

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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s76AA

Statutory/Policy: Statutory

Having your say

Participating in Rangitikei Council decision-making

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

What does this Policy (“Having your say”) cover?

This Policy* outlines how and when you can have input into the decision-making processes of the Council.

“Having your say”- covers two things.

1. Significance

This is the degree of importance of a decision based on its impact on:

- Rangitikei District as a whole
- people who are likely to be affected
- Council costs and/or the ability of the Council to deliver on the decision.

The Council must note that when making a decision, the degree of significance must be considered. If the decision is considered significant (and there are levels) there are certain procedures it must follow.

2. How the Council will get your input to decision-making (participation)

Participating in decision-making is either through (a) engagement or (b) consultation.

Engagement is where the Council provides opportunities for you to ‘have your say’ as an input to decision-making (ie before a draft or final decision is made).

Consultation is where the Council has already provided a draft decision (or has come up with options) and invites you to have your say through a formal process.

Some decisions, which are not considered significant, only require the Council to inform you about them.

**This Policy is required under the Local Government Act 2002 s76AA and is formally known as the Significance and Engagement Policy.*

Part 1 - Significance

Significance 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,—

- a) 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
- d) financial and other costs of doing so."

When assessing the **level of significance for all decisions**, the Council needs to consider:

- the community impact/interest (can be district-wide or localised)
- the impact on Māori cultural values and their relationship to land and water
- the impact on future interests of the community and district
- the potential effects of climate change
- the level of financial consequences of the proposal or decision
- the Council's ability to deliver on the decision.

The Council has three levels of significance:

- low (minor, short term)
- medium (moderate, mid-term)
- high (major and/or long term).

In general, the more significant an issue, the greater the need for engagement and/or consultation.

Strategic assets

Under this Policy, the Council is required to let you know what are our strategic assets. Strategic assets are those things that the Council considers are necessary to provide for the well-being of Rangitikei District.

Rangitikei District Council's strategic assets are as follows.

- Sections of the roading network where:
 - loss of that section would create significant disruption (time for an alternative, number of vehicles affected)
 - there are no alternative routes
- Bridges
- Streetlights
- Wastewater network and treatment plants
- Water treatment, storage, and supply networks
- Stormwater networks
- Waste transfer stations
- Recreation facilities
- Community amenities
- Community housing
- Libraries
- Cemeteries
- Administration building (Marton)
- Emergency Operation Centres

Part 2 - How the Council will get your input to decision-making (participation)

When the Council is seeking your input to decision-making, they are committed to:

- being clear about what you are being asked to contribute to
- being clear about how your input will be used to inform the decision
- being flexible about how your views can be shared
- ensuring we try and reach all affected people as best we can – particularly those who may find “having a say” more challenging than others
- using simple language and formats
- ensuring you have access to any documents or information needed
- ensuring elected members and staff are listening with an open mind to your views
- providing feedback, where feasible, on how your input was considered.

Participation in decision-making can be undertaken in several ways.

District-wide or localised

One of the significance considerations, is whether or not the impacts are district-wide or localised. So how participation will be invited depends on this.

Where the decision will have effects which are district-wide, the Council will invite people across the entire district to have a say.

Where the decision will have effects which are on or for a specific group of people (could be people who live in a specific place or people who have a specific interest), the Council will invite those people to have a say.

Input of Māori to decision-making

Council is committed to working with Māori to give effect to their role as tangata whenua and to enhance their ability to participate in the decision-making processes of Council.

While this is required under Clause 8 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002, in Rangitikei we are committed to a working relationships with Māori that goes above and beyond that.

TŪTOHINGA

- Memorandum of Understanding (TMOU) Initially signed in 1998, (TMOU) recognises the fundamental role of iwi in the District and the essential partnership between iwi and the Rangitikei District Council.

The key mechanism for delivering on the partnership is Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa, a standing advisory committee of the Council. Tangata whenua of the District are represented on the komiti, as is the Rātana Community.

Komiti members are regularly briefed on Council matters and specifically offered a lead role in reviews of policies/statements of particular relevance to Māori. Members of the komiti are also provided with a training budget in order to build capacity and capability among the group.

To give effect to the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding: TūtoHINGA, the Council and Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa are committed to looking for more effective ways to ensure that Māori are well informed, have an ability to have input into processes and, when they do so, understand the reasons for the Council's response.

Please go to Appendix for more information.

Engaging/consulting/informing

Engagement is where the Council provides opportunities for you to 'have your say' as an input to decision-making (ie before a draft decision is made).

Consultation is where the Council has already provided a draft decision (or has come up with options) and invites you to have your say through a formal process.

This section of the Policy describes what each of these looks like for Rangitikei District Council.

1. Engagement

- a) Seeking ideas/opinions (eg: surveys, drop-in sessions, social media, displays, stakeholder meetings) This type of engagement would be used for:
 - development of strategies/plans
 - community facility or amenity improvements
- b) Discussion and involvement (eg: hui/workshops, meetings, visits to community groups/schools/organisations)

This type of engagement would be used for:

- development of strategies/plans
- a new community facility or amenity such as a playground
- c) Working in partnership/collaborating (eg: wānanga, working groups, joint project teams). This would include identifying alternative approaches and joint solution(s).

This type of engagement would be used for:

- Community-led development projects (e.g. parks upgrades)

2. Consultation

Consultation means the Council has come up with a draft and/or options to get feedback on.

In other words, they have already made a decision and are now seeking community input into either (a) going ahead with or (b) amending that decision.

Consultation usually involves seeking submissions or formal feedback.

These submissions are considered by Council through a report that summarises the comments made.

The number of submissions for/against a decision will not be the only factor the Council takes into account when proceeding to a final decision.

The Council must also consider evidence from their advisors. This evidence can be made up of a range of inputs – for example: technical/geological research, bigger picture issues such as government directives and funding challenges.

Special Consultative Procedure (SCP)

Some consultations require us to use a Special Consultative Procedure (SCP). This means the consultation process must include:

- a 'statement of proposal' (a summary of what is being consulted on)
- specific advice on how and where you can have your say.

An SCP must also allow at least one month for submissions to be received. Council may use a range of methods for encouraging submission (eg: drop-in sessions, social media, displays, stakeholder meetings, public meetings).

Submissions to an SCP must always be in writing – although you can dictate your submission to someone if need be.

An SCP must be used for the following:

- establishing a council-controlled organisation
- making, amending or revoking a bylaw which is of significant public interest or likely to have a significant impact on the public
- the Long Term Plan
- the Annual Plan (unless there are no significant or material differences to the long-term plan projections for that year)
- assessing Council's water and other sanitary services
- setting or changing charges under the Resource Management Act.

3. Informing

There are some decisions where the costs, time or resources involved in engagement or consultation processes would out-weigh the benefits of that decision.

These are always going to be decisions that are low in significance eg: office opening hours, upcoming legislative changes, road works, signage, dates for community events etc.

In these cases, the Council would generally inform the community using one-way communication such as letters, its website, flyers, news stories, advertisements, social media.

Appendix – Development of Māori capacity to contribute to decision making

Activity under the Tūtohunga Memorandum of Understanding

A Māori community development programme was undertaken during 2011-14 and provided for facilitated hui of iwi/hapū from the northern rohe to pre-caucus before Komiti meetings.

A budget is allocated for the Māori Community Development Programme and is to be distributed by the Komiti in accordance with its own processes. This programme is designed to increase the capacity of Māori to contribute to local decision-making, and strengthen relationships between iwi organisations/marae and Council (including through the development of individual MOU). As a result, Council developed a policy for unlocking Māori landlocked land and a policy to recognise iwi/hapū interests in Council owned land that is declared surplus.

The Memorandum of Understanding: Tūtohunga is subject to review at the same time as each Representation Review. The last review was in 2019 with the final document approved on 17 December 2019.

Strategic Advisor – Mana Whenua

Council has an Strategic Advisor who facilitates effective communication with tangata whenua and manages relationships in order to assist with the development and analysis of Council policy in relation to iwi and Māori issues.

Maori Wards

In 2022, following a representation review our first elected members for the Tiikeitia ki Tai (Coastal) Ward and Tiikeitia ki Uta (Inland) Ward Māori Wards were sworn onto Council.

Members of Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa supported the introduction of Māori wards that were established in addition to the ongoing commitment to have Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa as a standing committee of Council.

The Post Treaty Settlement Environment

Finalisation of Treaty claims is a significant development in Rangitikei. The Council is aware that in a post-settlement phase, iwi with Mana Whēnua have obligations to all people in the rohe.

Ngāti Apa's claim has been settled, which was of particular significance to the District. It has resulted in addressing longstanding grievances that some iwi and hapū in our District have had with the Crown. The settlement has also resulted in commercial and cultural redress that has helped change the business, and cultural landscape within the region.

Ngāti Rangi settled their claim on 10 March 2018 and the Taihape claims are currently still progressing. The impacts of the Settlements/Acts on Council's business, resourcing levels and processes are not fully known at this stage. Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa Komiti is an opportunity for iwi/hapū without the capacity to engage independently to engage in a relationship with Council. However, the komiti does not pre-empt the opportunity for individual iwi/hapū to have a direct relationship with Council.