

8.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Date Adopted	Next Review	Officer Responsible
28 June 2021	30 June 2024	DCE, District Leadership & Democracy

Pūtake / Policy Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Enable Council to assess how significant particular issues, proposals, assets, and activities are and, the level of community engagement that is required once the degree of significance is known.
- Make it clear about when the Council will engage and how it may engage, so that significant decisions can be made alongside the community.
- Provide a guide that outlines the engagement principles that will be followed when engaging with the community.

Kaupapa here / Policy:

1. Whakamāramatanga / Definitions:

Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Includes key stakeholders, interested parties, and affected people, families, neighbourhoods, groups, marae, Hapū and Iwi, organisations and businesses
Decisions	Refers to all decisions made by or on behalf of council including those made by officers under delegation
Engagement	In terms of this policy, engagement is a term used to describe the process of involving the community in council decisions. Engagement occurs along a continuum from informing (the most passive form of engagement for the community) through to empowering (the most active form of engagement for the community).
Significant and Significance	The Local Government Act (LGA 2002) defines the terms “significant” and “significance”. Significance means the degree of importance of the issue, proposal, decision, or matter, as assessed by council, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for the district; any people who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision, or matter; and, the capacity of council to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so. Significant means that the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter

	has a high degree of significance.
Strategic asset	The LGA 2002 defines strategic assets as an asset or group of assets that council needs to retain if council is to maintain council's capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that council determines to be important to the current or future wellbeing of the community. A list of the strategic assets of the council is contained in Schedule 1 of this policy. For the purposes of this policy, council considers its strategic assets as a whole.

2. Whakahirahiratanga / Significance

Procedures for assessing significance

In general, the significance of an issue lies somewhere on a continuum from low to high. Council has identified the following criteria to assess the degree of significance:

- Importance to Rotorua District
- Importance to Te Arawa
- Community interest
- Consistency with existing policy and strategy
- Impact on Council's capacity and capability (including costs)

The factors relevant to assessing against these criteria are set out in Appendix 1.

Other criteria that can be taken into account are:

- Reversibility of the decision (the more difficult to be undone generally the higher the significance)
- Degree of impact on affected individuals and groups (assessing the consequences of the decision)
- Impact on the Levels of Service/rates or debt (the greater the impact the higher the likelihood that the proposal will be significant)
- Involvement of a strategic asset in the decision. (should the decision involve a strategic asset/group of assets, it is more than likely to have a higher degree of significance attached to it).

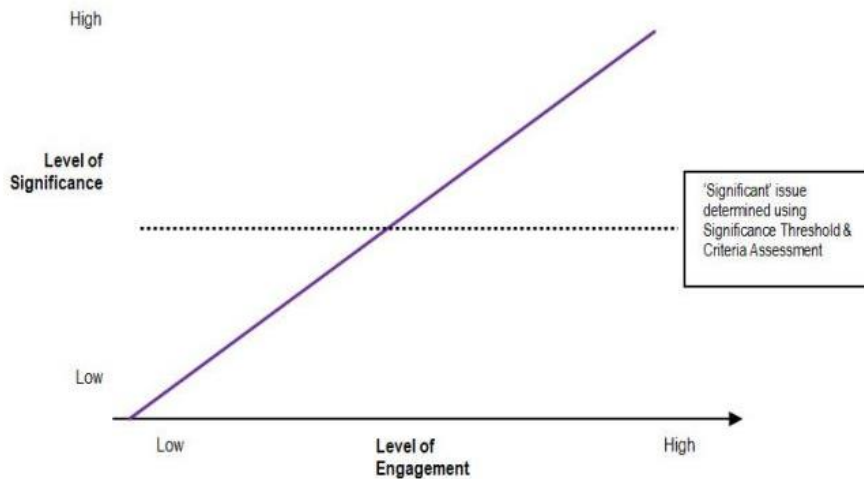
When a high degree of significance is indicated by two or more criteria, the issue is likely to be significant. The criteria merely provides a mechanism for identifying whether a matter is likely to be significant – they are not necessarily determinative of significance. Ultimately, in assessing the significance of a decision, Council will need to have regard to all relevant circumstances.

3. Tūtakitakitanga / Engagement

3.1 How the Council will determine the level of community engagement?

The Council will give consideration to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or to have an interest in, the matter, for all decisions. However, the level of community engagement that is directly undertaken will vary, depending on the level of significance attached to the matter.

In general, the more significant an issue, the greater the need for, and level of, community engagement. If the matter is considered significant, under this policy, then the Council may carry out a consultation process. (See Council's Community Engagement toolkit for examples and guidance on engagement methods.



3.2 When the council will engage

- a) When legislation requires that consultation or engagement be undertaken
- b) When a significant proposal or decision is being considered
- c) For some matters that do not trigger significance however are considered to have a greater level of interest from within the community.

3.3 When the council may not formally engage

- a) When, 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.
- d) When physical alterations to strategic assets are required to:
 - i. Prevent an immediate hazardous situation arising
 - ii. Repair an asset to ensure public health and safety due to damage from an emergency or unforeseen situation.

3.4 How will council engage?

Where the Council undertakes community engagement, the level of engagement, and the tools and techniques to be applied, will be tailored to the nature and significance of the matter being considered and to the target audience, notwithstanding legislative requirements.

There are a variety of tools and techniques that the Council may apply when undertaking community engagement.

In carrying out consultation the Council will be cognisant of the requirements of section 82 and 82A of the LGA 2002

The Council will use the SCP (as set out in section 83 of the LGA 2002) where required to do so by law.

3.5 Engagement principles

Council will underpin all its engagement efforts with best practice principles. Council will use as a reference the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum and decision-orientation approach as the foundation for its engagement. The spectrum will help Council to decide what type of

engagement is required to match the degree of significance of the matter at hand and enable decisions to be made. The principles also set out what community, can expect from council, while allowing for some flexibility regarding the forms that engagement may take. These principles align with LGA 2002 principles, ensuring we meet our statutory responsibilities in this regard.

Appendix 1 – Factors and criterion of determining and assessing significance

Appendix 2 – Strategic assets/ activities

Appendix 3 – IAP2 spectrum

Appendix 4 – Engagement principles

Appendix 1 – Factors and criterion of assessing significance

Criterion	<p>Importance to Rotorua District</p> <p>The extent to which the matter under consideration impacts on the environment, culture and people of Rotorua, now and in the future (Large impacts would indicate high significance).</p>
Factors	<p>Factors that might impact on community well-being are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any decision that would significantly alter the level of service provided by Council of a significant activity (including a decision to commence or cease such an activity). • Extent of costs, opportunity costs, externalities and subsidies. • Uncertainty, irreversibility, and the impact of the decision in terms of the community’s sustainability and resilience.
<p>High Degree of Significance Low</p> <p>← Large Impact Little Impact →</p>	

Criterion	<p>Importance to Te Arawa</p> <p>The extent to which the matter under consideration impacts on the environment, culture and people of Te Arawa, now and in the future (Large impacts would indicate high significance).</p>
Factors	<p>Factors that would indicate a high degree of significance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of prior public interest or the potential to generate interest or controversy. • Large divisions in views on the matter. • Extent of costs, opportunity costs, externalities and subsidies. • Uncertainty, irreversibility, and the impact of the decision in terms of Te Arawa’s community’s sustainability and resilience.
<p>High Degree of Significance Low</p> <p>← Large Impact Little Impact →</p>	

Criterion	<p>Consistency with Existing Policies and Strategies</p> <p>The extent to which the matter is consistent with Council’s current policies and strategies.</p>
Factors	<p>Factors that would indicate a high level of significance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions which are substantially inconsistent with current policies and strategies.
<p>High Degree of Significance Low</p> <p>← Inconsistent with other strategies and policies Well within other strategies and policies →</p>	

Criterion	<p>Community Interest</p> <p>The extent to which individuals, organisations, groups and sectors within the community are particularly affected by the matter.</p>
Factors	<p>Factors that would indicate a high degree of significance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of prior public interest or the potential to generate interest or controversy. • Large divisions in community views on the matter. • A moderate impact on a large proportion of the community. • A large impact on a moderate number of persons.
<p>High Degree of Significance Low</p> <p>← Large divisions in community views Significant community agreement →</p>	

Criterion	<p>Impact on Council’s Capacity and Capability</p> <p>The impact of the decision on Council’s ability to achieve the objectives set out in its Long-term Financial Strategy, Long-term Plan and Annual Plan.</p>
Factors	<p>Factors that would indicate a high level of significance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfers of strategic assets to or from council • The financial cost of the decision, in the short, medium and long term. • The extent of the impact on rates and/or debt (including cumulative effects). • The extent to which the decision is consistent with the Financial Strategy. • A financial transaction that involves a budgeted project (\$10million or greater) that has an anticipated cost increase of 50% or greater. • A financial transaction that involves an unbudgeted expenditure of \$5million or greater.
<p>High Degree of Significance Low</p> <p>← Large Impact/consequence Small Impact/consequence →</p>	

Appendix 2 – Strategic assets/activities

For the purposes of section 76AA and 97 (1) of the LGA 2002 the Council considers the following assets to be strategic assets.

The Council will consider the following strategic assets as a whole because it is the asset class as a whole that delivers the service.

The Council will therefore not undertake the special consultative procedure for decisions that relate to the transfer of ownership or control, or minor construction or replacement, of a part of a strategic asset, unless that decision triggers the significance thresholds and criteria outlined in this policy.

The assets and groups of assets that the council considers to be "strategic assets" are:

The roading network
The sewerage collection, treatment and disposal system, including the sewer network, pump stations and treatment works
The water supply system, including reservoirs, pump stations and reticulation
The land drainage system, including the storm water pipe network, waterways, and retention areas
The Rotorua Museum including the collections
The Rotorua Library
The Energy Events Centre including the sportsdrome
The Sir Howard Morrison Performing Arts Centre
The Aquatic Centre
Housing for the elderly
Shares in any council controlled organisation
The Rotorua Stadium
The core data set used to deliver council services
The Famously Rotorua Brand and any other subsequent brand

Appendix 3 – IAP2 continuum

Degree of Significance					
Level of Community engagement	Lowest level / No Community Engagement may be needed	Lower level of Community Engagement may be needed	Community Engagement is needed		Greatest level of Community Engagement is needed
SCP	The SCP is not required	The SCP is not likely to be considered but may be used where more efficient to do so	The SCP should be considered but may not always be appropriate	The SCP should be considered as a minimum along with other engagement forms	
Focus of Public Participation	Inform	Dialogue	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Types of issues that we might use this for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water restrictions Temporary road closure Emergency repair works to Council infrastructure Annual report adoption Smoke-free policy for Council open spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skate park or play ground New gardens Walkways Signage Leases, concessions and licences to occupy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Plan Annual Plan where there are no significant or material differences to the LTP Rates review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption or amendment of the LTP Significant bylaw Annual Plan – where the LTP may be amended Strategic Asset(s) changes in ownership or control Significant change in provision of any significant activity Portfolios & their strategies Alternative energy / geothermal developments 	Representation Election voting systems (MMP, STV or first past the post)
When the community can expect to be involved	Council would generally advise the community once a decision is made	Council would advise the community once a draft decision is made Council and would generally provide the community with up to 4 weeks to participate and respond.	Council would generally provide the community with a greater lead in time to allow them time to be involved in the process.	Council would generally involve the community at the start to scope the issue, again after information has been collected and again when options are being considered.	Council would generally provide the community with a greater lead in time to allow them time to be involved in the process e.g. typically a month or more.
Engagement Techniques Council might use (not a definitive list)	Public notices Websites & e-updates Information flyer Media releases Ratepayers newsletters Community noticeboards Billboards / Displays / Stands Progress charts	Formal hearings Surveys Open house events/expo Roadshow Public meetings Hui	Workshops Focus groups Citizens Panel Iwi/Māori and community leaders Round table meeting E-engagement Hui	External working groups (involving community experts) Steering Committees Symposium Hui	Binding referendum Citizen's Jury Local body elections Champion/s of the cause

Appendix 4 – Engagement principles

Principles <i>Councils that achieve consistent, effective and high quality engagement with the community follow these principles</i>	Indicators <i>Engagement processes that follow these principles commonly exhibit the following characteristics</i>	Outcomes <i>High quality engagement often produce the following outcomes and benefits</i>
Transparency Council ensures that decision-making is accessible, open, honest and understandable. Our community receives the information needed, and with enough lead time, to participate effectively	Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct community and stakeholder engagement in a genuine effort to listen to, and consider with an open mind, community and stakeholder input; • when presenting options for community and stakeholder feedback, ensure the options are realistic and deliverable; • ensure that questions are objective (ie: not leading), allowing people to express their views freely; • allow enough time and provide adequate resources to ensure participants have been provided fair opportunity to understand the matter and contribute their views • allow time to allow for issues that might arise during an engagement process; • value contributions made and time given; • give timely feedback on the results of the public’s input and decisions made; • value, respect and give weight to local knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members have a better understanding of the proposal or decision and are better able to participate effectively • Council understanding of community opinions and needs is enhanced
Building Relationships and Community Capacity Community engagement processes invest in and develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and learning opportunities with community partners and stakeholders. The Council should make itself aware of, and should have regard	Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build ongoing relationships with the community through a range of approaches (such as those included in the engagement guide set out in Schedule 3) • Provide community members and stakeholders with a reasonable opportunity to present their views and to participate in a way that suits them • Provide ways for the community to raise issues directly with the Council so that it is a two-way relationship • Identify opportunities to work in partnership with community organisations and leaders to encourage greater community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement processes leave neighbourhoods and communities stronger, better informed, increase their capacity to participate in the future, and develop new leader • A better decision or proposal will result from community participation • The decision or proposal will have greater community acceptance

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<p>Councils that achieve consistent, effective and high quality engagement with the community follow these principles</p>	<p>Engagement processes that follow these principles commonly exhibit the following characteristics</p>	<p>High quality engagement often produce the following outcomes and benefits</p>
<p>to, the views of all its communities</p>	<p>ownership and participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good information sharing of community view and preferences within council 	
<p>Inclusiveness and Equity</p> <p>Engagement and decision-making processes identify, reach out to, and encourage participation of the community in its full diversity. Processes respect a range of values and interests and the knowledge of those involved. Historically excluded individuals and groups are included authentically in processes, activities, and decision and policy making. Impacts, including costs and benefits, are identified and distributed fairly.</p>	<p>Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways of reaching out to affected residents, parties and stakeholders, including those who are typically heard from least often. The active participation of these communities is made a high priority • Identify early the demographics, values, and desires of and impacts on affected residents, parties and stakeholders, and influence the process design, and are reaffirmed throughout the process • Provide more than one way for people to participate • When required, invest in community capacity building to enable participation • Use culturally appropriate and effective strategies and techniques to involve diverse constituencies • Use plain language and avoid jargon and acronyms • Follow up with under-engaged groups to see how the process worked for their community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council decisions, proposals, policies, projects and programmes respond to the full range of needs and priorities in the community • Trust and respect for the Council increases among community members • Council staff and members of more traditionally engaged communities understand the value of including under-engaged communities • Equity is increased by actively involving communities that historically have been marginalised or excluded from decision making processes • New decisions and policies do not further reinforce the disadvantaged position of historically disadvantaged people or groups •
<p>Māori and Tangata Whenua participation</p> <p>Council should actively provide opportunities for Māori and Tangata Whenua to contribute to its decision making processes. Iwi Environmental Management Plans, Joint Management Agreements, Memoranda of</p>	<p>Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and protect Māori and Tangata Whenua rights and interests within Rotorua District • Actively consider how to address and contribute to the needs and aspirations of Māori • Engage early with Māori in the development of appropriate plans, policies and decisions • Take guidance from Māori in the ways Council will engage with them • Support Māori to fully engage with the Council, for example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Tatau o te Arawa partnership outcomes are met and fulfilled. • Treaty obligations are met • Equity is increased by actively involving communities that historically have been marginalised or excluded from decision making processes • New decisions and policies do not further reinforce the disadvantaged position of historically disadvantaged people or groups

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Understanding or any other similar high level agreements will be considered as a starting point when engaging with Iwi and Māori.	through but not limited to capability and capacity building	