



Engagement and Significance Policy							
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<b>Approved by</b>	Council						
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		2024	1yr		2yr		3yr
<b>Policy owner</b>	Communications Manager						

## Purpose

The decisions Council make affect its communities on a daily basis. The purpose of this policy is to let the community know how and when they can expect to be engaged informed/consulted in Council’s decision-making processes. This policy will tell you:

- When the community can expect to be engaged (consulted) with;
- What decisions Council and the community think are particularly significant (important);
- How Council will assess the significance (importance) of the decisions.
- How the community can expect to be engaged (consulted) with;

## Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
<b>Community</b>	<p>A group of people—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• living in the same place; or</li> <li>• having a particular interest or characteristic in common; or</li> <li>• owning property in the same place.</li> </ul> <p>It includes interested parties, affected people and key stakeholders.</p>
<b>Decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refers to all the decisions made by or on behalf of Council including those made by officers under delegation. (Management decisions made by officers under delegation during the implementation of council decisions will not be considered significant).</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process of involving the community in decision-making (see engagement levels and methods matrix)</li> </ul>
<b>Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision to be made by Council on a specific issue, asset or activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter that concerns or is before a local authority, means the degree of importance of the issue, proposal, decision, or matter, as assessed by the local authority, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the district or region;</li> <li>• any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision, or matter;</li> </ul> the capacity of the local authority to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so. </li> </ul>

Term	Definition
<b>Strategic Asset</b>	<p>The assets and groups of assets in terms of s.90(2) that Marlborough District Council considers to be strategic are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local roading network as a whole.</li> <li>• District storm water networks.</li> <li>• District water supply networks.</li> <li>• District sewerage networks.</li> <li>• River control assets.</li> <li>• Shares in MDC Holdings Ltd.</li> <li>• Commercial forestry known as Marlborough Regional Forestry.</li> </ul>

## Statements

1. Community engagement helps to strengthen the legitimacy of decisions. It enables communities to influence decisions and it increases the accountability of Council. It ensures the community are aware and can respond to Council proposals based on a range of knowledge, views and values.
2. When Council has a proposal, it needs to decide whether and how to engage (consult) with the community, individuals or particular interest groups. Council has to apply the principles of engagement set out in the Local Government Act 2002 when deciding what process to follow when consulting on a particular proposal. Council will use this policy when deciding how to consult or engage.
3. This policy is in four parts:
  - (a) Engagement - describes when Council will engage with the community;
  - (b) Significance - describes how Council decides if a proposal is significant (important). The level of significance (together with other factors set out in this policy) then determines what level of engagement is required;
  - (c) Details on community preferences about engagement and the Engagement Levels and Methods Matrix; and
  - (d) A brief description of the Special Consultative Procedure.

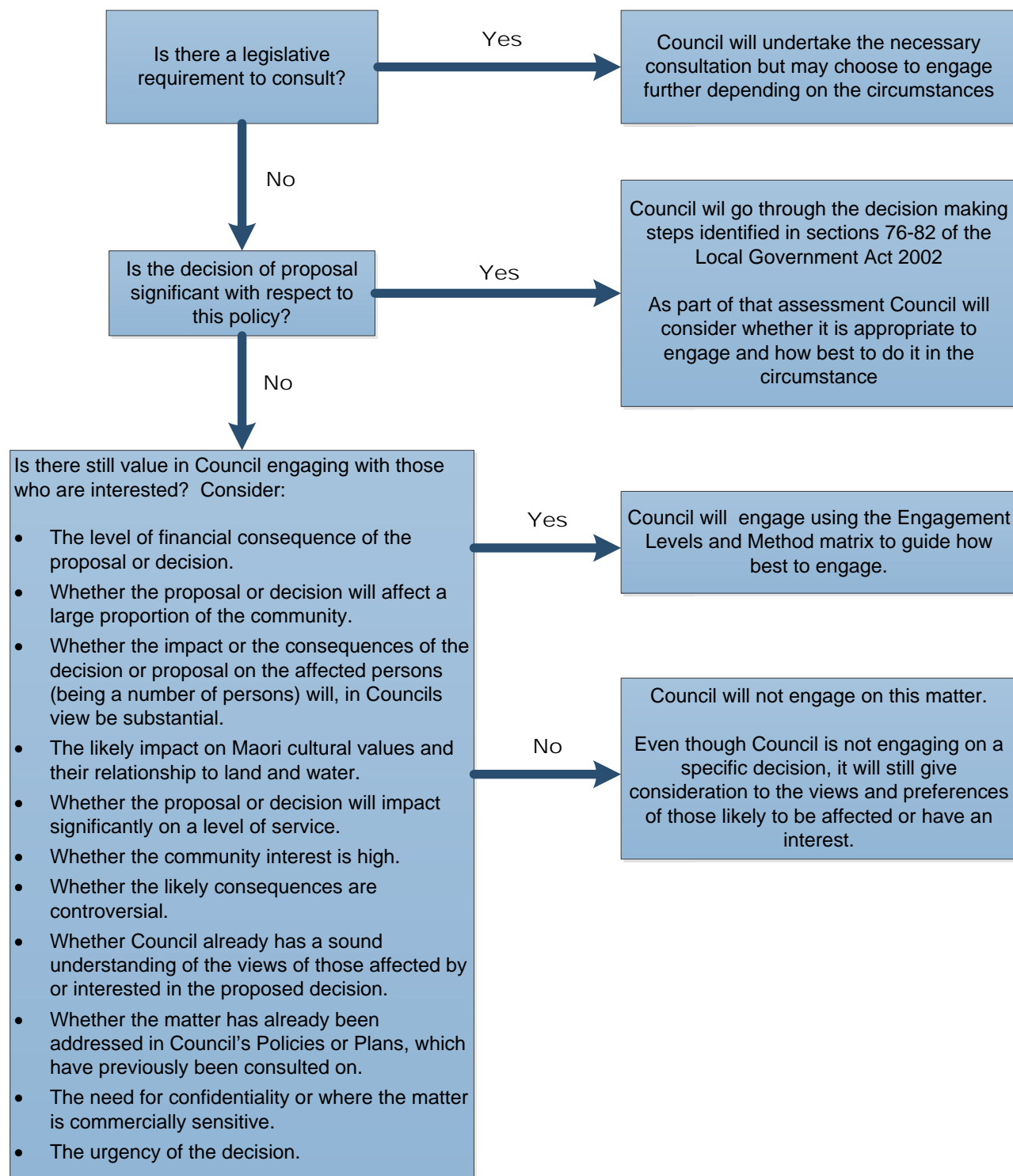
### Engagement with Māori

4. Council has a current policy on engagement with Māori, the Māori Capacity Development Policy, made under section 81 of the Local Government Act 2002. Council will continue to engage with Māori under that Policy. Council and Marlborough's tangata whenua iwi are reviewing the basis on which they interact. This review is likely to result in a dedicated Maori engagement policy.

## Engagement

5. Council is committed to effective engagement with Marlborough's communities on what matters to them. In return people expect to have the opportunity to be involved and have their say.
6. This part of the policy describes:
  - (a) The process to determine whether Council will engage with the community?
  - (b) When Council will not engage with the community.
  - (c) Feedback on decisions made.
7. Unless engagement is required by statute, it is open to Council to decide whether engagement is required in order to determine community views, and if so, the nature and extent of consultation
8. If the proposal or decision is affected by a number of the considerations below it is more likely to have a higher need of engagement.

## Process to determine whether Council will engage with the community



### When Council will not engage with the community

9. There are times when it is not necessary, appropriate or possible to engage with the community on a proposal or decision. These include:
  - (a) On decisions to take (or not take) enforcement action in a particular case (even where the matter may be highly significant under this Policy (for example, where the matter has high public interest)).

- (b) In emergency situations where an immediate response is necessary.
- (c) On administrative matters (for example, tendering and contracting, delegations, appointments (staff, commissioners, directors, and trustees), insurance and risk management).

#### **Feedback on decisions made**

10. Council will make sure that the public is told what choices and decisions were made and why. Council will endeavour to directly contact everyone who had input or made a submission. Council may use the media or the Council website to let people know.

### **Significant Proposals and Decisions**

11. This part of the Policy describes:
  - (a) The criteria or procedures Council will use to assess significance
  - (b) The approach Council will take to determining the significance of proposals and decisions. How significant a proposal or decision is has a direct impact on the level of consultation required.
12. Marlborough District Council will consider any decisions concerning the following as significant:
  - (a) Expenditure on issues, assets, or other matters (not including strategic assets) that represent more than 10% of Council's total budgeted annual income.
  - (b) Any transfer of ownership or control to or from the Council, or the construction, replacement or abandonment, of a strategic asset as defined by the Act or listed in this policy.
  - (c) Reducing Council's shareholding in any Council Controlled Organisation and Joint Operating Committee below 100% of the shareholding held as at 30 June 2012.
  - (d) Entry into any partnership with the private sector to carry out a significant activity.
  - (e) Whether an affected asset is a strategic asset within the meaning of the Act or listed in this policy.
13. Degrees of significance will be determined after consideration of the following criteria:
  - (f) Whether an affected asset is a strategic asset within the meaning of the Act or listed in this policy.
  - (g) The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the level of service in carrying out any significant activity.
  - (h) The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the capacity of the Council to provide any significant service or carry out any significant activity.

### **Engagement Levels and Methods Matrix**

14. This part of the Policy details community preferences for engagement and the engagement levels and methods matrix.

#### **Community preferences for engagement**

15. Many interest groups and communities already effectively engage with Council on an on-going basis. Council will continue to support existing community and interest groups in engaging with Council.
16. Council has established the "Smart and Connected" programme which brings together industries and interest groups to better manage their futures. The Smart and Connected economic strategy aims to create a partnership between Council and the community to promote the vision for Marlborough.
17. Council will look for other opportunities for communities and interest groups to engage with Council in this way. These opportunities may be single-issue or ongoing. They may involve establishing forums for communities and new Smart and Connected Cluster groups. These forums and groups allow people to express their views to Council on matters affecting them, allows Council to provide information of interest to them, and Council can assist them to make decisions for their future development.

18. When engaging with the community, Council will apply the following principles:
- (a) Undertake the engagement with an open mind. (Council expects other people involved in the engagement to also have an open mind)
  - (b) Be fair, informal and not too bureaucratic.
  - (c) Seek the views of interested and affected people.
  - (d) Seek the views of the people who it does not normally hear from.
  - (e) Give people relevant and easily understood information in a way that suits them.
  - (f) Use plain language.
  - (g) Make it easy for people to give their views to the Council.
  - (h) Engage in the community by going to where people are and not always expecting them to come to the Council.
  - (i) Involve people right through the decision making process.
  - (j) Give people time to think about the issues and respond to them.
  - (k) Be clear about the process being used and the levels of influence that people have.
  - (l) Be receptive to new ideas.
  - (m) Give people involved in the engagement a response to the issues they raise.
  - (n) Undertake the engagement in a cost effective way.
19. Council will look for other ways to engage with the community over the term of this Policy.
20. Council will use a variety of methods of engagement. The methods will vary greatly in accordance with the significance of the decision to be made in accordance with this policy and more than one method may be used over time on one project.

**Engagement levels and methods matrix**

Level	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<b>What does it involve</b>	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 decision making	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making	Working in partnership to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions. Sharing of resources (e.g. people) for a common purpose.	The final decision making is in the hands of the public. Under the LGA 2002, the Mayor and Councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of their constituents
<b>Types of issues that we might use this for</b>	Water restrictions	Rates review	Smart & Connected Leadership Groups	Resource Management Plan Review	Election voting systems (MMP, STV or first past the post)
<b>Tools Council might use</b>	Websites Social media Information flyer Public notices Public meetings Community papers	Formal submissions and hearings, focus groups, surveys (for example, phone and web—based polling surveys)	Workshops Focus groups	External or joint working groups (involving community experts or stakeholders)	Binding referendum Local body elections
<b>When the community can expect to be involved</b>	Council would generally advise the community once a decision is made	Council would advise the community once a proposal is determined by Council and would generally provide the community with at least 4 weeks to participate and respond	Council would generally provide the community with a greater lead in time to allow them time to be involved in the process	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	Council would generally provide the community with a greater lead in time to allow them time to be fully involved in the process

Note: the tools described in each column may also include tools described to the left of that column

## Brief description of the special consultative procedure

21. The special consultative procedure is an open invitation to the public to be involved in decision making. It is used when the issue to be decided on affects the whole of Marlborough or all ratepayers and residents in Marlborough are likely to be interested in the decision to be made. It is a formal process that is set out in the Local Government Act 2002. The main steps in the process are:
- (a) Council issues a statement of proposal which is open for the community to provide views. It remains open for at least a month. The community can make a submission on the proposal.
  - (b) Council will hold a hearing if the community want to present their views in person.
  - (c) Council makes a decision on the proposal taking into account the views expressed.
  - (d) The process can take four to six months (or even longer) to complete.
  - (e) Council will provide an opportunity for people to present their views in a manner that enables spoken (or NZ sign language) interaction between the person and Council, if requested.
  - (f) Council may allow a person to present their views by audio or audio-visual link, if requested.
  - (g) Council will ensure that the consultation documents are accessible to the public and that the fact the proposal is open for consultation widely known (for example, on Council's website).

## References

Name	Location
Local Government Act	
Resource Management Act	<a href="http://www.legislation.govt.nz">www.legislation.govt.nz</a>
Reserves Act	
Public version of policy	link

## Record of Amendments/Revisions

Details	Approval by whom	Date
Revision of Significance and Engagement Policy	Communications Manager	2016