

Summary of Council's policy on determining significance

Legislative requirements:

In accordance with section 76AA of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 the Council is required to have a Significance and Engagement Policy (Policy). This Policy is required to set out the following:

- (a) Council's general approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions in relation to issues, assets, and other matters;*
- (b) any criteria or procedures that are to be used by Council in assessing the extent to which issues, proposals, assets, decisions, or activities are significant or may have significant consequences;*
- (c) how Council will respond to community preferences about engagement on decisions relating to specific issues, assets, or other matters, including the form of consultation that may be desirable; and*
- (d) how Council will engage with communities on other matters.*

Determining whether a decision is significant:

The Policy outlines the criteria and procedures for Council when determining whether or not a decision is significant. In accordance with its general approach, Council will determine all decisions to be significant unless the impact on the:

- Current or future cultural, economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the District is minimal;
- Achievement of, or ability to achieve, the Council's stated levels of service as set out in the current Long Term Plan (LTP) is minimal;
- Capacity of the Council to perform its role and carry out its activities, now and in the future is unaffected; and
- Financial resource and other costs of the decision are minimal or included in an approved LTP.

Engagement with the Community

Community involvement in Council's decision making process for significant decisions is important. The Policy outlines how Council intends to engage with the Community during its decision making process for significant decisions.

The Policy describes different levels of community engagement and these are; inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. At a high level the extent to which Council will engage with the Community on a decision aligns with the significance of the decision that is to be made.

Decision making

When making decisions, Council will:

- Identify and assess as many options as are practicable;
- Quantify the costs and benefits resulting from the decision to be made;
- Provide detailed information accessible to the public; and
- Maintain clear and complete records showing how compliance with the Significance and Engagement Policy was achieved.

If the issue, proposal, decision, or other matters concerned involved a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, Council will take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

Review of the Significance and Engagement Policy

As part of the engagement process for the adoption of this Policy and subsequent reviews, the Council will work with people in the Horowhenua District on their engagement preferences and will review these preferences each LTP process as part of a review of the Community Engagement Strategy.

The Council will also take into account views already expressed in the Community, where there has been no material change to the issue since previous engagement, and make judgements on the level of support for those views, when determining the significance of a decision.

Note: *This is just a summary of the Significance and Engagement Policy. The full version of this Policy is available online on Horowhenua District Council's website (<http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Council/Council-Documents/Policies/>) or it is available upon request from the Council's civic building in Levin.*