

Central Hawke's Bay District Council	POLICY MANUAL	
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SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY	Approved by:	Council
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	Page:	Page 1 of 4

1.0 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's approach to determining the significance of matters on which it makes decisions, and to broadly guide the decision making and engagement approach to be undertaken, proportionate to the significance of the issue.

2.0 Determining the Degree of Significance

Significance is a continuum ranging from very low degrees of significance (**not important**) to very high degrees of significance (**very important or critical**).

The further along the continuum the more likely a matter will become "**Significant**" and that will influence the approach the Council undertakes in engaging with the community and obtaining community views.

Three key considerations in determining the degree of significance are:

(A) STRATEGIC ASSETS

The Central Hawke's Bay District Council owns a number of assets and assets managed "as a whole" that it considers to be strategic, however not all trading decisions made regarding these assets are regarded as significant nor do they affect the assets strategic nature.

The following assets (asset groups) are considered strategic and therefore significant:

- Infrastructural assets relating to roads, water, stormwater, and wastewater
- The network of parks, sports grounds and other recreational facilities
- The districts aquatic facilities, including the Waipawa Memorial Pool
- Solid waste facilities, including transfer stations and the Farm Road Landfill
- Retirement Housing, as a whole
- CHB District Libraries, as a whole
- Cemeteries
- Cultural facilities

(B) FINANCIAL THRESHOLDS

A decision will be deemed significant if:

- It incurs operational expenditure exceeding 5.0% of the Council's consolidated annual operating budget for that year.
- Incurs new capital expenditure on any one proposal in the first three years of the Council's plan, exceeding 10% of Council's consolidated annual capital budget for that year.

(C) OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In considering whether any issue, proposal, decision or other matter is of significance under this policy Council will also be guided by the following criteria:

- The number of people affected and the extent of the consequence;
- The financial implication on the Council's overall resources will be substantial;
- The level of public interest;
- Reversibility, how easily a decision can be undone;
- The consistency of the matter with existing Council policy, plans and documents;
- A decision to significantly alter the intended service level for any significant activity;
- Any transfer of ownership or control, or the disposal or abandonment of a strategic asset as a whole as defined by this policy.

Each of these criteria will be assessed to form a general understanding of the degree of significance and importance of the decision. A single criterion in isolation is not necessarily determinative of significance.

3.0 Linking Decision Making and Engagement

The degree of significance and importance of the decision will guide the Council as to the approach it takes in making the decision and obtaining community views in respect of the decision.

Proposals which are assessed at the higher end of the continuum of significance will require a more in-depth decision making process e.g. more in-depth analysis and if necessary a greater level of engagement and opportunity for the community to put forward their views.

The type of community engagement undertaken will be proportionate to the significance of the matter and the number of affected residents. This is a judgement to be made on a case by case basis by the Council.

The Council will have regard to the consultation spectrum below to determine its engagement approach and will:

- Recognise that different levels of participation are appropriate for different issues and different members of the community;
- Consider which level(s) of participation to use, on a case-by-case basis;
- Make it clear which levels of participation we are using, and why;
- Seek the appropriate degree of community input;
- Use the level of inform as a minimum standard in all our consultations.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Inform Ask Involve Collaborate Empower



Increasing community involvement in and impact on decision-making

(See Appendix (A) for a broad list of the types of engagement methods)

4.0 Significant Decisions

For significant matters (which do not require the use of the Special Consultative Procedure) the Council will broadly undertake the following steps:

- Seek preliminary community views prior to formulating a proposal for formal feedback where practicable;

- Undertake targeted engagement where directly affected parties are identified;
- Put in appropriate processes to hear community views
- Inform the affected community of the decision

Significant decisions in relation to land or a body of water must take into account the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

5.0 Procedures to Ensure Compliance

All reports by officers to Council seeking a decision will include a statement addressing the issue of significance. ***If the proposal is considered to be significant:***

- (1) The report is to include a statement about how the relevant sections of the Local Government Act 2002 and the Significance and Engagement policy will be observed,
- (2) The proposal will generally be subject to peer review, in a manner determined by the Council.

If the proposal is not significant, but has a high degree of significance, (1) above also applies.

6.0 Guiding principles

The principles of consultation (Section 82) as set out within the Local Government Act 2002 will guide Councils approach.

Notes:

- *This policy will not apply where, in the opinion of the Council, failure to make a decision urgently would result in unreasonable or significant damage to property, or risk to people's health and safety, or the loss of a substantial opportunity to achieve the Council's strategic objectives. Other policy and legislative requirements will still apply.*
- *In cases where legislation requires the Council to use the Special Consultative Procedure as set out in the Local Government Act 2002, that process will be used as a minimum requirement.*

APPENDIX A - EXAMPLES OF ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Levels of Participation	This means:	Examples:
Inform	Providing clear, balanced information to assist citizens to understand problems and issues, as well as the options, alternatives and solutions considered, along with communicating the Council's performance. This level is likely to be used once a decision has been taken.	Annual Report Educational material CHB Banter Website
Ask	Seeking feedback from the community, including views on the relevant issues, opportunities and different options; then throughout the process keeping the community informed, listening and acknowledging concern, and providing feedback on how their input influenced the decision. This level may be used where there may be diverse interests/ views that the Council needs to find out and weigh up before making a decision.	Special Consultative Procedure Submissions Feedback forms Surveys Other research
Involve	Working with the community throughout the decision-making process to ensure their issues and concerns are identified, understood and considered. This level may be used where it is likely that there is a consensus view or a single community is affected.	Public seminars and workshops Working Parties Collaborative Design Processes
Collaborate	Partnering with the community in each aspect of the decision, including developing alternatives and choosing solutions. This level may be used where decisions are truly shared between the Council and the community or where it is not just Council's resources that are involved. The Council will not own the decision alone, and will be a joint participant in a broader process or partnership.	Joint Committee Community Plans Trusts
Empower	Placing final decision-making in the hands of the community. This level may be used where implementing the decision is a community responsibility, and Council wishes to provide assistance e.g. by providing resources etc.	Council elections Referendum

NOTE: The table above represents examples of the types of engagement tools the Council may apply depending on the level of community participation sought. This list is not definitive and not intended as a mandatory requirement.