

Report 14.557
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File SP/12/02/03

Committee Council
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Significance and Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

To seek approval of a Greater Wellington Regional Council Significance and Engagement Policy.

2. Background

Under the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) must adopt a Significance and Engagement Policy by 1 December 2014.

Section 76AA, of the Local Government Act states:

The purpose of a significance and engagement policy is

- (a) *to enable the local authority and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions, and activities; and*
- (b) *to provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions about different issues, assets, or other matters; and*
- (c) *to inform the local authority from the beginning of a decision-making process about –*
 - (i) *the extent of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made; and*
 - (ii) *the form or type of engagement required.*

A draft Significance and Engagement Policy is included in **Attachment 1**.

3. Comment

As previously discussed with Councillors, the attached draft Significance and Engagement Policy draws on our existing Significance Policy, which has been reviewed and is still considered fit for purpose. An engagement component has now been added, which is based on the approach outlined in the International

Association for Public Participation (IAP2) guidance. This provides for a spectrum of engagement, with more significant issues requiring greater levels of engagement. It also sets out GWRC's strategic assets as required by the Act.

Questions on engagement preferences were included in the Citizens Panel survey undertaken as part of the Long Term Plan pre-consultation. The results of this survey, as well as established GWRC practices for community engagement, were taken into account as part of the development of the Policy.

In developing this Policy we have sought to achieve a good balance between meeting legislative compliance and providing clear guidance to the community and GWRC staff on what, when and how people can expect to be consulted.

The Policy has also been drafted to provide flexibility for GWRC around specific levels of engagement and techniques. This acknowledges that the needs of each decision-making process are different and avoids the risk of tying down a particular approach which may not be relevant.

The draft Policy has been subject to a legal review.

4. Communication

The Significance and Engagement Policy will be referenced in the Long Term Plan 2015-2025. It will also be placed on the GWRC website. No further communication of the policy is planned at this time.

5. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

5.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Adopts** the Significance and Engagement Policy set out in Attachment 1.*

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Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Draft Significance and Engagement Policy