

Council Policy

Policy Title: Social Policy
Responsibility: Group Manager Customer Services
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1 Policy Objectives

- 1.1 To promote a comprehensive critique of the social impacts of Council decisions.
- 1.2 To promote, advocate for, and support social resilience.
- 1.3 To analyse unintended consequences.
- 1.4 To align policies, strategies and activities with Council's Outcomes.
- 1.5 To set out the principles to guide Council decision making.
- 1.6 To set out the methodology for analysing issues.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Resilience** means the ability to recover readily from adversity, change or hardship, or the like.
- 2.2 **Communities** means a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, or have a common cultural and historical heritage.
- 2.3 **Social impacts** means the impacts of actions and or policies that relate to the life, welfare, and relations of human beings in a community.
- 2.4 **Significant** means the consequence or importance, of something or what is intended.

3 Principles

- 3.1 Council commits to some broad guiding principles to help guide its decision making process and service provisions:
 - (a) Active engagement and communication with the community and social sectors.
 - (b) Culturally appropriate interactions.
 - (c) Work alongside affected parties.
 - (d) Consideration of the impacts of decisions on communities and groups of people.
 - (e) Decisions based on good data, sound information and future needs.
 - (f) Transparent decision making.
 - (g) The use of straight forward and plain English.
 - (h) Use ethical, fair and equitable language and methods.

- (i) Work towards sustaining equilibrium.
- (j) Decisions should improve quality of life.
- (k) Use a balanced approach to decision making.
- (l) Ensure decisions are both effective and cost effective.

3.2 Staff/council will give consideration to the resilience of the community and the social impacts of decisions in drafting of reports, strategies, policies, bylaws and other documents.

4 Background

4.1 Council received submissions in 2015 on developing a Social Policy.

4.2 The Local Government Act 2002 (Section 14 1) sets out Council's requirement in performing its role, including;

“(h) in taking a sustainable development approach, a local authority should take into account—

- (i) the social, economic, and cultural interests of people and communities; and*
- (ii) the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment; and*
- (iii) the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.”*

4.3 This role of Council does not impact on the primary requirement for central government or other agencies to fulfil their own responsibilities in each of these areas. The role of the Council is not therefore to take over social services and functions from central government agencies or community groups but to take into account the social, cultural and economic interests of people and community while fulfilling its own responsibilities.

4.4 With these constraints, and in consultation with the community, Council has developed a social policy that provides a framework for Council decision making that will take into account the social resilience of Ruapehu Communities and the social impacts of decisions.

5 Policy Statement

5.1 Determining the social impacts of an issue is an exercise in judgement. Council must assess how a decision may affect the community. There are both qualitative and quantitative considerations when determining the implications of a matter.

5.2 Part one – Determine if a Social Impact Assessment needs to be undertaken

5.2.1 An issue, proposal, decision or other matter will need to be assessed for social impacts if it triggers the Significance and Engagement Policy.

5.2.2 In all other cases, in considering if the matter will need to be assessed for social impacts, the degree of social impacts of any issue, proposal, decision or other matter Council will be guided by the following:

- (a) The likely impact on the community;
- (b) The parties who are likely to be affected by or interested in the decision and the likely impact or consequences from the perspective of those parties;

- (c) Whether the decision, or something similar to it, has a history of being controversial and generating wide public interest in the District, or a part of the District;
- (d) The degree to which the decision is reversible;
- (e) The financial and non-financial implications;
- (f) The degree of the impact on rates or Council debt;
- (g) The degree to which the decision affects the Outcomes as stated in the Long Term Plan.

5.2.3 If it assessed that there is no significant social impact, then this needs to be noted in the Council Report.

5.3 Part 2

5.3.1 Once it has been determined that a social impact assessment needs to be undertaken a Social Impact framework needs to be undertaken to determine the impacts, and the summary of this included in Council Reports.

5.3.2 Possible framework templates for determining the social impacts of any issue, proposal, decision or other matter will be developed for staff guidance.

6 Related Council Documents

6.1 The Significance and Engagement Policy

7 Annotations

| Date | Description |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 28 March 2018 | New Policy Adopted |
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