

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| First adopted: | <i>1 December 2014</i> <i>Amended 2016</i> <i>Amended 2022</i> |
| Next review date: | <i>1 July 2024</i> |
| Document number: | <i>A3137888</i> |
| Sponsor/Group: | <i>Group Manager: Finance & Strategy</i> |

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose and Scope

1. To enable Council and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions and activities.
2. To provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions made by Council.
3. To inform Council from the beginning of a decision-making process about the extent, form and type of engagement required.

Revocations

4. The Taupō District Council Significance and Engagement Policy 2014 is revoked when this policy comes into force on 1 October 2022.

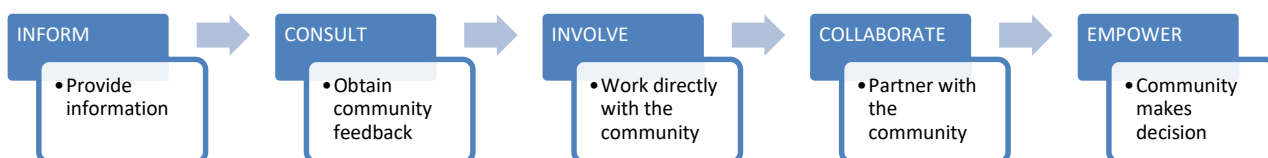
Definitions

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| The Act | The Local Government Act 2002. |
| Decisions | Refers to all decisions made by or on behalf of Council including those made by officers under delegation. (Management decisions made by officers under delegation during the implementation of council decisions will not be deemed to be significant). |
| Engagement | A term used to describe the process of providing and seeking information and feedback from the community to inform and assist decision making. |
| 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, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the current and future social, economic, environmental, or cultural well-being of the district or region; (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 other 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 |
| 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 |

Background

5. Council is committed to the principles of inclusive localism. Localism is about giving voice, choice, and control to our communities; with the goal of enabling local solutions and providing the conditions for our local communities to thrive
6. Community engagement is central to legitimate localism as it allows Council to have meaningful discussions with our community on challenging matters and how best to resolve them.
7. This policy sets out the engagement and decision-making principles we will follow, our statutory consultation requirements, and how we will go about determining the significance of a matter.
8. Council makes decisions about a wide range of matters and most will have a degree of importance, but not all issues will be considered to be “significant”. The appropriate level of engagement on a matter will correspond to its level of significance.
9. The greater the importance of a matter, the more robust the level of analysis and engagement required. However, in situations where there is a high level of import and urgency it may not be possible to engage extensively with the community other than to inform them of the decision.
10. Before starting, all Council projects will be assessed in line with the provisions of this policy so as to determine their significance and the appropriate form of community engagement required.
11. Our public engagement will be in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of public participation.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Determining significant decisions or proposals

12. Council decisions are **considered to be significant** if they:
 - a. Have a high degree of significance (based on an assessment of the factors set out in **Clause 15** below); or
 - b. Substantially affect Council’s ability to deliver a key activity as identified in the Long-term Plan; or
 - c. Result in the transfer of ownership or control of a strategic asset as defined by the Act or listed in this policy (see Schedule 1); or
 - d. Require the sale of Council’s shareholding in any council-controlled trading organisation or council-controlled organisation.
13. If a matter is identified as being significant, it will then be assessed against the requirements of section 77 to 82 of the Act. Those sections describe the decision-making process that Council must go through and the principles of consultation.

14. When Council makes a decision that is significantly inconsistent with this policy, the steps identified in section 80 of the Act will be undertaken.
15. When determining the significance of a matter, the following criteria will be applied. The criteria are of equal weight and will be considered as a whole, not in isolation.

Table 1 Factors that determine significance

| Criteria | Level of significance | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | None | Low | Moderate | High |
| What are the financial consequences to Council? | No additional costs | An unplanned for expense but <u>less than</u> \$50,000 OpEx or \$200,000 CapEx | An unplanned for expense but <u>less than</u> \$200,000 OpEx or \$2,000,000 CapEx | An unplanned for expense <u>over</u> \$200,000 OpEx or \$2,000,000 CapEx |
| Are many people, organisations or businesses affected? | Only a small number of individuals | Not many, such as the people in a street or a neighbourhood | There are specific parts of the community affected, such as all of a suburb | It impacts multiple suburbs, most of the community, or has major impacts for specific parts of the community |
| Will additional funding from the community be required? | No additional costs | An additional minimal cost to service users | An additional minimal cost to all of the community | An additional moderate or high cost to service users or the community |
| Will there be a diversion of already committed resources? | No | Limited diversion of resources that may result in minor delays to project delivery or a temporary interruption to service delivery | Some diversion of resources that may result in project delivery delays of up to 12 months or longer-term service delivery delays | Substantial diversion of resources that may result in project delivery delays of more than 12 months or a cessation of a service |
| Has there been recent community engagement? | There has been engagement within the last 3 years | There has been engagement, but it has been longer than 3 years | There has been engagement, but the circumstances have changed | There has been engagement but the scope, budget and/or circumstances have changed |

Engagement

16. Council engages with the community for a wide range of reasons and on a number of levels including as customers, citizens, ratepayers, subject matter experts and as partners. For relatively minor issues Council may simply inform the community of the decisions that have been made. At the other end of the spectrum there may be issues when Council wants to collaborate with communities and empower them to make decisions.

17. As well as carrying out consultation on certain decisions, we will seek to establish ongoing relationships with our communities to provide opportunities for matters to be raised which are not currently under consultation.
18. Council will use the Special Consultative Procedure (as set out in section 83 of the Act) where required to do so by law. There are also other pieces of legislation like the Resource Management Act 1991 and Reserves Act 1977, which have their own engagement requirements.

Engagement with Māori

19. Council has specific legal requirements with regards to engaging with Māori some of which are derived from treaty settlement processes, as well as Joint Management Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding or any other similar high-level agreements. These will be considered as a starting point when engaging with Māori.
20. Council also has other duties, obligations, and commitments to Māori and iwi authorities. Where appropriate, these guide our decision-making including on matters of significance and our engagement approach.
21. TDC is committed to meeting its statutory Tiriti O Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi obligations and acknowledges partnership as being the basis of Te Tiriti. This requires both parties to treat and work with each other in good faith and show good will to reflect the partnership relationship
22. Our duties, obligations, and commitments are to:
 - protect Māori rights and interests within Taupō district
 - give effect to the Treaty principles
 - enable Māori participation in Council's decision-making processes
 - recognise Māori values and perspectives including (but not restricted to) mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems), tikanga (Māori customary protocols and practice) and kaitiakitanga (stewardship)
 - contribute to building capacity for Māori to participate in decision making
 - work with and take into account the advice of Māori and iwi authorities, ensuring that their input is reflected in Council's strategies, policies, and plans, and on other matters.
 - work in partnership with iwi and hapū to give effect to Treaty Settlement legislation and any provisions that result from these.
23. In addition to meeting our statutory requirements, we aspire to give effect to the principles of meaningful partnership in working with Māori; as they are best placed to express and advocate for their aspirations, interests, and values.

Methods for Engagement

24. Council will seek opportunities to engage with the community. However, the type and nature of the decision will also guide how we will go about communicating with and engaging with the community. Table 2 below illustrates the various levels of engagement that may accompany a matter.
25. The Project Planning and Engagement table below illustrates when and how we will engage with the community during a project cycle

Table 2 Levels and forms of engagement

| Types of Engagement | Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower | No engagement |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Explanation | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. (One-way communication flow) | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions (Two-way conversation flow and feedback to the public on how their input was used - if used) | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. (Two-way conversation flow and public input directly influenced in alternatives being considered) | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. (Active and iterative engagement with the public) | To place final decision-making power in the hands of the public (and implement the public's wishes) | Circumstances in which engagement is not undertaken |
| Tools of Engagement | Social media; Community newsletters; Letters; Council website; local newspapers; fliers; notice boards, radio | Open days; Surveys and Focus groups; 'graffiti' walls; drop-in sessions | Formal submissions; Community workshops; Focus groups; Hui | Co-design / co-drafting; Charettes; Discussion with iwi authorities | Referendums; Polls | |
| Examples of when we might use this level of engagement | Changes to schedules; Renewing a pipe; Laying new seal; Changing streetlights; Sewage spills; Project updates; Updates on governance decisions that don't require a formal public consultation | Pre-engagement surveys; Informal feedback with stakeholders; | Developing new policies, plans or bylaws; Providing a new service or extending infrastructure networks; Developing the Long-term Plan; Playground design; Roading design | District Plan Review; Building a new museum | Joint Management Agreements | Bid analysis; Choosing contractors; Routine operational decisions; Confidential matters; Matters of high urgency; Matters engaged on within the last 3 years; Matters covered by other adopted plans |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|----------------------|---|
| | | | | | | or policies; Staff remuneration decisions |
| Timing of Engagement (refer to planning table above) | After preferred option is chosen but before implementation | Understanding issues and options identification | Understanding issues - options identification - cost benefit analysis of the options | Understanding issues - options identification - cost benefit analysis of the options - choosing a preferred option | Whole planning cycle | |

Table 3. The timing of engagement in the planning cycle

| | 1. Identify the problem or issue | 2. Explore options / solutions | 3. Do a cost vs. benefits analysis | 4. Select the preferred option | 5. Implement intervention / notify decision or outcome |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Empower | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Collaborate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Involve | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Consult | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Inform | | | | | ✓ |

SCHEDULE 1– STRATEGIC ASSETS

Section 5 of the Local Government Act defines a strategic asset as:

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 76AA(3) 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*

The following is a list of assets or group of assets that the Council needs to retain if it is to maintain its capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that it determines to be important to the current or future well-being of the community.

- A. Assets the council owns that are defined as strategic assets under section 5 of the LGA are:
 - shares in Taupō Airport
 - the council's pensioner housing network.

- B. The council has also determined the following to be strategic assets given they are critical to deliver services:
 - roading and footpath assets
 - the public transport network
 - the water supply, wastewater, and stormwater networks
 - the network of parks and open spaces
 - the community facilities network
 - cemeteries
 - the heritage and general library collections
 - the network of stadiums and venues
 - Taupō museum, including the associated art and heritage collection.