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# SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY SUMMARY

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to identify the degree of significance of issues or decisions; to provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions; and, to inform the Council about the extent and form of public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made.

## WHAT IS SIGNIFICANCE?

**Significance** – means the degree of importance of the issue, proposal, decision, or matter, as assessed by the Council, in terms of its likely impact on:

- the current and future social, economic, environmental, or cultural well-being of the District or region
- any persons likely to be particularly affected by, or interested, and
- the capacity of the Council to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.

The level of significance is a continuum and determining the significance of a matter is an exercise of judgment. The Council uses the following to determine the level of significance:

- Does the decision relate to an asset that is a 'strategic asset'<sup>13</sup>.
- Is there, or likely to be, a substantial change in the level of service provided by Council.
- Is there, likely to be, or has there been:
  - » a high level of community interest in a proposal or decision; or
  - » controversy in the context of the impact or consequence of the change; or
  - » an impact on the social, economic, environmental or cultural well-being of the community in the present or for the future; or

- » a specific area affected (e.g. geographic area, or area of a community by interest, age or activity); or
  - » an impact or consequence relating to the duration of the effect arising from a proposal, decision or activity.
- Will the decision substantially impact on the District's ability to mitigate or adapt to climate change.
  - Will the decision substantially affect Council debt, rates on residents or the financial figures in any one year or more of the Long Term Plan (LTP).
  - Does the decision involve the sale of a substantial proportion of, or controlling interest in, the Council's shareholding in any Council-controlled trading organisation or Council-controlled organisation.
  - Does the decision involve entry into any partnership with the private sector to carry out a significant activity; or any new proposal to contract out the delivery of any Council group of activities.
  - Does the decision involve Council exiting an existing activity or adding a new group of activities.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE HAS BEEN DETERMINED?

Once Council has decided what level of significance an issue has, it will consider how it should engage with its communities. In general, if a decision has a high level of significance the Council can be expected to make greater efforts to ensure it understands the views of interested and affected parties.

Enabling effective participation of individuals and communities in the decision-making of councils is the primary purpose of consulting with the community. This will enable elected representatives to make better-informed decisions on behalf of those they represent.

The exact form and extent of consultation and engagement will be determined by Council on a case by case basis, including considering the level of significance of the matter and any statutory requirements.

13. Strategic asset, means an asset or group of assets that the Council needs to retain to maintain the Council's capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that the local authority determines to be important to the future well-being of the community; and includes any land or building owned by the local authority and required to maintain the local authority's capacity to provide affordable housing as part of its social policy; and any equity securities held by the Council in a port a company or an airport company.

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### ENGAGEMENT WITH IWI/MAORI

Council will honour all engagement processes, agreements and memorandums of understanding developed with iwi/Māori as they relate to its decision-making policies. The Council's Fostering Māori Participation in Council Decision-Making through Ngā Iwi/Council Partnership statement is on page 251 of this document.

### INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The Council typically engages at early engagement stage (i.e. prior to Council having decided on a draft plan, policy or proposed option) and/or when it has decided on a draft plan, policy or proposed option.

At either stage the Council will make information available about the issue being addressed; any options identified and their consequences; how participants can provide their views; the timeframe; and the likely subsequent stages in engagement and decision making.

### COUNCIL DECISION MAKING

In making its decisions the Council will consider the views of interested or affected parties, along with a number of other relevant factors.

Once the decision has been made the Council will make available clear records, or descriptions of the decisions, where engagement has taken place.

The full Significance and Engagement Policy can be viewed on the Council's website [www.tasman.govt.nz/my-council/key-documents/more/governance-policies/](http://www.tasman.govt.nz/my-council/key-documents/more/governance-policies/)

