first signatory on a petition where there is no head petitioner) who responded to a notification will be advised of the details of any decision taken or the details of any meeting (whether Council or a public) to which the notification refers. Notification may be either by letter, by facsimile, e-mail or by personal communication/contact.

Submissions and Community Comment

Where possible, the opportunity for the receipt of submissions and community comment will be enabled and encouraged. Submissions from the public are to be in writing and must contain a name and address and preferably a contact phone number. If possible, e-mail addresses and/or fax numbers of those who make the submission should also be included. All letters on an issue including individually signed form letters will be considered as a separate response.

Any community group or non-profit organisation may request that it be advised of any proposal which falls within the scope of this policy or in general for all matters affecting its area of operation within the Ashfield LGA and such a request is not to be unreasonably declined. As part of the checklist procedure attached, details of any such organisation should also be recorded.

Feedback can be received using any of the various options listed below.

By mail:

The General Manager
Ashfield Council
PO Box 1145, Ashfield 1800,

or by email to: info@ashfield.nsw.gov.au

or in person:

Customer Service Centre, ground floor
260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield, NSW 2131

Process for Submissions

The process for handling submissions received in relation to a notification may consist of various options:

- (1) Submissions may be made public via the Council website (unless the respondent otherwise requests)
- (2) Council may acknowledge the receipt of any submissions received in response to a notification to all respondents.
- (3) All respondents to a notification will be advised, if time permits, as to any public meetings or Council meetings organised in connection with such notifications. Such advice may be either by letter, by facsimile, e-mail or by personal communication/contact.



Appendix A - Checklist for Notifications

Issue:

Directorate/Department:.....

TRIM No:.....

Methods: [please tick and add details for the appropriate notification method(s) to be used]

Formal letter(s) to all affected residents, business owners and employees.

.....

Community Survey.

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Media release and/or commissioned advertising in the print media.

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Fact sheet translated into several languages.

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Social media comment.

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Public meeting for community input.

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Public exhibition of plans, proposals and issues.

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Council website information placement.

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Public and Community Comment

Provision for community comment will be available through (please indicate):

- Submissions from the public
- Public meetings (please specify)
- Survey (please specify)
- Public Exhibition process (please specify)

COMMUNITY OR NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

Are there any community groups or not-for—profit organisations which need to be consulted for this notification process ? [Please indicate by circling] Yes No

If Yes, please record details below:

Name of community group or organisation:

Contact details {name and telephone number}

.....

Postal address:

Email:

Council Staff Member:.....

Date: