

Wanganui District Council's Governance Statement

Wanganui District Council's Role in Our Community Governance

Local Democracy

The Council's local democracy role underpins all its other roles. It must consider the diverse range of 'communities of interest' within the Wanganui District as it identifies, plans for and responds to issues. The Council's responses must be affordable and in line with its overall strategies to benefit the community. Wanganui District Council will work with residents and ratepayers so they become informed citizens who actively participate in a representative democracy.

Local Governance

Wanganui District Council will continue to build and maintain relationships with and between residents and other stakeholders with an interest in the Wanganui District community. The Council will identify the key issues that affect the community's well-being and respond to those issues through research, mediation, facilitation and advocacy (e.g. community development, economic development, environmental management, Iwi liaison). From the Council's relationships with stakeholders, it will establish partnerships that can address the issues facing its community. The Council's current priority is to stimulate economic growth.

Community Stewardship

Wanganui District Council will own, on behalf of the community, resources and facilities which the community believes are best managed by the Council (e.g. physical assets associated with the water supply, bequeathed assets such as Bason Botanic Gardens, Sarjeant Gallery).

Providing Public Goods

Wanganui District Council will provide facilities and services required by residents where there is no other adequate provider. Public goods are facilities and services that are available to benefit all residents (e.g. streetlights, roads and footpaths, parks and reserves).

Providing Individual Goods

Wanganui District Council will provide facilities and services for the private benefit of individuals where the community believes they are best provided by the Council (e.g. water).

Balancing Rights and Freedoms

Wanganui District Council will, when necessary, make and enforce bylaws and other regulations to maintain the good of the community. It will balance the rights, obligations and freedoms of the individual against those of other individuals, and against maintaining the overall community good.

In fulfilling its purpose Wanganui District Council exercises powers and fulfils responsibilities conferred on it by legislation.

Representation Arrangements

The Council is required to review its representation arrangements at least once every six years. This review must include the following:

- the number of elected members (within the legal requirement to have a minimum of six and a maximum of 30 members, including the Mayor)
- whether the elected members (other than the Mayor) shall be elected by the entire Wanganui District, or whether the District will be divided into wards for electoral purposes, or whether there will be a mix of 'at large' and 'ward' representation
- if election by wards is preferred, then the boundaries and names of those wards and the number of members that will represent each ward
- whether or not to have separate wards for electors on the Maori roll
- whether to have Community Boards and if so how many, their boundaries and membership and whether to subdivide a community for electoral purposes.

Wanganui District Council must follow the procedure set out in the Local Electoral Act 2001 when conducting this review, and should also follow guidelines published by the Local Government Commission. The Act gives everyone the right to make a written submission to the Council, and the right to be heard if wished.

Everyone also has the right to appeal any decisions on representation arrangements to the Local Government Commission. The Commission will make a binding decision on the appeal. Further details on the matters that the Wanganui District Council must consider in reviewing its membership and basis of election can be found in the Local Electoral Act 2001.

At its Ordinary meeting held on 11 August 2003, the Council resolved that the Representation Review be undertaken in 2006.

The Local Government Commission announced its decision on the Wanganui District Council's membership and ward arrangements for the 2007 local election on 5 April 2007.

The Commission's determination is:

Under section 19R of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Commission determines that for the general election of the Wanganui District Council to be held on 13 October 2007, the following representation arrangements shall apply –

- (1) Wanganui District as delineated on S.O. Plan 36047 deposited with Land Information New Zealand, shall not be divided into wards;
- (2) The Council shall comprise the mayor and 12 councillors, elected by the electors of the district as a whole;
- (3) There shall be a Wanganui Rural Community, comprising the area as delineated on S.O. Plan 386523 deposited with Land Information New Zealand;
- (4) The Wanganui Rural Community shall be divided into three subdivisions;
- (5) Those three subdivisions shall be –
 - (a) the Kai Iwi subdivision, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan 386526 deposited with Land Information New Zealand;
 - (b) the Whanganui subdivision, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan 396525 deposited with Land Information New Zealand; and
 - (c) the Kaitoke subdivision, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan 386524 deposited with Land Information New Zealand.

- (6) The Wanganui Rural Community Board shall comprise two members of the Council elected by the electors of the district as a whole and seven members elected by the electors of the subdivisions of the community, as follows –
- (a) three members elected by the electors of the Kai Iwi subdivision;
 - (b) two members elected by the electors of the Whanganui subdivision; and
 - (c) two members elected by the electors of the Kaitoke subdivision.

As required by sections 19T(b) and 19W(c) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the boundaries of the above subdivisions coincide with the boundaries of current statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for Parliamentary electoral purposes.

The Re-organisation Process

The Local Government Act 2002 sets out procedures which must be followed during proposals to:

- make changes to the boundaries of the Wanganui District
- create a new district
- create a unitary authority, i.e. transfer all of the functions of the Regional Council to Wanganui District Council
- transfer a particular function or functions to another council.

The procedures for resolving each type of proposal are slightly different. In general they begin with a proposal either from the local authority, the Minister of Local Government, or by a petition signed by ten per cent of electors.

Proposals for a boundary alteration or transfer of functions from one local authority to another will be considered by one of the affected local authorities, or by the Local Government Commission if the local authorities refer the proposal to the Commission or if they cannot agree on which of them should deal with the matter. Proposals for the establishment of a new district or for the creation of a unitary authority will be dealt with by the Commission. These proposals cannot be implemented without a poll of electors.

Further information on these requirements can be found in the Local Government Act 2002. The Local Government Commission has also prepared guidelines on procedures for local government re-organisation.

Electoral Systems

Wanganui District Council currently operates its elections under the 'First Past The Post' electoral system. This form of voting is used in parliamentary elections to elect Members of Parliament to constituency seats. Electors vote by indicating their preferred candidate(s), and the candidate(s) that receives the most votes is declared the winner regardless of the proportion of votes that candidate(s) obtained.

The other option permitted under the Local Electoral Act 2001 is the Single Transferable Vote system (STV). This system is used in Whanganui District Health Board elections. Electors rank

candidates in order of preference. The number of votes required for a candidate to be elected (called the quota) depends on the number of positions to be filled and the number of valid votes. The necessary number of candidates to fill all vacancies is achieved first by the counting of first preferences then by a transfer of a proportion of votes received by any candidate where the number of votes for that candidate is in excess of the quota, and then by the exclusion of the lowest polling candidates and the transfer of these votes in accordance with voters' second preferences.

Under the Local Electoral Act 2001 the Council can resolve to change the electoral system to be used at the next two elections or conduct a binding poll on the question, or electors can demand a binding poll. A poll can be initiated by at least five per cent of electors signing a petition demanding that a poll be held. Once changed, an electoral system must be used for at least the next two triennial general elections, i.e. the Council cannot change its electoral system for one election and then change back for the next election.

Wanganui District Council resolved at its meeting held on 8 August 2005:

That the electoral system used for the last Triennial Election (namely the First Past the Post system) shall remain as the electoral system under which Triennial General Elections of the Council and its community boards (if any), and any associated election shall be held.

Roles and Conduct

The Mayor and the Councillors of the Wanganui District Council have the following roles:

- setting the policy direction of the Council
- monitoring the performance of the Council
- representing the interests of the Wanganui District. On election all members must make a declaration that they will perform their duties faithfully and impartially, and according to their best skill and judgment in the best interests of the Wanganui District.
- employing the Chief Executive (under the Local Government Act the local authority employs the Chief Executive, who in turn employs all other staff on its behalf).

The Mayor is elected by the Wanganui District as a whole, and as one of the elected members shares the same responsibilities as other members of Wanganui District Council. In addition the Mayor has the following roles:

- presiding member at Wanganui District Council meetings. The Mayor is responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of business during meetings (as determined in Standing Orders).
- advocate on behalf of the community. This role may involve promoting the community and representing its interests. Such advocacy will be most effective where it is carried out with the knowledge and support of the Council.
- ceremonial head of Wanganui District Council.
- providing leadership and feedback to other elected members on teamwork and chairing committees.

The Deputy Mayor is elected by the members of Wanganui District Council at the first meeting of the Council following the triennial elections. The Deputy Mayor exercises the same roles as other elected members. In addition, if the Mayor is absent or incapacitated, or if the office of Mayor is vacant, then the Deputy Mayor must perform all of the responsibilities and duties, and may exercise the powers of the Mayor (as summarised above). The Deputy Mayor may be removed from office by resolution of the Council.

The Council may create one or more committees of the Council. A **committee chairman** is responsible for presiding over meetings of the committee, ensuring that the committee acts within the powers delegated by the Council, and as set out in the Council's Delegations Register. A committee chairman may be removed from office by resolution of the Council.

The Chief Executive is appointed by the Council in accordance with section 42 and clauses 33 and 34 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Chief Executive implements and manages the Council's policies and objectives within the budgetary constraints established by the Council. The Chief Executive is the employer of staff, and negotiates the terms of employment for the staff, of the Wanganui District Council. Under section 42 of the Local Government Act 2002, the responsibilities of the Chief Executive are:

- implementing the decisions of the Council
- providing advice to members of the Council and Community Boards
- ensuring that all responsibilities, duties and powers delegated to the Chief Executive or to any person employed by the Wanganui District Council, or imposed or conferred by any Act, regulation or bylaw are properly performed or exercised
- ensuring the effective and efficient management of the activities of Wanganui District Council
- maintaining systems to enable effective planning and accurate reporting of the financial and service performance of the Council
- providing leadership for the staff of the Council.

Elected members have specific obligations as to their conduct in the following legislation:

- Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002, which includes obligations to act as a good employer in respect of the Chief Executive and to abide by the current Code of Conduct and Standing Orders
- the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 which regulates the conduct of elected members in situations where there is, or could be, a conflict of interest between their duties as an elected member and their financial interests (either direct or indirect)
- the Secret Commissions Act 1910, which prohibits elected members from accepting gifts or rewards which could be seen to sway them to perform their duties in a particular way
- the Crimes Act 1961 regarding the acceptance of gifts for acting in a certain way and the use of official information for private profit.
- All elected members are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct. Adopting such a code is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002. Once adopted such a code may only be amended by a 75 per cent or more vote of the Council. The Code of Conduct sets out the Council's understanding and expectations of how the Mayor and Councillors will relate to one another, to staff, to the media and to the general public in the course of their duties.

It also covers disclosure of information that is received by or is in the possession of elected members, and contains details of the sanctions that the Council may impose if an elected member breaches the code. Copies of the full Code of Conduct, adopted by resolution of the Wanganui District Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 3 November 2003 (reviewed at the Council's meeting held on 29 November 2004), may be obtained from the Governance Services Manager or from the Wanganui District Council's website: www.wanganui.govt.nz.

Governance Structures

The Council may review its committee structures. At the Council's meeting held on 25 February 2008, it resolved to adopt the following structure:

- Finance and Infrastructure Committee
- Community Development Committee
- Youth Committee (a Subcommittee of the Community Development Committee)
- Hearings Committee
- Wanganui District Councils' Forestry Joint Committee
- Wanganui Rural Community Board

The Wanganui District Council has a Council meeting at six-weekly intervals.

The Wanganui Rural Community Board has meetings at six-weekly intervals.

The Standing Committees and the Youth Committee meet at six-weekly intervals, but a meeting may be cancelled if there is no business to transact.

The Hearings Committee will meet only if there is a Resource Management Act (RMA) Resource Consent application, Liquor Licensing application, a Dangerous Dog Classification appeal or temporary road closure appeal to be heard.

A Hearings Committee meeting is scheduled six weekly but is subject to confirmation.

The Wanganui District Councils' Forestry Joint Committee meets as business requires.

All meetings are publicly notified in the Wanganui Chronicle (local newspaper), as required by the Council's Standing Orders. Therefore, any cancellation or postponement of any meeting is also publicly notified.

The Council may, from time to time, establish ad hoc committees, subcommittees and working parties to consider particular issues.

Details of these committees, including their terms of reference, membership and meeting agendas are published on the Wanganui District Council's website: www.wanganui.govt.nz.

Conduct of Meetings

The legal requirements for Council meetings are set down in the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

All Council and committee meetings must be open to the public unless there is reason to consider some item with the public excluded. Although meetings are open to the public, members of the public do not have speaking rights unless prior arrangements are made with the Chairman. The LGOIMA contains a list of the circumstances where the Council may consider items with the public excluded. These circumstances generally relate to protection of personal privacy, professionally privileged or commercially sensitive information, and the maintenance of public health, safety and order. The Council's agenda is a public document, although parts may be withheld if the above circumstances apply.

The Mayor or committee chairman is responsible for maintaining order at meetings and may, at his or her discretion, order the removal of any member of the public for disorderly conduct, or remove any member of the Council who does not comply with Standing Orders.

Minutes of meetings must be kept as evidence of the proceedings of the meeting. These must be made publicly available, subject to the provisions of the LGOIMA.

For an ordinary meeting of Wanganui District Council or one of its committees, at least 14 days notice of the time and place of the meeting must be given. Extraordinary meetings generally can be called with three working days notice.

During meetings the Mayor and Councillors must follow Standing Orders (a set of procedures for conducting meetings). The Council may suspend Standing Orders by a vote of not less than 75 per cent of the members present and voting. The Council has a Code of Conduct, a copy of which can be obtained from the Governance Services Manager or from the Council website: www.wanganui.govt.nz.

Wanganui District Council has adopted New Zealand Model Standing Orders for Meetings of Local Authorities and Community Boards — NZS 9202:2003 — incorporating Amendment No 1 — issued by Standards New Zealand. These were amended by Council resolution on 25 September 2006 to allow the presiding member at a Committee to have a deliberative vote; and in the case of an equality of votes, a casting vote. Copies can be purchased from Standards New Zealand, Private Bag 2439, Wellington 6020. Website: www.standards.co.nz .

Management Structures and Relationships

The Local Government Act 2002 requires Wanganui District Council to employ a Chief Executive whose responsibilities are to employ other staff on behalf of the Council, implement the Council's decisions and provide advice to the Council. Under the Local Government Act 2002 the Chief Executive is the only person who may lawfully give instructions to a staff member. Any complaint about individual staff members should, therefore, be directed to the Chief Executive, not to the Mayor or Councillors.

Requests for Official Information

Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) any person may request information from the Wanganui District Council. Any request for information is a request made under LGOIMA. It is not necessary to say the request is made under LGOIMA.

Once a request is made the Council must supply the information unless reason exists for withholding it. The LGOIMA allows information to be withheld if release of the information would:

- endanger the safety of any person
- prejudice maintenance of the law
- compromise the privacy of any person
- reveal confidential or commercially sensitive information
- cause offence to tikanga Maori
- disclose the location of waahi tapu
- prejudice public health or safety
- compromise legal professional privilege
- disadvantage Wanganui District Council while carrying out negotiations or commercial activities
- allow information to be used for improper gain or advantage.

Wanganui District Council must answer requests within 20 working days (although there are certain circumstances where this time-frame may be extended). The Council may charge for official information under guidelines set down by the Ministry of Justice.

Requesting Information

Members of the public wishing to obtain information in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, should address their request in writing to:

The Chief Executive
Wanganui District Council
PO Box 637
Wanganui

This will be delegated to the Manager who heads the activity that is responsible for the business which is the subject of the enquiry.

Any complaints relating to the release of information should be referred to either the Chief Executive or the Manager of the appropriate activity.

Petitions and Submissions

All petitions and submissions should be addressed to:

The Chief Executive
Wanganui District Council
PO Box 637
Wanganui

Iwi Consultation and Partnership

Consultation with Maori as Tangata Whenua is required by the Resource Management Act 1991 and is a consequence of the Treaty of Waitangi. The concept of partnership between the Crown and Iwi as understood in the Treaty is also relevant to Local Government.

Consultation with Maori in general and their involvement in decision-making is now a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002.

The Council's main initial means of consultation and partnership building was the Iwi Liaison Working Party – Te Roopu Whakakotahi, formed in 1992. This had three Iwi and three Council representatives who originally met monthly at alternate venues. The Iwi represented were Te Atihaunui-A-Paparangi and Nga Rauru. This body was formally wound up in November 2000 due to the developments detailed below.

Two major sub sections of Atihaunui-A-Paparangi now have formal relationships with the Council. These are Te Runanga O Tupoho and Te Runanga O TamaUpoko.

In May 1998 the Council and Te Runanga O TamaUpoko signed a relationship agreement and six-weekly meetings of TamaUpoko Link are now held. The Council and Te Runanga O Tupoho signed a relationship document in May 2000 and six-weekly meetings started in November 2000.

TamaUpoko Link and the Tupoho Working Party each have three Councillor representatives, four or five Iwi representatives and meetings are attended by relevant officers. All Councillors are welcome to attend these meetings. Tupoho Working Party meetings are open to the public and the confirmed minutes of all meetings are reported to the Community Development Committee.

The Council has less formal relationships with Nga Rauru, Ngati Apa and the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board. These may be formalised as the need arises. Iwi representatives are also directly involved with other Council activities such as the Wastewater Scheme, the Riverbank Stability Project.

In February 2001 the Council, Iwi and the Crown signed an agreement that Moutoa Gardens (known to Whanganui Iwi as Pakaitore) would be re-vested in the Crown and administered jointly. The Moutoa Gardens Historic Reserve Board consists of representatives of those three parties. The Council's representatives, (appointments to be confirmed by the Minister of Conservation), are Crs Barbara Bullock, Rana Waitai and Rangi Wills.

The Council has an ongoing Treaty of Waitangi awareness programme of 1½ days available to all staff and Councillors. This is now run once a year.

An extensive handbook of Council/Iwi information is available internally.

Consultation

Consultation and Decision Making

The prime purpose of consultation is to enable the effective participation of individuals and communities in the decision-making of their local authorities.

Consultation may be used in a number of circumstances and can be defined in terms of:

- Asking local people and other stakeholders for input, feedback and information about the Council's initiatives, projects, services and operations and responding accordingly;

- Researching the needs, priorities and attitudes of local people;
- Seeking the views of local people or special interest groups on specific issues or proposals;
- Involving local people in decisions that affect them.

Methods of Consultation

The method of consultation used will vary from issue to issue. The most effective method of consultation will depend on the issue and the parties involved. Methods of consultation may include:

- Community non-binding referenda.
- Polls
- Community Surveys – for gathering data from a large sample population.
- Public meetings – to canvass different points of views, an opportunity to hear and respond to other points of view, e.g. Community Outcomes meetings which are required to be undertaken every six years.
- Meetings with other key agencies – discussions with key individuals representing an organisation to allow greater two way dialogue.
- Focus Groups – small group of people (8 to 10) for in depth discussions.
- Working parties – key individuals working on a specific issue or proposal.
- Forums – key individuals from other like-minded agencies and used to coordinate effort.
- Hui – consultation with Maori and Iwi.
- Telephone/Hotline – ‘one on one’ discussions or submissions.
- On line – web, email or chat rooms for feedback, submissions or dialogue with specific audiences.
- Special Consultative Procedure.

Consultation with Partners

The Council has partnership agreements with Te Runanga O TamaUpoko, Te Runanga O Tupoho and the Police, and regular meetings are held as part of the relationship. The Council has also established special working relationships with UCOL and Whanganui District Health Board. Consultation processes will be based on the relationships established and the agreements with the representative groups.

Special Consultative Procedure

The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) makes it clear that the Council has a very broad responsibility to consult with all ‘stakeholders’ in its area.

The Act also sets certain consultation principles (Section 82) and a procedure that the Council must follow when making certain decisions (Sections 83-90). This procedure, the Special Consultative Procedure, is regarded as a minimum process.

The Special Consultative Procedure (SCP) consists of the following steps and is met by the Council in the following way:

- 1. Preparation of a statement of proposal and a summary.** The Council will prepare a Statement of Proposal, which includes a description of the proposed decision, course of action or options being considered. The statement will be distributed throughout the

community and be available for inspection at the Council's Customer Services Counter, Municipal Office Building, 101 Guyton Street, and other places as appropriate to the issue. The Council will also prepare a full and fair summary of the proposal which will be distributed as widely as the Council considers to be reasonably practicable. That statement will also be included on the agenda for the Council's meeting.

- 2.. **Public Notice.** The Council will publish a notice of the proposal in the local newspapers and on its web site. This public notice will include information on its consultation plans, how to obtain the Summary, how to access and inspect the Statement of Proposal and the submission period, including the deadline for written submissions.
3. **Receive Submissions.** The Council will acknowledge all written submissions and submitters may also be invited to make oral submissions. The Council will allow at least one month (from the date of the notice) for submissions, or longer if deemed necessary. A range of methods will be made available for making submissions, including in writing, via the web site, email, telephone 'hotline' or fax.
4. **Deliberate in Public.** All meetings where the Council deliberates on the proposal or hears submissions are open to the public (unless there is some reason to exclude the public sector under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA)). All submissions will be made available unless there is reason to withhold them under LGOIMA.
5. **Follow up.** A copy of the decision and a summary of the reasons will be provided to submitters.

By law, the Council shall follow the Special Consultative Procedure before it:

1. Adopts the 10-Year Plan or the Annual Plan.
2. Amends the 10-Year Plan.
3. Adopts, revokes, reviews or amends a bylaw.
4. Changes the mode of delivery for a significant activity (for example from the Council to a Council-Controlled Organisation or from a Council-Controlled Organisation to a private sector organisation) if that is not provided for in the 10-Year Plan.

The Council may use the Special Consultative Procedure under other legislation, and may use this procedure in other circumstances if it wishes to do so.

A significant activity in relation to any issue, proposal or decision, means one that has a high degree of significance. The Council is required to have a Policy on Determining Significance.

Policy on Determining Significance

Introduction

This policy on determining significance outlines the statutory requirements and Council's general approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions, and includes criteria and procedures the Council will use in assessing which issues, proposals, decisions and other matters are significant.

It also lists assets the Council considers to be strategic assets.

Statutory requirements

The Council is required to have a policy on significance under section 90 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Section 5 of the Act defines 'significant' and 'significance' as follows:

Significance, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision or other matter that concerns or is before a local authority, means the degree of importance of the issue proposal, decision or matter, as assessed by the local authority, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for:

- (a) the current and future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the district.
- (b) Any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by or interested in the issue, proposal, decision or matter.
- (c) The capacity of the local authority to perform its role, and the financial and non-financial costs of doing so.

Significant, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter has a high degree of significance.

In other words, **significance** means the degree of importance of a proposal or decision, which can range from insignificant to very significant. At some point on the continuum there will be proposals or decisions with a low degree of significance and those with a high degree of significance. A **significant** proposal or decision is one with a high degree of significance.

Rationale for the policy

The significance of a decision will help determine the appropriate nature, extent and degree of compliance required with the decision-making process set out in Part 6 of the Act.

Section 79 of the Act (compliance with procedures in relation to decisions) provides that it is the responsibility of the Council to make judgments about how to achieve compliance with sections 77 (requirements in relation to decisions) and 78 (community views in relation to decisions) that are largely in proportion to the significance of the matters affected by the decision. In making such judgments the Council must have regard to the significance of all relevant matters and the principles relating to local authorities, the Council's resources and the extent to which the nature of the decision and the circumstances allow consideration of a range of options or the views of other people.

In essence, the more significant the issue the higher the standard of compliance required.

Council decision-making processes must also promote compliance with the requirements of sections 80 (Identification of inconsistent decisions), 81 (Contributions to decision-making processes by Maori) and 82 (Consultation processes). For significant decisions, the Council must ensure appropriate compliance.

Inconsistent decisions

If a decision is significantly inconsistent with, or will have consequences significantly inconsistent with a plan or policy of the Council, the Council must, when making the decision, identify the inconsistency, give reasons for it and any intention of the Council to amend the policy or plan to accommodate the inconsistency (section 80).

Maori contributions to decision-making

The Council must provide opportunities for Maori to contribute to decision-making processes, consider ways to foster development of Maori capacity to contribute and provide relevant information (section 81).

Consultation and public information

The significance of a matter will guide the Council's decisions concerning the extent and nature of the consultation to be undertaken with the persons likely to be affected or interested in the decision or matter, and in determining the extent and detail of information to be provided by the Council when consulting with or reporting to the community.

The Council must comply with the principles of consultation set out in section 82 (Consultation processes) in such a manner that the Council considers, at its discretion, to be appropriate. In determining what is appropriate the Council must have regard to various matters including the nature and significance of the decision or matter to the wider community and those who may be more directly affected by the decision.

The principles of consultation (section 82) include the principle that persons interested in decisions should be provided with reasonable access to relevant information, and should be given clear information concerning the purpose of the consultation. In addition, persons who present views to the Council should be provided with information concerning both the relevant decision and the reasons for those decisions. In determining how to comply with these, and the other principles of consultation, the Council will take into account the nature and significance of the decision.

Inclusion in the 10-Year Plan and use of the special consultative procedure

Significance may also determine whether a decision on a matter must be explicitly included in the 10 Year Plan, and in a statement of proposal which has been considered under a special consultative procedure, before the decision can be made (section 97 Certain decisions to be taken only if provided for in 10 Year Plan).

This policy identifies the assets the Council considers to be strategic assets. Any decision to transfer ownership or control of a strategic asset, or a decision to construct, replace or abandon a strategic asset cannot be made unless it has first been included in the 10 Year Plan, and in a statement of proposal relating to the 10 Year Plan. All such actions relating to a strategic asset are automatically significant and must meet the requirements relating to significant decisions. Significant decisions also include:

- Significantly altering the intended level of service for any significant activity (section 97).
- Significantly affecting the capacity of, or cost to, the local authority (section 97).
- Altering the mode by which a significant activity is undertaken (section 88).

General Approach

The Council will consider each proposal or decision on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the proposal or decision is significant. In determining this issue, the Council will apply the criteria and procedures set out in this policy and will also consider each of the following:

- The likely impact/consequences of the decision or proposal on the current and future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community.
- The parties who are likely to be particularly affected by or interested in the decision or proposal.
- The likely impact/consequences of the decision or proposal from the perspective of those parties.
- The financial and non-financial costs and implications of the decision or proposal having regard to the Council's capacity to perform its role.

The more significant or material the impact or consequences of the decision or proposal, the higher the standard of compliance required with Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002, and the more likely the matter will be 'significant'.

It is helpful to bear in mind that the references to 'significance' in the Act are intended to ensure that appropriate attention and consideration is given to matters based on their relative importance to the district or region.

The Council will not make a decision or proceed with a proposal which it considers to be significant, unless it is first satisfied that sections 77 (Requirements in relation to decisions), 78 (Community views in relation to decisions), 80 (identification of inconsistent decisions), 81 (Contributions to decision-making by Maori) and 82 (Consultation processes) of the Act have been appropriately observed. The procedures below are designed to ensure observance of this policy.

Prior to delegating a decision on any specific matter to officers or committees, the Council as a whole will consider the significance of the matter being delegated.

Thresholds

Council has not set any thresholds for significance. Whether a matter is significant does not depend on any one factor. It is possible for a transaction of \$10,000 to be significant while a transaction of \$1,000,000 may not be significant. The factors that will affect significance are listed below. Decisions on significance will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Criteria

In considering whether any decision has a high degree of significance the Council will consider whether:

1. The impact or consequences of the decision or proposal on the affected persons (being a number of persons) will be substantial.
2. The decision or proposal affects all or a large portion of the community in a way that is not inconsequential.

3. The decision or proposal is inconsistent or largely inconsistent with existing documented policies and plans.
4. The impact or consequences of the decision will damage relationships with Maori.
5. The impact or consequences of the decision will have a more than minor adverse effect the quality of the environment.
6. The community has deeply divided views on the matter and the decision will generate a high degree of controversy.

Procedures

Every report to Council must include a statement indicating that the issue of significance has been considered, with a recommendation to Council assessing the significance of the proposal or decision. If the decision changes from that recommended, the Council must reconsider the significance of the amended decision. The statement should state 'In terms of the Policy on determining significance, the recommended decision is significant/not significant'. Note, the word 'recommended' will be removed when the decision becomes a Council resolution.

If the proposal or decision is determined to be significant in terms of the criteria stated in this policy, the report will also include a statement addressing the appropriate observance of such sections 77 (Requirements in relation to decisions), 78 (Community views in relation to decisions), 80 (identification of inconsistent decisions), 81 (Contributions to decision-making by Maori) and 82 (Consultation processes) as are applicable.

Note: Before considering the application of the criteria it should be checked that the issue has not already been included in the 10 Year Plan or the significant decision has already been subject to a Council resolution or covered by an existing Council policy or plan.

Strategic assets

Section 5 of the Act defines "strategic asset" as follows:

Strategic asset, in relation to the assets held by a local authority, means an asset or group of assets that the local authority needs to retain if the local authority is to maintain the local authority's capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that the local authority determines to be important to the current or future well-being of the community, and includes –

- a) any asset or group of assets listed in accordance with section 90(2) by the local authority; and
- b) any land or building owned by the local authority and required to maintain the local authority's capacity to provide affordable housing as part of its social policy; and
- c) any equity securities held by the local authority in
 - i. a port company within the meaning of the Port Companies Act 1988:
 - ii. an airport company within the meaning of the Airport Authorities Act 1966.

For the purpose of section 90(2) of the Act, the Council considers the following assets to be strategic assets:

Activity/Group of Activities	Asset
Community facilities	All cemeteries Portfolio of reserves and land used for parks, gardens, sports fields and recreational areas as a whole Network of street trees but no individual tree Portfolio of community recreational and leisure facilities as a whole
Cultural facilities	Information archives Sarjeant Gallery collections as a whole The library collections as a whole
Pensioner housing	The portfolio of pensioner housing but not any specific units
Wanganui Airport	The airport encompassing an asphalt runway and terminal building
Investments	Majority shareholding in Wanganui District Council Holdings Ltd The entire forestry asset but not individual forestry stands or sections of land
Roading	Roading network as a whole but not any specific part of the network
Sewerage and stormwater services	Sewerage and stormwater networks as a whole but not any specific part of the network
Water supply	Water supply and reticulation system as a whole but not any specific part of the network

‘Significant’ and ‘significance’ in other contexts

The Local Government Act 2002 uses the term significant and significance in a number of contexts. Unless it is inappropriate in the context, the criteria set out in this policy and in the statutory definitions will apply.

