

Policies

Long Term Council Community Plan
incorporating the Annual Plan 2003/04



Significance Policy

30th June 2003



WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL: POLICY ON SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Act 2002 sets out a new framework for Councils' consultation and decision-making processes. Significance is a key concept in this new framework. The Act sets up two general types of decision – those that are 'significant' and those that are not 'significant'. If a decision is 'significant' then the Council should follow a more rigorous consultation and decision-making processes. Councils are required to have a Significance Policy that sets out how they will determine the significance of a decision.

The Significance Policy, along with the Council's Consultation Policy, gives Council guidance on what consultation processes it should follow for its decisions. The Council still has the flexibility to determine specifically how it will consult for each decision (except in cases where it must follow the Special Consultative Procedure or specific requirements under other legislation such as the RMA).

Under the Act the Council is required to show:

- its general approach to determining which proposals and decisions are significant
- any thresholds, criteria and procedures for determining which proposals and decisions are significant
- the strategic assets owned by the Council.

It needs to be noted that if a decision is not 'significant' (as defined in Section 5 of the Act) it does not mean that it is unimportant. Furthermore a decision that a matter is "not significant" does not mean that there will be no consultation with the community about the proposal.

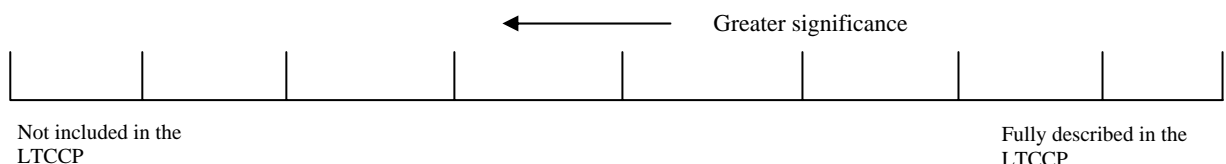
THRESHOLDS & CRITERIA

A significant decision is one that has a high degree of importance in terms of its impact upon:

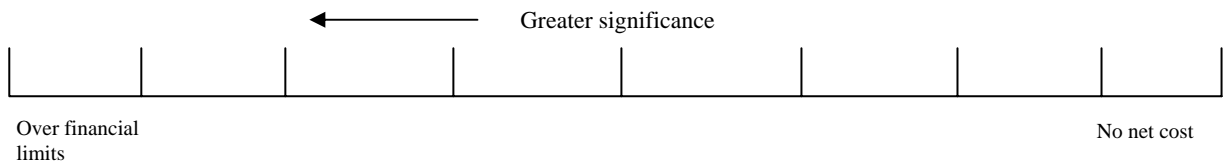
- The wellbeing and sustainable development of Waitakere City.
- The persons likely to be affected by or with an interest in that decision.
- The ability of the Council to implement the decision without impacting on the Council's ability to achieve community outcomes or other outcomes identified in the Long Term Council Community Plan.

When making a decision as to the significance of the matter Council will consider information on the reasons for the decision, the options and their relative costs and benefits, and the views of those that are affected by, or have an interest in, the decision, commensurate with the significance of that decision. Criteria that will be considered when making that decision may include:

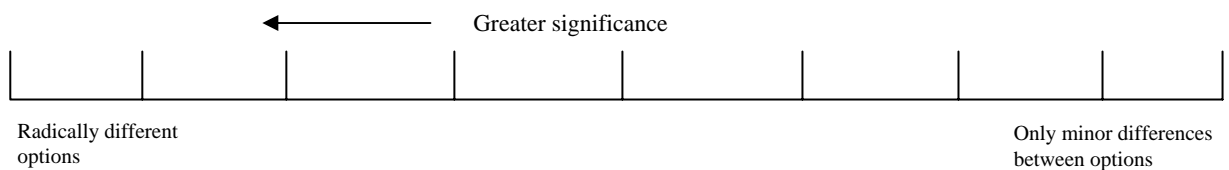
- The extent to which the decision flows logically from a decision already made in the Long Term Council Community Plan or the Annual Plan.



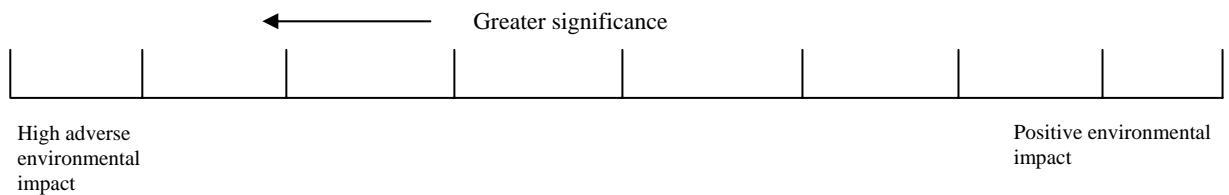
- The magnitude of the decision in terms of its net cost to the Council. Most major spending decisions will be made in the context of the LTCCP or Annual Plan. A decision involving more than \$1,000,000 in unbudgeted capital expenditure or more than \$250,000 in unbudgeted annual operating costs may be regarded as significant.



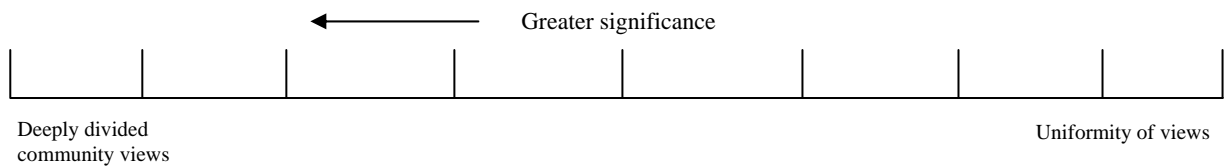
- The variation in impact of the options identified (including a 'do nothing' option) on the community. The greater the variation the greater the degree of significance.



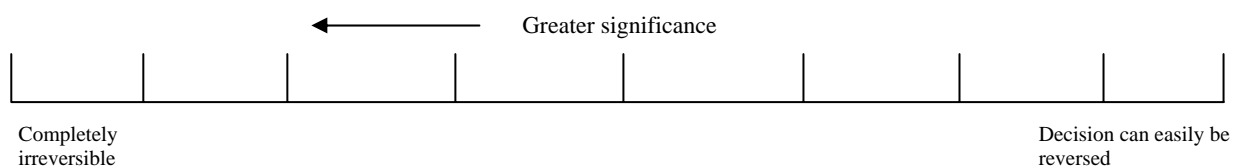
- Any adverse impact on the physical and natural environment. The greater the adverse impact the greater the significance.



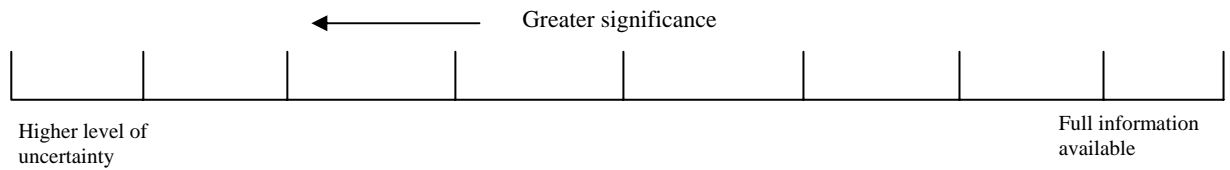
- The extent to which the matter under consideration may be controversial within the community.



- The reversibility of the outcomes arising from the decision



- The benefit of a precautionary approach, where there is a level of uncertainty of outcomes.



STRATEGIC ASSETS

The Council is required by Section 90 of the Act to provide a list of its Strategic Assets (as defined in Section 5 of the Act).

Once defined as strategic assets, any significant changes to the Council's ownership or control, or any decisions to construct, replace or abandon these assets listed must be expressly provided for in the Council's current long-term council community plan (LTCCP). If the proposal is not provided for, a special consultative procedure will be undertaken in order to change the LTCCP.

For the purposes of the Policy, the Council considers its strategic assets as whole single assets because it is the asset class as a whole that delivers the service. In the interests of the efficient management of resources, the Council will therefore not undertake the special consultative procedure for decisions that relate to the transfer of ownership or control, or minor construction or replacement, of a part of a strategic asset unless that part substantially affects the level of service provided to the community.

Any physical alterations to strategic assets that are required to either prevent an immediate hazardous situation arising, or to repair an asset to ensure public health and safety due to damage from an emergency or unforeseen situation, will also not have to undergo a special consultative procedure. Any actions taken will be reported in the relevant Annual Plan or Annual Report.

The assets and groups of assets that Waitakere City Council considers to be strategic assets are:

- Older Adults housing assets.
- The roading network.
- The stormwater network.
- The wastewater network.
- The water supply network.
- Parks and reserves assets, as a whole.
- Community centres, halls and libraries, as a whole.
- The land and buildings comprising the proposed Waitakere City Council Civic Centre.
- The Council's shareholdings in Watercare Services Limited and Auckland Regional Transport Network Limited