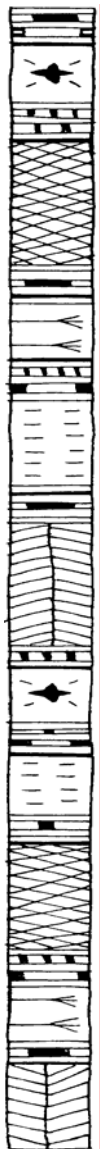


COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE POLICY

CONTENTS

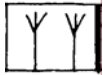


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INTRODUCTION

Waitakere City Council supports a wide range of groups in the community who provide local services and activities on a voluntary or 'not for profit' basis. This document outlines the basis for providing this assistance.



WHAT IS MEANT BY COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

The Community Assistance Policy contains a number of policies and guidelines, which together make up a 'package' of assistance. The following table shows the various forms of community assistance that Council provides to local community groups.

DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	REBATES OR REMISSIONS	ADMINISTRATION OF OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	INDIRECT ASSISTANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community Wellbeing Fund (this replaces Council's Social Programme Fund from 1998) ■ Loans (in exceptional circumstances only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rates relief for community groups ■ Regulatory fee waivers: reductions on resource and building consent fees ■ Community Hall Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creative New Zealand's 'Creative Communities' Scheme ■ Hillary Commission's 'Community Sport Fund' ■ Youth Programme Fund ■ Out of School Care Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leasing land and/or buildings ■ Loan guarantees (in exceptional circumstances only)

Although Council sees each of these forms of assistance as part of a clear package, for ease of reference separate guidelines have been developed for each. Note that the guidelines on loans and loan guarantees have been combined.

Other information available:

- a short brochure outlining what types of assistance are provided and how to find out more
- a list of current leases that Council has with community groups, along with a map showing where leased properties are in the City

All documents and more information can be gained by phoning Council on 839-0400.



HOW THE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE POLICY WAS DEVELOPED

The need to clarify Council's role in supporting local community groups was identified in the early 1990s. In 1995, Council decided a comprehensive policy on this support was required. Some of the key issues that needed addressing included:

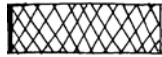
- Concern that many groups were not aware of the types of Council assistance available.
- Concern that Council was providing more support to some community activities than others.
- Increasing numbers of ad hoc requests for assistance were being received with few clear guidelines about how these requests should be assessed.
- Lack of an overview about what assistance Council was providing, what it was costing, and who was benefiting.
- Little accountability for groups receiving assistance and lack of Council monitoring of who was receiving assistance, what for and what effect the assistance was having.

The development of the policy began with an audit of all assistance Council provided to community groups. An analysis of what types of groups and activities were benefiting from this assistance was undertaken. This review estimated that around \$700,000 was being provided by Council annually to local community groups (excluding central government funding through Creative New Zealand).

During the development of the policy elected members held a series of workshops. Council's Standing Maori Committee, Te Taumata Runanga was heavily involved in identifying issues and options from a Maori perspective, and the Pacific Islands Advisory Board was also involved in the review. A Pacific Islands fono or community meeting was held with more than 60 people attending to discuss issues and options.

Two rounds of community consultation were undertaken, with responses from local community groups key to developing this policy. In November 1997 an "Issues Paper" for community discussion was released. Nine public meetings were held to discuss the issues raised in the paper. Feedback was received from a diverse range of groups.

In April 1998 an "Options Paper" was released for public comment. This paper summarised the key issues and suggested a range of options to address each issue. A report summarising the feedback is available by phoning 839-0400.



COUNCIL'S GOAL AND OBJECTIVES IN PROVIDING COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

The goal of the Community Assistance Policy is:

To help strengthen the ability of local community groups to create a strong social base for Waitakere City and to meet local needs.

Objectives of the policy are (in no priority order):

1. To provide assistance to local community groups that enables them to identify and meet community needs.
This objective recognises that, given adequate resources, the voluntary or not for profit sector is often best placed to identify community needs.
2. To provide assistance that complements other available funding and assistance and improves groups' chances of getting this assistance.
3. To target Council's assistance to activities which contribute to its strategic direction, as reflected in the following outcomes, while ensuring that selection criteria recognise the full range of ways in which groups can contribute.
 - Increasing participation in community activities.
 - Improving access to health, leisure and other services essential to mental and physical wellbeing.
 - Improving access to information, education and learning opportunities.
 - Fostering iwi, hapu and Maori development.
 - Fostering cultural diversity in Waitakere City.
 - Encouraging the community to be involved in looking after the City's natural, heritage and cultural resources.
 - Improving safety for people in their homes, on the roads, in their local neighbourhood, and in town centres.
 - Fostering co-operation, partnership, and sharing of resources between groups in the "not for profit" sector.
 - Promoting a sense of belonging and identity for all people living in Waitakere City.
4. To promote co-operation, partnerships and networking within the not for profit sector.
5. To provide assistance in a way that is clear to all, simplifies decision making, is as fair and consistent as possible, and makes applying for assistance as easy as possible.
6. To provide a package of assistance that spreads benefits across the diverse range of activities provided by the not for profit sector.
7. To provide assistance in ways that recognise, protect and foster the needs and aspirations of iwi, hapu and Maori in Waitakere City.
8. To provide assistance to the not for profit sector in culturally appropriate ways.
9. To work with other funding agencies, sharing information and developing joint solutions to issues and problems.



WHY COUNCIL PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

Council's goal and objectives for the community assistance that it provides the not for profit sector reflect the reasons that Council chooses to fulfil a role in this area. This section reviews the mandate for Council's involvement in community assistance and explains the reasons its involvement.

Mandate for local government involvement

Council's responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1974 (LGA) are broad and include:

- recognising that different communities exist and have their own identities and values
- delivering facilities and services to communities that meet their needs, choices and preferences

Support to the not for profit sector, while not required by the LGA, helps Council fulfil these responsibilities. Community groups often represent particular sectors of the community and can help to reinforce their identity and values.

Contribution of community groups to strengthening communities

The diverse range of services and activities provided by local community groups benefit the City in many ways:

- by giving people opportunities to participate in their local community
- by meeting local needs that would not be met by the private or public sector
- by fostering a sense of identity and belonging within certain groups

As community groups tend to operate at a "grass roots" level, very close to their local community, they are in a better position than local government to identify local needs and the most effective means of meeting these needs. It is important that groups retain a high level of independence and control over their activities. This is reflected in objectives one and two of this policy (see page three).

Council's strategic plan, the Greenprint, emphasises the need to strengthen communities and resource them to better provide for their own needs. It also highlights the importance of developing partnerships which will strengthen the ability of Waitakere City's diverse communities to become involved – in delivering services for their own members; in acting as stewards of the environment; and in decision making. The not for profit sector has a vital role to play in each of these areas.

Role for local government

Waitakere City Council considers central government to be responsible for paying for welfare related social services and providing the main support for the not for profit sector. It does not wish to duplicate this role.

Council targets its assistance to strengthen the viability and develop the capacity of the City's not for profit sector. By supplying some of the basic infrastructure (such as buildings) required to maintain the sector, Council can help develop the social base of the City. Groups are better placed to apply for project based funding if they have sufficient resources and support to keep themselves up and running.

Council also considers co-operation and networking within the not for profit sector critical to the viability and effective functioning of the sector. Co-ordination is an important part of Council's role and it is committed to providing support that encourages co-operation and networking.



THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

KEY ELEMENTS OF EACH TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Community Assistance Fund

Each year Council sets aside around 50 cents per person in Waitakere City (approx \$215,000 in 2007/08), to allocate in the form of a grants fund to groups engaged in a wide range of social service and community activities. The purpose of the Community Assistance Fund is similar to that of the Social Programme Fund - to provide financial support to groups for expenses and projects which are often not eligible for funding from other sources. This fund is available for a range of expenses including:

- Training
- Volunteer expenses
- Administrative costs
- Social auditing and strategic planning
- Equipment (small scale only)
- Projects and small scale community events

The size of grants ranges from a few hundred dollars to a maximum of \$5000 per application. Two funding rounds are held each year with applications closing at the end of February and August.

Note that sporting, physical leisure, art and cultural activities are excluded from this scheme as other assistance is available (see below).

Creative New Zealand's 'Creative Communities Fund'

Council receives \$5000 plus 58 cents per resident each year (close to \$100,000 for 1998/99), from Creative New Zealand. This funding is to provide financial support to arts and cultural activities taking place within Waitakere City, which are of primary benefit to Waitakere City residents.

This funding is available by way of a grant or a guarantee against loss (GAL). GALs are normally given for events where groups need to cover their costs. If the GAL is not needed then the excess funding is returned by the group to the Creative Communities Scheme. The following types of expenses are eligible:

- Events
- Salary costs for short term projects
- Artist in residence schemes
- Tuition for young artists/performers
- Promotion
- Materials associated with an event or project
- Seminars and workshops
- Equipment

Funding is allocated according to the following categories:

- Projects that increase participation in the arts.
- Projects that increase community wide interest in the arts.
- Projects that enhance and strengthen the local arts sector.

Grants range in size but are usually less than \$5000. Groups are usually expected to make some contribution to the project. There are two funding rounds a year with applications closing in April and September. **This is the only form of community assistance provided or administered by Council which is available to individuals as well as groups.**

Leases for land and buildings

Council leases land and/or buildings to a wide range of community groups. It has over 160 lease agreements, with sports groups, arts groups, groups targeting children and young people such as Scouts and Girl Guides, and social service groups such as Lions, kindergartens and Plunket. A list of where leased premises are and who currently holds a lease with Council is available by phoning 839-0400.

In some cases groups lease land and a building from Council, in others they have built their own building on Council land (usually on a park or reserve). In all cases low rentals are charged.

During the next two years Council will undertake a Community Facilities Review which will identify priorities for new community facilities. It will also complete its Parks Strategy and Reserve Management Plans, which will provide better information about the long term suitability of parks land for community buildings.

Council will only allocate new property leases in exceptional circumstances in the next two years (until at least July 2001). Groups looking for premises will be encouraged to share with other groups currently holding leases.

A priority over the next few years will be to establish current leases with all groups and to iron out outstanding lease issues.

Accommodation Assistance

The AAF is designed to provide more equitable, fairer and more transparent form of funding than previous rates remissions. Not-for-profit organisations and community groups who either own their own properties and those leasing or renting properties are eligible to apply.

Loans and Loan Guarantees

Discounting the loans given out through the Hillary Commission Community Sport Fund, as a general rule Council does not lend money or give loan guarantees to community groups unless there are **exceptional** reasons to do so. In these circumstances Council prefers to give a loan guarantee rather than a loan. Any loans or loan guarantees provided will be provided on a cost recovery basis to Council.

Fee Waivers (reducing fees for resource or building consents)

Groups who have paid regulatory fees to Council to develop community facilities can apply to get up to a third of these fees reimbursed. Five thousand dollars was set aside for this in the 1998/99 year.

More information is available on each of the above by phoning 839-0400.



Key Policy Issues

This section addresses major issues common to all forms of Council assistance. The policies Council has adopted to address these issues also contribute to the objectives outlined on page three. Each policy is cross-referenced to one or more objective.

Issue: Categories of funding

Some groups feel that the activities they are engaged in are excluded from receiving funding and assistance from Council. For example the Maori community has expressed concerns that marae, Kaumatua (Maori elders), and Maori language development are not well supported. Often however, the underlying issue is that groups are unclear of what they can apply for, or that the criteria are broad rather than specific.

Policy: To define categories of activities for which assistance is available that are simple and inclusive, while making it clear what will not be funded.

(Contributes to objectives one, three, five, seven and eight)

Issue: Eligibility criteria - certainty versus flexibility

Groups want Council to be as clear as possible about what is eligible for funding so that time is not wasted completing applications which will not receive funding. On the other hand Council is reluctant to set too many rules about what is, and is not, eligible for funding as there is a risk that it will exclude applications unnecessarily.

Policy: To define activities/services eligible for different forms of community assistance in a way that clearly specifies what will and will not be funded, while keeping exclusions to a minimum.

(Contributes to objectives three and five)

Issue: Assessing eligible applications

Assessing applications for funding can range from a formal points system, to free assessment, where the judgement of the assessing committee is critical. Generally the former provides the applicants with more certainty although the application process may be more complex. The latter gives the assessing committee more flexibility.

Policy: To tailor the assessment method to the level of assistance being offered. Council generally favours the use of guidelines which make it clear to the applicant the factors that will be taken into account in assessing applications, rather than a formal points system.

(Contributes to objectives three and five)

Issue: Community involvement in decision-making

In the past, only elected members (Councillors or Community Board members) have allocated all forms of community assistance, except the Community Sport Fund and Creative Communities Scheme. In these two cases a combination of elected members and community representatives make decisions. There is a strong case for increasing the range of community representation and involvement in decision making. Treaty of Waitangi obligations point to the need for iwi/Maori representation; some groups in the community make up a high level of the population and/or provide alternative cultural perspectives (for example Pacific Islands people make up 11% of City residents). Other people in the community have specialist knowledge of the not for profit sector and could contribute to achieving fair and informed decision making.

Policy: To include Maori, Pacific Islands and not for profit sector representation on the Committee responsible for assessing applications wherever possible, and to review community involvement in allocating other forms of assistance periodically.

(Contributes to objectives one, three, four, seven and eight)

Issue: Accountability

It is important for Council to ensure that assistance is being used for its intended purpose and that groups receiving assistance are viable (so for example a group given a five year lease is not likely to disband during that time). However if accountability requirements are too rigid, this can place unreasonable administrative requirements on groups.

Policy: To improve accountability while tailoring requirements to the amount of assistance provided. In general, groups receiving a lower level of assistance will not be expected to meet the same level of accountability requirements as groups receiving more assistance.

(Contributes to objective five)

Issue: Avoiding capture of assistance by some groups/types of activities

An evaluation of groups and activities receiving assistance from Council revealed that benefits are not evenly distributed. Some types of groups and activities may receive several forms of assistance, and others none. There are a number of reasons for this, for example many groups are not always aware of what is available, and in the past, the degree to which groups receive other forms of assistance from Council has not been taken into account.

Policy: To take into account other forms of Council provided assistance that groups are receiving when assessing applications, and to give priority to groups not receiving other forms of assistance.

Policy: To monitor on an ongoing basis the groups and activities receiving assistance, and to regularly review annual funding priorities based on activities that received less funding in the past.

Policy: To ensure grants available through Council are well advertised, with new ways of reaching groups explored on an ongoing basis.

(Contributes to objectives three and six)

Issue: Simplicity and clarity

The biggest issues identified by many groups were their lack of awareness of what was available through Council and how to apply, and the complexity of application forms.

Policy: To ensure good information is available to groups as to what is available and how to apply.

Policy: That application forms are easy to understand and use, while providing Council with the information it needs.

Policy: To ensure Council staff are able to assist applicants in identifying the types of assistance they are eligible for and in completing application forms.

(Contributes to objective five)

Issue: Transparency

Until recently Council was not aware of the full value of the assistance it was providing. While Council now has a much better understanding of this, groups receiving assistance are not always aware of its value. This is a particular issue for non-monetary assistance such as the lease of land or a building.

Policy: To show the value of the subsidy provided where possible. In relation to leases, this means showing the value of the subsidy to the group as the difference between the cost to Council of providing community property leases and the actual rent charged.

(Contributes to objective five)

Issue: Fragmentation of the not for profit sector

As many groups now compete with each other to access funding there is a danger that the not for profit sector will become fragmented and less effective as a result. Council considers that a core part of its role is co-ordinating different parts of the not for profit sector and encouraging groups to work together.

Policy: To ensure assessment criteria for various forms of assistance encourage co-operation, partnership and sharing of resources between not for profit sector groups.

(Contributes to objective four)

Other information available

Council has a wide range of information available, which may be of interest to particular groups.

Background information relating to the development of this policy

- Summary review of Council's total community assistance provision – who is getting what (October 1997)
- Issues Paper for community discussion (November/December 1997)
- Summary of consultation feedback on Issues Paper (January 1998)
- Options Paper (April/May 1998)
- Summary of consultation feedback on Options Paper and of feedback from the Pacific Islands fono (June 1998)

For a copy of any of these documents please ring 839-0400.

Public Brochure

This is an easy-to-use guide for groups on Council's community assistance. It gives an overview of what is available and how to apply. For copies please ring 839-0400.

Guidelines and application forms for each type of assistance

To apply for a particular form of assistance – specific information is needed about what to apply for and how. Council has separate guidelines on:

- Leasing land or buildings from Council
- Community Assistance Fund
- Creative Communities Scheme (Creative New Zealand)
- Loans and loan guarantees

For a copy of any of these phone 839-0400.