

Significance and Engagement Policy

**Adopted by the Gore District Council
4 November 2014**

Purpose

The Gore District Council has developed the Significance and Engagement Policy (the Policy) to let people know when and how they can expect to be involved in the Council's decision-making processes.

The aims are to:

- Ensure a clear and consistent approach to how we engage with residents, ratepayers and stakeholders
- Ensure residents, ratepayers and stakeholders get accurate information in a timely manner so they can make informed comment during the decision making process

This is also a guide to elected members and Council staff as to what level and form of engagement may be required from the start of a decision-making process.

The Policy replaces the existing Significance Policy and Consultation Policy.

Significance

The Policy shows how the Council will assess importance during a decision-making process, ie its level of significance. The level of significance is a guide to the degree of community engagement that may be required to gain an understanding of community views and preferences on an issue.

Approach to determining significance

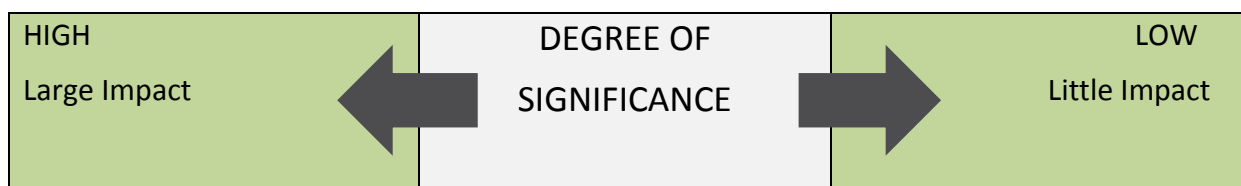
The decision on a matter's significance rests with the Council. It will evaluate significance on a case-by-case basis.

The Council will take into account the impact on or consequences for the District, affected parties, our community outcomes (Long Term Plan), benefits and costs, and the view of local iwi.

Decisions of low significance, including some decisions made under delegated authority, may not explicitly state the degree of significance.

Assessment of significance

The thresholds and criteria for determining significance



Thresholds






- Expenditure of more than \$1million;
- Community interest - taking into account the extent to which individuals, groups, organisations and sectors of the community will be affected by a Council decision;
- The impact on the Council’s capacity and capability to carry out any activity identified in the Long Term Plan, Annual Plan and Financial Strategy; and
- Inconsistency with existing policy and strategy.
















Criteria

- Whether the asset is a strategic asset or listed in this policy;
- The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the level of service in carrying out any significant activity;
- The extent to which there is, or is likely to be, a change in the way in which any significant activity is carried out; and
- 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.

Council officers will need to take significance into consideration when making a recommendation to the Council. The final decision about the significance of any matter rests with elected members. Other factors may be taken into consideration when determining significance, such as urgency, commercial sensitivity or the public good.

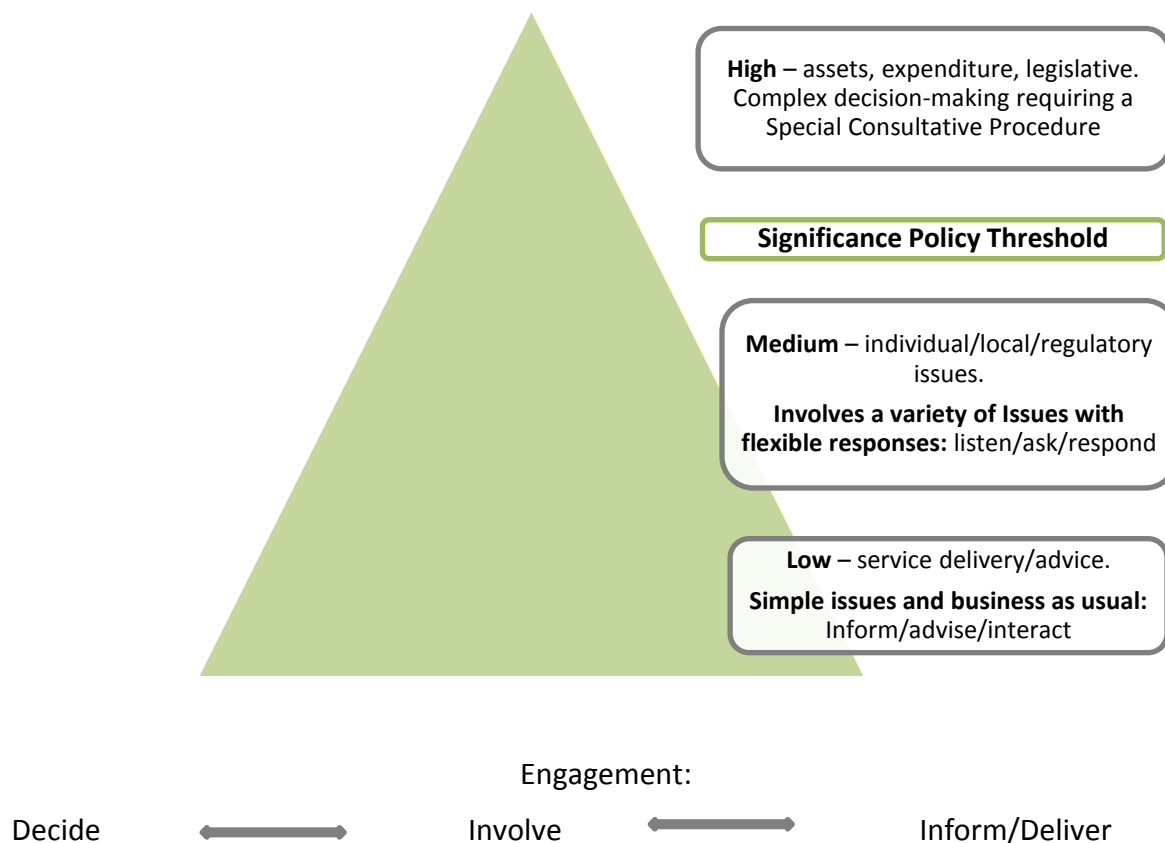
Strategic assets

Activity	Asset	Strategic Issues			
		Economic	Social	Cultural	Environmental
Water Supply	The water supply network, including reservoirs, treatment plants, pump stations and reticulation				
Community Services	The District’s libraries				

	The reserves lands including land held under the Reserves Act and land used for parks, reserve, cemeteries, sports fields and recreation areas.				
	The land and buildings used for the administration of the District				
	The land, buildings and commercial operations of the Gore heritage precinct.				
	The District's aquatic facilities				
	The land and buildings that make up our community halls, civic centres and community centres.				
Roading	The Gore District roading network				
Land Drainage	The land drainage system including the stormwater pipe network, the open river system, waterways, wetlands and retention basins.				
Wastewater	The wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system including the sewers, pump stations and the treatment works.				

Engagement

Engagement occurs at all levels of the Council's interaction with the community, from the provision of services and information through to special consultation and significant decisions. What matters is the needs and expectations of the community are continually delivered in a cost-effective manner, and the level of engagement is appropriate to the issue in question.



The Council will not engage on every issue. We know ‘consultation fatigue’ or over consultation can cause people to tune out. Therefore we will concentrate on having the right conversations on the issues that are genuinely significant. Even when the Council does not consult, consideration will be given to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the matter. This will be in proportion to the significance of the matter.

Some of the things we may not ask about include:

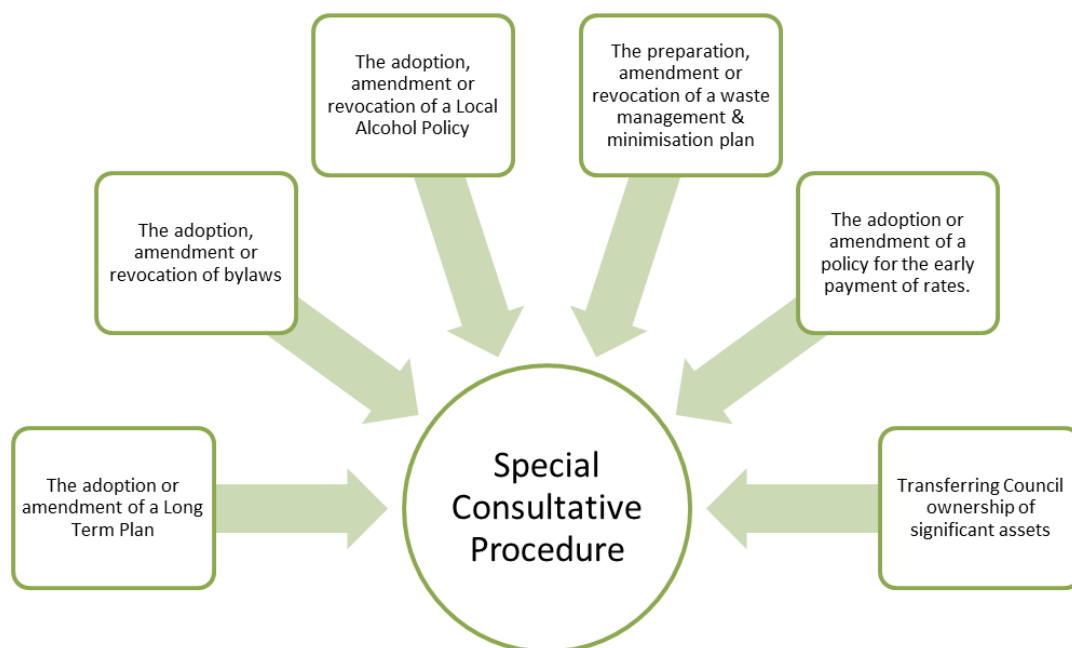
- Emergency management activities and during a state of emergency,
- When the matter has already been addressed by our policies or plans,
- There is a need for commercial sensitivity,
- Organisational decisions that do not materially reduce a level of service,
- Decisions in relation to regulatory and enforcement activities,
- Decisions to act where it is necessary to -
 - Comply with the law
 - Save or protect life, health or amenity
 - Prevent serious damage to property

Much of the Council’s service delivery and regulatory work is provided to the community by Council staff who report on their activities to the Council. Issues of concern to individuals or groups requiring a decision by the Council may involve more complex engagement, including consultation, public forums, surveys and submissions.

Issues considered of high significance by meeting one or more of the thresholds and criteria set out in this policy will be dealt with by a Special Consultative Procedure.

What is the Special Consultative Procedure requirement?

A Special Consultative Procedure (SCP) is a more formal process than asking for feedback. The Council is required to give the community at least one month to make formal submissions on a proposal and make these submissions publicly available. It will be used when required by law, and when the Council considers there is a high degree of significance in the issue.



Consultation and Engagement Tools

The Council will use various media to ensure the community is provided with all details to make an informed decision and to effectively engage. When consultation and engagement takes place we will endeavour to let people know:

- What is proposed
- Why
- What options we have
- Our preferred option and why
- Costs and rating impact if any
- How the community can have a say
- The timeframe and process
- How we will communicate the outcome

We acknowledge the Council has a responsibility to provide opportunities to engage, just as the community has a responsibility to decide whether it wants to engage with the Council.

The mediums the Council may choose from to engage include:

- Emailing
- Online surveys
- Mainstream media (particularly community newspapers and radio)
- Our newsletter ChinWag
- Social Media – our Facebook page
- Our website
- Reaching out to where people are

Engagement Tools

The Council's toolkit may include but not be limited to the following:

Consultation – Length of Engagement as required under LGA or if not a requirement reflective of a 20 working day principle		
WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Special Consultative Procedure	Statutory Notice Advertising radio & newspaper ChinWag feedback form Website Press Releases Social Media Hard copies available at Council facilities Submissions Hearing Public decision Feedback to all submitters	10 Year Long Term Plan Changes to level of service Asset Management Plan Amending or revoking a bylaw Changes to financial policy Review of the Gambling Venue Policy Annual Plan (when there are significant and material differences from the LTP)
Consultation (this is not to inform, this is to consult on options and consider feedback before making a decision)	Statutory Notice (if required) Advertising radio & newspaper ChinWag feedback form Website Press Releases Social Media Hard copies available at Council facilities Submissions Hearing Public decision Feedback to all submitters	Reserves Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management plans Resource Management Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project delivery • consents & licensing Local Government Act 1974 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road closures Projects over \$1million Minor bylaw changes that must be changed by publicly notified resolution

Engagement – if appropriate, period of notice will vary but where possible 20 working days

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p>Information on projects (where the decision has been taken to undertake a project)</p> <p>Service Provision (eg facility promotion, event funding, libraries, sport)</p> <p>Education (eg community resilience)</p>	<p>Statutory notice if required</p> <p>Press Releases or advisory (as appropriate)</p> <p>Targeted information is any special interest groups or stakeholders, such as neighbours or businesses (email, letter, direct contact)</p> <p>Advertising</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Stakeholder database</p>	<p>Road works</p> <p>Street-scaping</p> <p>Trees</p> <p>Water, Wastewater, Stormwater</p> <p>Reserves/works</p> <p>Service disruptions eg water outage</p> <p>Civil defence preparedness</p> <p>Democratic process (Electoral Act)</p> <p>Mandatory requirement/amendment (central Government)</p>
<p>Community</p>	<p>Targeted information is any special interest groups or stakeholders, such as neighbours or businesses (email, letter, direct contact)</p> <p>Press releases or advisory (as appropriate)</p> <p>Advertising</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Stakeholder database</p>	<p>Events</p> <p>Social issues</p> <p>Advocacy (central Government)</p> <p>Facilitation</p>

The Council will also use additional methods of consultation and engagement as it believes is appropriate. These may include:

- Community forums/workshops
- Resident and Ratepayer surveys
- Phone survey
- Street survey
- Posters
- Rates Notice
- Electronic newsletter
- Brochures
- Displays at Southern Field Days or pastoral shows

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1 contains three relevant sections from the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill (No 3) that relate to this policy being:

- 76AA Significance and Engagement Policy
- 83 Special Consultative Procedure
- 86 Use of special consultative procedure in relation to making, amending or revoking bylaws

76AA Significance and Engagement Policy

- “(1) Every local authority must adopt a policy setting out—
 - “(a) that local authority's general approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions in relation to issues, assets, and other matters; and
 - “(b) any criteria, or procedures that are to be used by the local authority in assessing the extent to which issues, proposals, assets, decisions, or activities are significant or may have significant consequences; and
 - “(c) how the local authority will respond to community preferences about engagement on decisions relating to specific issues, assets, or other matters, including the form of consultation that may be desirable; and
 - “(d) how the local authority will engage with communities on other matters.

“(2) The purpose of the policy is—

- “(a) to enable the local authority and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions, and activities; and
- “(b) to provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions about different issues, assets, or other matters; and
- “(c) to inform the local authority from the beginning of a decision-making process about—
 - “(i) the extent of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made; and
 - “(ii) the form or type of engagement required.

“(3) The policy adopted under subsection (1) must list the assets considered by the local authority to be strategic assets.

“(4) A policy adopted under subsection (1) may be amended from time to time.

83 Special Consultative Procedure

Where this Act or any other enactment requires a local authority to use or adopt the special consultative procedure, that local authority must—

- “(a) prepare and adopt—
 - “(i) a statement of proposal; and

- “(ii) if the local authority considers on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to enable public understanding of the proposal, a summary of the information contained in the statement of proposal (which summary must comply with section 83AA); and
- “(b) ensure that the following is publicly available:
 - “(i) the statement of proposal; and
 - “(ii) a description of how the local authority will provide persons interested in the proposal with an opportunity to present their views to the local authority in accordance with section 82(1)(d); and
 - “(iii) a statement of the period within which views on the proposal may be provided to the local authority (the period being not less than 1 month from the date the statement is issued); and
- “(c) make the summary of the information contained in the statement of proposal prepared in accordance with paragraph (a)(ii) (or the statement of proposal, if a summary is not prepared) as widely available as reasonably practicable as a basis for consultation; and
- “(d) provide an opportunity for persons to present their views to the local authority in a manner that enables spoken (or New Zealand sign language) interaction between the person and the local authority, or any representatives to whom an appropriate delegation has been made in accordance with Schedule 7; and
- “(e) ensure that any person who wishes to present his or her views to the local authority or its representatives as described in paragraph (d)—
 - “(i) is given a reasonable opportunity to do so; and
 - “(ii) is informed about how and when he or she may take up that opportunity.

“(2) For the purpose of, but without limiting, subsection (1)(d), a local authority may allow any person to present his or her views to the local authority by way of audio link or audiovisual link.

“(3) This section does not prevent a local authority from requesting or considering, before making a decision, comment or advice from an officer of the local authority or any other person in respect of the proposal or any views on the proposal or both.

86 Use of special consultative procedure in relation to making, amending, or revoking bylaws

- “(1) This section applies if, in accordance with section 156(1)(a), the special consultative procedure is required to be used in relation to the making, amending, or revoking of a bylaw.
- “(2) The statement of proposal referred to in section 83(1)(a) must include,—
 - “(a) as the case may be,—
 - “(i) a draft of the bylaw as proposed to be made or amended; or
 - “(ii) a statement that the bylaw is to be revoked; and
 - “(b) the reasons for the proposal; and
 - “(c) a report on any relevant determinations by the local authority under section 155.”