

Policy on Significance

The intent of this policy is to enable Council to undertake its day to day operating activities in an efficient and effective manner.

Council will take into consideration the following.

- (a) The current and future social, economic, environmental or cultural well-being of the district.
- (b) The impact of the decision on Council's strategic direction as outlined in the Long-Term Council Community Plan.
- (c) The impact of the decision on individual communities and the appropriate community plan.
- (d) The public interest (both historical and current) in relation to decisions concerning this issue.
- (e) The financial consequence of the issue. An issue which has a direct annual financial consequence of more than 7.5% of total operating expenditure (including internal charges) would be regarded as significant.

Criteria

The following are the criteria for assessing the significance of an issue.

- (a) Whether the asset is a strategic asset within the meaning of the Local Government Act or listed in this policy.
- (b) The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the level of service in carrying out any significant activity.
- (c) The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the way in which any significant activity is carried out.
- (d) The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the capacity of the Council to provide any significant service or carry out any significant activity.
- (e) The assets being considered must be owned by Waikato District Council.

Thresholds

The following are the thresholds which Council will use to determine the significance of issues.

- (a) Any one project with an expenditure of more than 7.5% of total operating expenditure (including internal charges) in any financial year.
- (b) Any transfer to or from Council of ownership or control, of an asset at a value greater than 7.5% of total operating expenditure (including internal charges).
- (c) The sale of more than 40% of the Council's shareholding in Tanlaw;
- (d) Entry into any partnership with the private sector to carry out an entire activity (as defined in the Revenue and Financing Policy) which has an annual operating expenditure of more than 7.5% of total operating expenditure (including internal charges).
- (e) Strategic decisions concern the whole asset class and not individual components.
- (f) Exemptions from these thresholds will be:
 - any land and buildings in fee simple (freehold title)
 - any emergency works whatsoever such as natural disasters
 - Roading maintenance contracts (including reseals).

Processes

The decision to determine whether or not a project or issue

is significant will be decided by Council through reports to either committee meetings or Council directly. All Council reports from 1 July 2003 onwards will include a paragraph indicating whether or not the issue is of significance.

In terms of the Local Government Act, the following assets are considered to be strategic.

- (a) The Roading network and associated infrastructure.
- (b) Parks and Reserves, associated buildings (excluding community halls), and infrastructure.
- (c) Water supply schemes.
- (d) Wastewater schemes.
- (e) Urban stormwater schemes.
- (f) Housing for the Elderly units.
- (g) Raglan wharf and Raglan Harbour endowment properties.
- (h) 40% or more of the shareholding in Tanlaw Corporation.
- (i) Shareholding in Waikato Regional Airport Limited.
- (j) Libraries network.

Council's shareholding in Waikato Regional Airport Limited and its involvement in Housing for the Elderly units are defined by the Act to be strategic assets.

Involving Maori in Decision-Making

Identify the Maori stakeholder groups in the district and develop a database for regular supply of information and engagement. This would include:

- all Marae
- management groups used extensively for provisions under the Resource Management Act (RMA)
- Waikato Raupatu Trustee Company
- individuals who request to be placed on Council's 'supply of information' list
- key individuals in the district with knowledge on specific issues.

Identify the key issues of particular interest to Maori that would include:

- LTCCP and Annual Plan
- Annual Report
- District Plan and associated documents
- issues of possible significance to Maori
- key policy papers that have the intent of changing the Council's direction or operations.

Build on the existing good quality relationships that have been established, including:

- regular Marae visits
- open invitation to meet with the Maori Liaison Committee, His Worship the Mayor, Council representatives
- supplying information to key stakeholders on a regular and timely basis
- continue to encourage the dialogue that has been established with RMA relationships.

Identify a draft annual timetable of documents that Council would wish to have engagement with Maori and deliver it to the stakeholders so as to give adequate advice of upcoming processes.

Develop a bi-annual newsletter to key stakeholders (prepared in Maori and English) to keep Maori informed of current issues. This would be additional to Council's newsletter, The Link, which is distributed six times per year.

Sponsor seminars and hui with keynote speakers on Maori issues to better inform the wider Waikato District community.