Significance and Engagement Policy

Approved by:	Timaru District Council
Date adopted:	27 October 2026
Review:	Every 3 years, or as required This Policy does not cease to have effect because it is due for review, or being reviewed
Consultation:	Required as part of the Long Term Plan and section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002

This document has been broken into two sections:

- Part 1: an overview to help the reader understand the wider context, and;
- Part 2: Council's policy on Significance and Engagement in accordance with statutory requirements.

Part 1: Overview

1. Context

For every decision Timaru District Council (Council) makes, whether big or small, we need to consider how important that decision is to our communities and how it might impact them. Sometimes we are already aware of people's views on a matter, or are very limited in our choices about a decision, but at other times, we need to hear your thoughts before we decide what to do, and at other times it may be appropriate that we collaborate with the community to reach a decision together, or empower the community to make decisions themselves.

Often when Council is making an important, or significant decision, the way we engage is set by legislation and there is a process we must follow, but other times we determine how to engage. When deciding how significant a decision is for our communities, we look at a number of factors, including:

a) Who is affected by, or interested in the decision;

b) What the costs will be, and;

c) What the overall impact of the decision will be.

These factors are part of working out the best way to engage with our communities on the issue. Do we need to just tell the community it's happening? Do we need to ask the community for feedback on a draft proposal? Or will the best outcomes be reached if we involve the community every step of the way to design solutions to issues and make decisions?

The Significance and Engagement Policy guides Council's assessment of the significance of matters and sets out how and when our communities can expect us to engage, before making a final decision on both significant and less significant matters.

2. Legislative Framework

Council, under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), is an organisation of representative democracy. The LGA gives Council authority to make decisions for, and on behalf of the community and makes it accountable for those decisions through the election process.

Councils are also directed by the LGA to seek out and take account of community views in the process of decision-making.

One of the purposes of local government is "to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities".

Sections 76-81 of the LGA provide a framework which applies to all decision-making processes, including the consideration of community views. For each decision, Council determines how those requirements apply.

Council's decision-making is further framed by other things, such as the requirements of government policy, technical matters and financial implications. These matters can also influence engagement on an issue (e.g., if there is only one, or very limited viable options, such as a specific change required by new legislation).

Some decisions of Council are made under legislation with specific consultation processes for plans, policies or other matters. Examples of these are District Plans under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and Reserve Management Plans under the Reserves Act 1977. For most other matters there is a prescribed consultation process and Council must follow the requirements of the LGA. These are explained in the following section.

Regardless of the level of significance, if the decision is about a matter that has a prescribed legal process, Council must follow that process. However this does not mean that Council is limited to only engaging in accordance with the legislation. Council can choose to undertake additional engagement activities to support the decision-making process if this is considered appropriate.

3. Local Government Act 2002 Consultation Requirement

Consultation is one of the ways we engage to find out about community views and preferences before making a decision. We consult on certain decisions because we recognise how important they are to our communities, or because we are required to by statute, or both.

The LGA contains principles which guide consultation as well as some specific requirements. It refers to consultation in two different, but closely related ways: 'consultation' and the 'special consultative procedure' (SCP). As the name implies, the 'special consultative procedure' is a specific kind of consultation.

Section 82 and 82A Local Government Act

Section 82 of the LGA provides some overarching principles for consultation. This includes:

- Identify people who will be affected by, or have an interest in the decision;

- Provide them with reasonable access to relevant information in an appropriate format on the purpose and scope of the decision;
- Encourage people to give their views;
- Give people a reasonable opportunity to give their views in an appropriate way;
- Listen to, and consider those views, with an open mind, and;
- After the decision, provide access to the decision and any other relevant material.

Section 82A details some additional obligations if the consultation is a specific requirement under the LGA. Where this section applies Council also develops:

- A description of what we want to do and why;
- An analysis of the practical options (with advantages and disadvantages), and;
- A draft of the policy or relevant document (or details of the changes to any policy or document).

Section 83 – the Special Consultative Procedure (SCP)

The SCP builds on the principles of section 82 of the LGA as well as detailing additional requirements, including developing a 'statement of proposal' (SOP). An SOP is a document that provides detailed information on what the proposal is about and how people can provide their feedback. Depending on what the consultation is about, for example a Long Term Plan or a bylaw, the exact content requirements are further prescribed in the LGA. In some cases it requires the development of a specific consultation document, such as that required for the LTP or Annual Plan (in certain circumstances). In addition to meeting the principles of section 82, Council will:

- Make the SOP publicly available;
- Allow feedback to be provided for a minimum of one month;
- Ensure people are given an opportunity to present their views to Council through spoken interaction (or using sign language).

4. What is 'consultation' and what is 'engagement'?

Often the two terms 'consultation' and 'engagement' are used interchangeably, however, this is not accurate. Consultation is just one of the engagement options available, depending on the matter. Because Council is required by the LGA to undertake consultation for a range of reasons, it has become an easily recognisable term and process, for both Council and the community.

Consultation generally is when we develop a proposal, often a draft policy or plan, and then ask for the public's views on the draft proposal. Council then considered these views before deciding on what the final policy or plan should say.

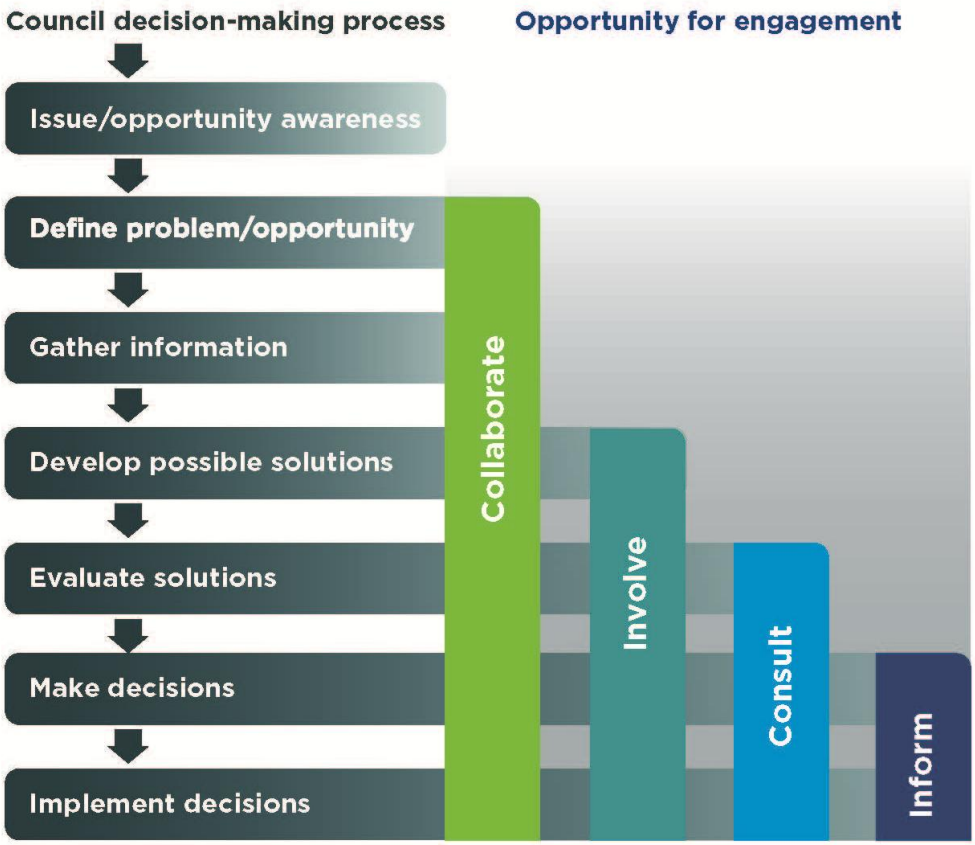
Most councils in New Zealand, including Timaru District Council, apply the principles developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) when talking about these matters.

The IAP2 developed the Spectrum of Public Participation to assist with the selection of the appropriate level of participation, or 'engagement' for the issues or problem. The graph below provides a summarized version of the Spectrum.



This means that engagement can range from letting the community know about the decisions, to supporting others to make their own decisions that Council then implements.

Another way of looking at the different types of engagement is to look at the steps in the decision-making process as an issue, proposal or decision progresses from development to final decision. The diagram below outlines the steps and the associated types of opportunities for participation.



The highest level of engagement, 'Empower' is not included in the above graph, nor in the flow-chart in Appendix B. This is because it is a non-standard engagement method that is generally used in exceptional circumstances, or outside of Council's formal decision-making process where Council's role is assisting others to make a decision. Often this kind of engagement is supported by Council through a framework of grants, advice and support.

Very occasionally, and in certain circumstances, Council may choose to empower the community to decide through a binding referendum. Council can also delegate decisions to a

group of people, for example a reserve management committee, or by allowing for the establishment of a Business Improvement District.

5. Māori

The Council recognises Kati Huirapa o Arowhenua holds manawhenua[1] status from the Rakaia to Waitaki rivers, including the Timaru District. As Crown partners under Te Tiriti o Waitangi the Timaru District Council recognises its obligations and responsibilities to enable manawhenua priorities and leadership.

Māori have a unique relationship with Councils through the Treaty of Waitangi and supporting legislation. This relationship is reflected in the requirements of the LGA to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi by maintaining or improving opportunities for Māori in local authority decision-making process.

The LGA requires Council to:

- Take into account Māori interests where any significant decisions are to be made affecting 'land or a body of water';
- Establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to council decision-making processes;
- Consider ways to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to council decision-making processes;
- Put in place processes to consult with Māori; and
- Assist Māori to better participate generally in decision-making.

Aside from the legislative requirements, the Council appreciates that Māori perspectives may offer different views of local issues and is keen for those views to be included in its deliberations.

Council considers it important to further develop relationships with Kati Huirapa o Arowhenua (Arowhenua) who represent those who hold manawhenua within the Timaru District. In doing so, the Council acknowledges the role of Arowhenua as the manawhenua. The Council; however, encourage both formal and informal opportunities for developing a closer relationship with groups representing local Māori who are not manawhenua.

The Council will ensure all its significant policy and decision-making processes include opportunities for discussion with mana whenua, through their mandated representatives, at the earliest opportunity and before decisions are made; and endeavor to provide resources to help facilitate that engagement. The Council acknowledges that the involvement of manawhenua in the Council decision making process is not restricted to matters directly affecting the Arowhenua.

The Council will respect the views expressed on behalf of mana whenua and foster close collaboration at an operational level. Council will offer places for rūnunga representatives on Council Committees, including the Environmental Services Committee, the Safer Communities Committee and the Local Arts Assessment Committee, and other bodies as appropriate, and seek regular engagement with manawhenua to discuss matters of common interest and foster

[1] Those who exercise customary authority or Rakatirataka (Chieftainship, decision making rights)

general relationships. Opportunities are also considered for appointments on planning and resource consent hearing committees.

To assist in this commitment and extending this relationship, Council has signed a Service Level Agreement with Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Ltd (AECL). AECL is mandated by Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua to help advise councils and other agencies on issues of interest to Arowhenua Rūnunga, to facilitate consultation with Arowhenua Rūnunga, and to ensure timely and appropriate input into policy, plans and processes on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua.

The Mayor may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to formally recognise the relationship with AECL and the expectations of it. Council's Senior Management will also make themselves available to meet with Arowhenua.

Part 2: Policy

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to:

1.1.1. Enable Council and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions and activities;

1.1.2. Provide clarity on how and when communities can expect to be engaged in the process of decision-making by Council;

1.1.3. Inform Council from the beginning of the decision-making process about the extent, form and type of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made.

2. Background

2.1. Section 76AA of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) requires Council to have a policy on significance and engagement that sets out:

2.1.1. The general approach Council takes to determining significance;

2.1.2. The criteria and procedures used by Council in assessing the extent to which something is significant, or may have significant consequences; and

2.1.3. How Council will respond to community preferences, and what the community can expect in terms of engagement on matters with different degrees of significance.

2.2. For further detail on the context, legislative framework and requirements, see the Introduction to Significance and Engagement attached to this policy.

3. Definitions

Engagement: The process of informing and seeking information from the community to assist with Council decision-making. There is a continuum of community involvement ranging from "Inform" to "Empower" (refer to Part One of this policy and Appendix B).

Significance:[2] In relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter that concerns or is before Council, means the degree of importance of the issue, proposal, decision, or matter as assessed by Council in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for, -

a) The current and future social, economic, environmental or cultural wellbeing of the district:

b) Any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision, or matter:

c) The capacity of Council to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.

[2] As defined in section 5 of the LGA.

Significant:[3] In relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that the issue, proposal, decision or other matter has a high degree of significance. The significance will fall somewhere on a continuum from low to high. At some point, a matter will transition from being not significant to being significant. This point is matter-specific and dependent on its individual circumstances.



Strategic Asset:[4] In relation to the assets held by Council, means an asset or group of assets that Council needs to retain in order to maintain Council's capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that Council determines to be important to the current or future wellbeing of the community; and includes –

d) Any asset or group of assets listed as strategic assets in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy; and

e) Any equity securities held by Council in a port company within the meaning of the Port Companies Act 1988.

Special Consultative Procedure: A defined and mandated form of public consultation set out in section 83 of the LGA.

4. Approach to Determining Significance

4.1. Council's approach to determining the degree of significance of an issue, proposal, decision, or other matter (the issue) will include:

4.1.1. The relevant Council officer undertaking an assessment of the issue in the earliest stages of a proposal against this Policy, which is reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team;

4.1.1.1. The Chief Executive may request that the Corporate and Communications Group undertake a separate assessment of significance, for example when an issue/ proposal is deemed to potentially contain a significant unbudgeted expense or variance, a high level of risk, require a significant redistribution of funds between Council units, or significantly affect a level of service or delivery of another, already approved Council activity. This will be aligned with the delegations contained Council's Delegations Manual.

4.1.1.2. Each report will receive a legal, financial and significance check as part of the review and approval process. The relevant aspects of each draft report are to be reviewed for legal content (by the Legal Services Manager or their

[3] As defined in section 5 of the LGA.
[4] As defined in section 5 of the LGA, as it relates to Timaru District Council.

appointed delegate), financial content (by the Chief Financial Officer or their appointed delegate), and assessment of significance (by the Group Manager Corporate and Communications or their appointed delegate).

4.1.2. All decision-making reports presented to Council will include a summary of the assessment of significance, and recommend a corresponding level of engagement.

4.1.3. Due consideration by Council of the assessment of significance and engagement prior to any resolution on an issue. Elected members can make their own significance assessment, and may resolve that any matter has a higher or lower level of significance than that assessed by officers.

4.1.4. Where decision-making authority has previously been delegated to a committee of Council, the Chief Executive, or a Council officer, a reassessment of significance will be carried out in instances when there is material change to any of the criteria listed in Part 2, Section 5. This includes consideration of whether the existing delegation continues to apply, or needs to be reconsidered by the delegator.

5. Criteria for Assessing Significance

5.1. Council will consider the following criteria when determining the degree of significance of an issue:

5.2. **Current and future impact on the community**, including the number of people affected by the issue/ proposal and the degree (including monetary cost to those affected) to which they might be affected;

5.3. **Impact on strategic assets**, being the effect of those assets listed in this policy on the purpose for which they are held by Council;

5.4. **Impact on levels of service**, being the expected degree to which Council's stated levels of service will be increased, decreased or affected;

5.5. **Extent of community interest**, being the level of community and media interest currently apparent, previously expressed or likely to be generated, and the extent to which the community holds united or divided views;

5.6. **Impact on manawhenua (Arowhenua Rūnanga),** taking into account the relationship of Māori to their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga;

5.7. **Impact on Council's financial position,** including expected costs to Council, revenue streams, and limits as stated in Council's Financial Strategy;

5.8. **Consistency with approved plans, strategies and policies,** being the extent to which an issue or proposal is aligned or already provided for within Council's strategies, policies, and the current Long Term Plan or Annual Plan;

5.9. **Impact on the environment**, including the expected impact of the issue or proposal on pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and the ability for these to be mitigated, and;

5.10. **Extent of risk**, including the level of financial, political, reputational, legal and health and safety risk the issue or proposal exposes Council to, and the expected level of difficulty to reverse the issue or proposal once a decision has been taken.

Note: any decision to alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of Council, and any decision to transfer ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from Council can only be made if provided for in a Long Term Plan, or as part of a Long Term Plan variation through the Annual Plan and consulted on accordingly.

Significant water services contracts and joint water service provider arrangements

5.11. Council will determine whether water services contracts or joint water service provider arrangements are significant for the purposes of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 (LGWSA 2025) by assessing them against the following criteria:

5.11.1. Whether the proposed contract or arrangement is of high value relative to the revenue that the provider receives from providing the water service to which the contract relates:

5.11.1.1. Specifically, for operating expenses (OPEX) contracts, whether the contract or arrangement has an aggregate per annum value of more than 25% of annual operating revenue of the applicable water service in the most recent financial year.

5.11.1.2. Specifically, for capital expenditure (CAPEX) contracts, whether the contract or arrangement has a total value of more than 10% of the most recent valuation of Council's property, plant and equipment for the applicable water service; or

5.11.2. Whether the proposed contract or arrangement will create a public-private partnership (as defined by s 23(4) of the LGWSA 2025); or

5.11.3. Whether it is deemed that the proposed contract or arrangement could risk Council's ability to meet its statutory obligations; or

5.11.4. Whether the proposed contract or arrangement exceeds any of the following thresholds:

5.11.4.1. The length of the contract or arrangement (excluding options for renewal or extensions) is greater than 15 years; or

5.11.4.2. The contract or arrangement alters the ownership or control of a listed Council strategic asset; or

5.11.4.3. If the matter is considered of high significance under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy standard criteria, it is likely to be considered a significant contract or arrangement.

5.12. The criteria operate independently; the contract or arrangement is deemed significant if any are triggered.

5.13. These criteria apply to any contracts or arrangement (including contracts that impact or enable the delivery of water services) entered into by Timaru District Council whilst it is a water services provider. The clause will cease to apply to contracts or arrangement entered into for any water services that transfer to Central South Island Water Limited which are effective from or after the date of transfer.

5.14. Where a contract or arrangement is identified as significant, engagement will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the LGWSA 2025 and any other applicable legislation. This consultation may be undertaken as part of a Long Term Plan or Annual Plan process if LGWSA 2025 requirements can be met.

5.15. However, Council will not usually consult on significant contracts or arrangements when the matter, proposal or project that the proposed contract or arrangement relates to has already been consulted on or approved through the Water Services Strategy, Water Services Delivery Plan, Long Term Plan or Annual Plan, and it is deemed that there are no substantive changes from what has already been consulted on.

5.16. Any consultation will not disclose any commercially sensitive information or include matters that would undermine the ability for Council to undertake a competitive commercial tender process.

5.17. Prior to the transfer of relevant water services to Central South Island Water Limited, the Joint Shareholders' Committee will be notified via tabled report about:

5.17.1. Whether any water service contracts or joint arrangements for relevant water services have been identified as significant; and

5.17.2. How any legislative requirements have been complied with, or will be complied with.

6. Engagement Principles

6.1. In considering the approach to engagement on any issue, Council will consider community preferences about engagement on decisions and will apply the following principles:

6.1.1. **Appropriateness –** Council will determine the appropriate level of engagement on a case-by-case basis, according to the degree of significance, and engagement will be tailored to meet the particular needs of each issue, budget considerations, the stakeholders involved and the context.

6.1.2. **Genuineness –** There is a genuine willingness on Council's behalf to engage with an open mind to ensure the community's views are included in the decision-making process.

6.1.3. **Timeliness –** Council will consider engagement early in the planning process to ensure the public can be involved in the decision-making process and to ensure sufficient time to allow genuine engagement. Timeframes for engagement can vary accordingly.

6.1.4. **Accessibility –** Council will provide reasonable access to engagement processes in a manner and format that is appropriate to people's needs. This will require varying methodologies, taking into account factors such as location, technology, social and cultural context.

6.1.5. **Information –** Council will provide relevant information to the issue under consideration, including options and consequences, in a manner that can be readily understood by interested or affected people.

6.1.6. **Diversity** – Council will endeavor to seek the views of a wide cross-section of the community, using the most appropriate ways of engaging with various representative groups in the community.

6.1.7. **Engaging with Māori –** Council will maintain and improve opportunities for iwi/Māori to contribute to Council's decision-making processes and will continue to work with iwi to refine and improve these processes.

6.1.8. **Feedback** – Council will provide information regarding the outcome of the decision-making process and the reasons for the decisions.

7. Engagement Processes

7.1. The degree of significance of an issue influences who is involved in the decision making process, and at what point they become involved. It also affects how much time and money Council will invest in exploring and evaluating options, and engaging with the community before making a decision.

7.2. Council will use the engagement spectrum to determine the most appropriate processes and methods for engagement with affected and interested communities on particular decisions or issues. This approach is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework.

7.3. For matters determined to have a high degree of significance, Council will, at a minimum, consult with the community in accordance with the requirements of section 82 of the LGA, except for matters with another prescribed statutory consultation process. In those cases, Council will consult in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. Council can choose, within its power, to engage on something where assessment under the policy does not indicate a high degree of significance.

7.4. An engagement plan, addressing Council's engagement principles, will be developed for proposals with a high degree of significance. Where an issue has been determined to have a lower degree of significance, Council must still decide what level of engagement with the community is appropriate.

7.5. The decision on the level of engagement for all issues will be informed by determining the level of significance as assessed against Council's stated criteria. In determining this, Council will consider:

7.5.1. The views of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, and Council's commitments to engage with the same (refer to the "Māori" section of this policy in Part One);

7.5.2. What, if any, aspect of the decision can change as a result of engagement due to the legislative, technical and operational aspects of the matter;

7.5.3. The decision-making requirements of the LGA and any other relevant legislation;

7.5.4. The characteristics of the interested or affected persons (e.g. geographically, or by interest, age or activity);

7.5.5. The length of time the matter relates (e.g. is it a one off decision or a ten year strategy), and;

7.5.6. Whether it is appropriate for Council to engage. The circumstances in which Council will not engage include:

7.5.6.1. Where no viable alternative is deemed to be available, including where a decision is necessary to comply with the law;

7.5.6.2. Emergency management activities during a declared State of Emergency;

7.5.6.3. Urgent matters where an immediate or quick response is required, including for the protection of life, property and the environment;

7.5.6.4. A commercially sensitive or confidential matter, including to protect the privacy of individuals;

7.5.6.5. Where Council deems that it already has a comprehensive understanding of the views and preference of the interested or affected persons, and;

7.5.6.6. Where the matter relates to a policy, strategy or plan that Council has already consulted on recently.

7.6. While the above criteria will assist in determining the level of engagement and who to engage with, these details are also informed by the specific situation. Just because a matter has a higher level of significance compared to another matter, it does not mean that a higher level of engagement is necessarily appropriate and vice versa.

7.7. See Appendix A and Appendix B for additional information about how to apply engagement principles.

8. Strategic Assets

8.1. The LGA requires that Council identify and list the assets considered to be strategic assets (including strategic water service assets under the LGWSA 2025) (see Glossary).[5]

8.2. Any decision to transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the local authority must be explicitly provided for in a Long Term Plan, following community consultation.[6] Note that this includes a Long Term Plan variation through the Annual Plan.

8.3. Council considers the following assets, or groups of assets, to be strategic:

8.3.1. Council's equity securities in Timaru District Holding Ltd;

8.3.2. Council's housing assets as a whole;

8.3.3. Cultural and Learning Facilities as a whole;

8.3.4. District cemeteries as a whole;

8.3.5. Parks facilities as a whole;

8.3.6. Recreational facilities as a whole;

8.3.7. Redruth Landfill;

8.3.8. Roading network as a whole;

8.3.9. Timaru Airport, and;

[5] Section 76AA
[6] Section 97 and 93E of the LGA

8.3.10. Water supply, Wastewater and Stormwater networks as a whole.

8.4. To remove doubt, strategic assets as defined above are the assets as a whole entity and not the individual elements of that asset. The requirements of section 97 of the LGA are only triggered if the proposal relates to the asset as a whole, or where it would materially affect the nature and operation of the asset.

8.5. Nothing in this section precludes Council from engaging with the community when proposing the transfer of ownership or control of any other Council asset, through Long Term Plan consultation, or other mechanisms as determined by this policy.

Delegations, References and Revision History

Delegations
Identify here any delegations related to the policy for it to be operative or required as a result of the policy

Delegations Register Reference	Delegation
	While there are no specific delegations relating to this policy or its implementation, wherever decision-making ability has been delegated by Council to a committee or officer, the responsibility of assessing the significance of a decision or an issue, and the resulting engagement required accompanies this delegation.

References
Include here reference to any documents related to the policy (e.g. operating guidelines, procedures)

Document Reference	Title
www.iap2.org	International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework
Local Government Act 2002 (LGA)	Sections 76AA-81, 93E, 97

Revision History
Summary of the development and review of the policy

Revision	Owner	Date Approved	Approval By	Next Review	Doc Ref
1	Strategy and Corporate Planning Manager	15 February 2021	Timaru District Council	September 2023	#1404319
2	Group Manager Corporate and Communications	1 July 2024	Timaru District Council	As part of the 2027-37 LTP	#1584635
2.1	Group Manager Corporate	27 October 2026	Council	As part of the 2027-37 LTP	#1879586

Appendix A: Assessment of Significance

The below table is a tool intended to assist in assessing the significance of an issue/ proposal. The Corporate Planning, Strategy and Governance Group are available to assist Council staff with this process and determination.

Step 1. Apply each of the "Criteria" and their associated "Factors to consider" to the issue/ proposal in question. Determine whether, for each criterion, the issue/ proposal meets the "High", "Medium" or "Low" level of significance. The examples given are intended to be illustrative and provide a guide, rather than be determinative.

Step 2. Determine an interim overall level of significance by considering the number of "High", "Medium" and "Low" ratings. For example, visually, where does the centre of gravity appear to lie? Discussion with the Corporate Planning, Strategy and Governance Group is encouraged if there are a large number that are rated "High" (four or more of the nine criteria, for instance).

Step 3. Consider whether there are any extenuating circumstances that mean that one or more criteria require additional weighting (where it counts more than another criteria), and therefore the issue/ proposal requires a different overall assessment of significance. It is important to note that the criteria do not necessarily have to be equal. Take the example of managed retreat due to coastal erosion at Rangitata Huts. Whilst the number of people affected may be relatively low, the impact on them would be so significant (the cost and disruption of relocating homes and moving to a new community) that the "impact on community" criteria would be given additional weighting relative to the others.

Step 4. Determine what the final overall level of significance is. It may be "High", "Medium" or "Low", or a range such as "Low – Medium".

It is important to use careful and professional judgement when assessing significance as it is, by its nature, subjective. It is not a prescriptive exercise, and any particular issue/ proposal needs to be considered on its merits and individual circumstances. What is significant for one type of Council activity may be less significant for another activity.

		Examples may include		
Criteria	**Factors to consider**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Impact on community	What number of people are affected, and to what extent? What is the potential for the impact to be more significant or widespread than intended?	*More than 500 people affected.* *Daily lives impacted to a significant extent on an ongoing basis.* *Costs incurred are significant relative to means.* *E.g. Rangitata Huts managed retreat from coastal erosion*	*Less than 500 people affected.* *Daily lives impacted to some extent.* *Some costs incurred but are not significant.* *E.g. Road closed for a month to upgrade safety features*	*Less than 100 people affected.* *Negligible or low impact on daily lives.* *Costs incurred are nil or minor.* *E.g. expansion of Fresh Air Project on Stafford Street*
Impact on strategic assets	Does the proposal affect a Council strategic asset? If yes, how?	*Sale or transfer of a strategic assets.* *E.g. proposal to centralise or privatise water network and services*	*Partial sale or transfer of an entire strategic asset, or entire sale and transfer of an non-strategic asset of high to moderate value* *E.g. sale of current Timaru Library building if library services have relocated*	*Sale or transfer of a non-strategic asset of low value* *E.g. sale of a low-value building deemed surplus to requirements*
Impact on levels of service	Does the proposal affect Council's stated levels of service for a particular activity? If yes, does it increase or decrease the level of service?	*High impact on levels of service.* *A new service created or existing service removed.* *High number of people affected.* *Level of service affected for an extended period.* *E.g. Aorangi Stadium/ grounds/ unavailable for a year whilst new stadium constructed*	*Medium impact on levels of service.* *Levels of service increased or decreased, but not to a significant extent.* *Moderate number of people affected.* *Impact occurs for a relatively short duration.* *E.g. CBay closure for a month for renovation*	*Minor to nil impact on levels of service.* *Low number of people affected.* *Impact occurs for a short duration.* *E.g. upgrade to small-scale water scheme*

		Examples may include		
Criteria	**Factors to consider**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Extent of community interest	Do the community and/ or media have a current or likely future interest in what is proposed?	*Significant, known public or media interest.* *Likely to be a regional or national or regional "front page" issue, or have sustained social media coverage.* *E.g. building a new stadium*	*Moderate public or media interest.* *Likely to receive coverage in a local or community paper, or have short-term social media coverage.* *E.g. amendment to Dog Bylaw*	*Low to no public or media interest.* *Not likely to feature in traditional media.* *Social media coverage likely to be minor to nil.* *E.g. amending Backflow Prevention Policy schedules*
Impact on manawhenua (Arowhenua)	Is the issue of interest to, or will affect, Arowhenua, and, if so, to what extent?	*Yes/ High.* *Relates to a body of water, land or taonga that Arowhenua have an interest in.* *E.g. District Plan review*	*Some interest, but not to a high or specific extent.* *E.g. Climate Change Policy*	*No special interest.* *E.g. Local Alcohol Policy*
Impact on Council's financial position	How does the proposal affect Council's reserves, rates, fees and charges or debt? What is the unbudgeted expense, or variance from a prior approval?	*Significant impact on Council's finances.* *Could impact Council's debt cap.* *High unbudgeted cost or variance.* *E.g. extent of provision for, or revaluing of assets leading to increases in, depreciation*	*Moderate impact on Council's finances.* *Medium impact on reserves, rates, fees and charges or debt overall.* *E.g. Fraser Park grant*	*Low to negligible impact on overall finances.* *Proposal able to be met within existing budgets.* *E.g. CPI-indexed change to existing contract*

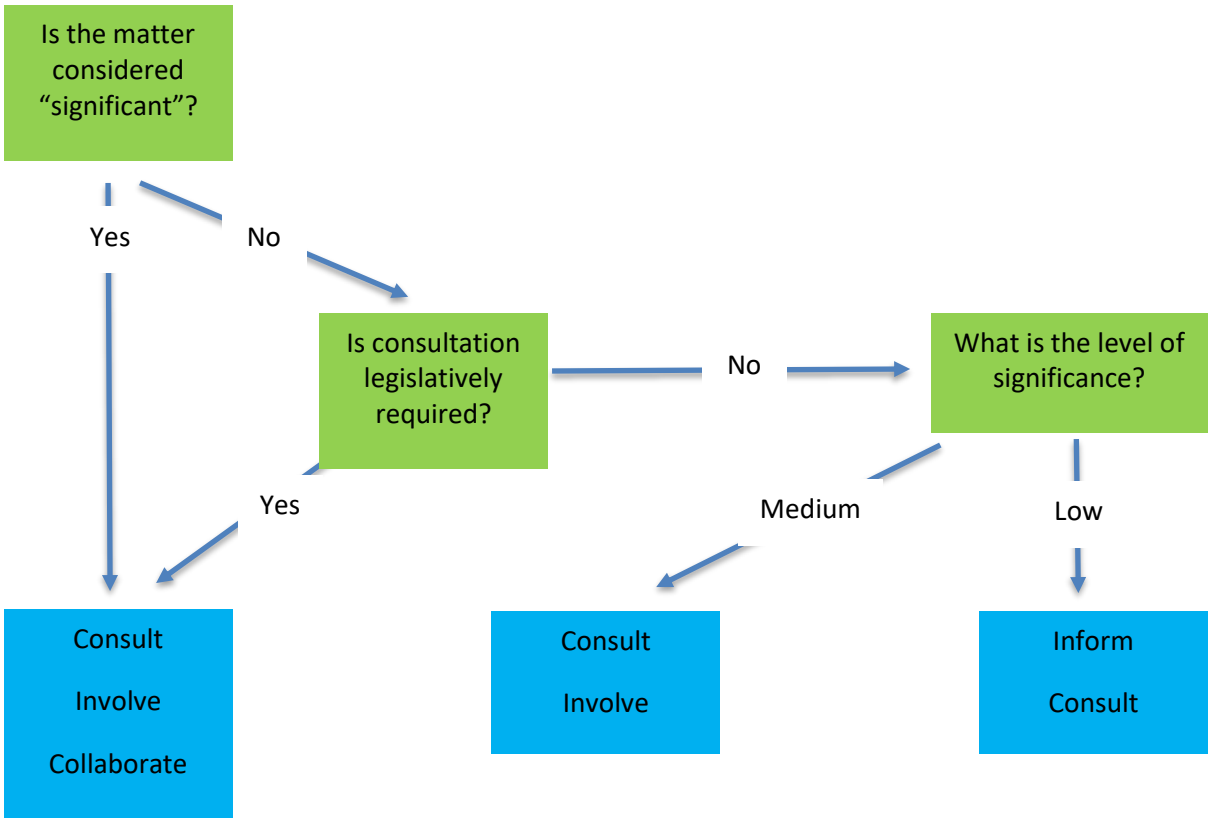
		Examples may include		
Criteria	**Factors to consider**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Consistency with approved plans, strategies and policies	Is the proposal aligned with Council's current plans, as articulated in the Long Term Plan or Annual Plan? Is it consistent with existing strategies and policies? If no, what is the difference?	*High degree of inconsistency with Council plans, strategies, and policies.* *A response to an unexpected issue or opportunity.* *Community has not been previously consulted.* *E.g. urgent upgrade of Temuka residential water supply due to presence of asbestos*	*A moderate degree of inconsistency with Council plans, strategies, and policies.* *Perhaps an extension of a previous proposal.* *Community has been consulted on the broad topic within the past five years.* *E.g. extending the scope of the proposed Heritage Facility*	*Consistent with existing Council plans, strategies, and policies.* *"Business as Usual".* *The community is deemed to have a good understanding of the issue/s and options.* *E.g. upgrading CBD footpath tiles*
Impact on the environment	How does the proposal affect pollution in the natural environment, e.g. impact on waterways or habitats? Is the proposal consistent with Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals? Can any negative impacts be mitigated?	*High pollution likelihood/ risk.* *Not consistent with Council's GHG reduction goals, e.g. a high increase in emissions relative to another option.* *Difficult or expensive to mitigate.* *E.g. Introduction of waste incinerator at Redruth*	*Reasonable likelihood of pollution occurring.* *A medium degree of inconsistency with Council's GHG reduction goals.* *Mitigation options are available but potentially expensive.* *E.g. large sealed area created for vehicle parking on a former playing field*	*No impact, or reduction of pollution.* *No impact, or reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.* *Mitigation options are available, affordable, and effective.* *E.g. increased buffer capacity for sewerage ponds to reduce frequency of local discharges into rivers after rainstorms*

		Examples may include		
Criteria	**Factors to consider**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Extent of risk	What is the overall level of risk (financial, political, reputational, legal, health and safety, etc) of what is proposed? Could the decision be reversed, and how easily? How well understood are possible adverse effects and unintended consequences?	*Significant risks are present. There is a low, or expensive, degree of reversibility. Adverse effects and unintended consequences have not been considered to a meaningful extent. E.g. deferral of infrastructure projects which may lead to non-compliance with national standards*	*Some risk, but this is not deemed to be significant. Adverse effects and unintended consequences are well-scoped and can be mitigated. E.g. decision to proceed to detailed design for the Theatre Royal*	*Minor to negligible risk, or a potential opportunity. The decision to be made is not determinative, i.e. there is the opportunity for changes to be made. Adverse effects and unintended consequences are well understood. E.g. change to operational PPE*

Appendix B: Identification of Engagement Method

Once a degree of significance has been assessed, it is then necessary to use this determination to identify the appropriate corresponding engagement method.

The flow-chart and table below assist to determine what types of engagement methods may be suitable for any particular matter. These should be actioned in conjunction with the Engagement Processes section earlier in this policy. Further, where the issue or proposal is of significance to Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, refer to the "Māori" section in part one of this policy.



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
What does it involve	One-way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.	Two-way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives, and proposals to inform final decision making.	Participatory process designed to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision-making.	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.	The final decision making is in the hands of the public.
Types of issues that we might use this for	Annual Report, Infrastructure upgrades, Water restrictions.	Rates review, Bylaw reviews, Local Alcohol Policy.	District Plan, Long Term Plan, Infrastructure projects, policy development.	Representation Review, Canterbury Water Management Strategy, significant capital projects, matters of significant community interest.	Local body elections; when central government that mandate a local referendum; matters deemed to have exceptional community interest.
Tools Council might use	Websites, information flyers, advertising, public notices, media releases, newsletters, Council Noticeboard.	Formal submissions and hearings consultation processes, informal meetings, focus groups, surveys, expos, roadshows.	Workshops, Focus groups, Community Boards, Youth Councils, Public meetings, surveys.	Multi stakeholder process, Joint Committees, face to face liaison, working parties.	Referendums, local group involvement, advisory groups, citizens panels, participatory budgeting.
When the community can expect to be involved	Council would generally advise the community once a decision is made.	Council would generally advise the community once a draft decision is made and would generally provide the community with up to four weeks to participate and respond.	Council would generally involve the community at the refining state of the options.	Council would generally involve the community at the start to scope the issue, again after information has been collected and again when options are being considered.	As a non-standard engagement method, the point at which the community would become involved is situation-specific.