



Community Engagement Policy 2024 *(Significance and Engagement Policy)* *Consultation Document*

We're reviewing our Community Engagement Policy, which aims to help us have the right conversations with the right people, at the right time.

We want to hear what you think about our proposed changes, so find out more and have your say inside.

We are accepting feedback until Sunday 28 April 2024

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(Significance and Engagement Policy)

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Introduction

Our Community Engagement Policy (also known as a Significance and Engagement Policy) is due for review.

Our policy aims to ensure that we make well-informed decisions by having the right conversations, with the right people, about the right issues at the right time. The policy sets out a framework for us to identify the level of significance attached to an issue, proposal or decision, and how we should be consulting with our community.

We are proposing some changes and we want to know what you think.

This document includes a summary of the changes we are proposing and a submission form for your feedback. If you'd like to find out more, we'd encourage you to read the full policy on our website at ashburtondc.govt.nz/itsourplace

We are accepting feedback until Sunday 28 April 2024.

What is the policy about?

Our Community Engagement Policy shows how Council will assess the level of significance attached to decisions, and how we will select an engagement method that fits with the level of significance.

It aims to ensure that Council hears community views about relevant decisions. In general, the amount of time and effort spent on engagement will be greater if the issue is of higher significance.

The policy also acknowledges our relationships with interested and affected parties and aims to maintain and strengthen those relationships in future.

Why do we need a policy?

Under the Local Government Act 2002, we are required to have a Significance and Engagement Policy. During the last review of the policy in 2021, we decided to rename our policy to the Community Engagement Policy, to provide more clarity on what the policy is about.

The Local Government Act 2002 requires our policy to set out:

- Our approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions
- Any criteria or procedures used to assess significance
- How we will respond to community preferences about engagement on decisions; and
- How we will engage with communities on other matters.

What are we proposing?

The main changes we are proposing and the reasons for them are discussed below.

New significance criteria

We are proposing to add a new criteria to consider when we are assessing the significance attached to a proposal or decision.

We are proposing to call this new criteria 'environmental / climate change impact'.

Factors to consider will include whether the decision is environmentally sustainable, whether it has an impact on climate change, and whether it is consistent with our Climate Resilience Plan.

Why?

This was identified as a gap when reviewing our current policy, so we are proposing to add this to ensure impacts on the environment and climate change are considered when decisions need to be made.

Where can I see this in the policy?

Section 4.5 - significance assessment criteria number 8.

New strategic assets

We are proposing to add the following Council facilities to the strategic assets schedule:

- EA Networks Centre
- Te Whare Whakatare, and
- Ashburton Art Gallery & Museum.

Why?

Under the Local Government Act 2002, a 'strategic asset' is an asset that a local authority needs to retain to maintain its capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that is important to the current or future well-being of the community. We consider these facilities to meet the definition of strategic assets, so therefore are proposing to include them in Schedule 1 of the policy.

Where can I see this in the policy?

Schedule 1 – Strategic assets.

New section on implementation

A new section is proposed to be added, to outline what we will do to implement the policy. This includes things like training for staff and Councillors, maintaining staff guidelines, publishing the policy on our website, and referencing community views in reports to Council.

Why?

We are already doing a lot of these things, but we propose to add this section to increase transparency on the implementation of the policy.

Where can I see this in the policy?

Section 1.2.

Other changes include:

What	Where	Why
Definitions of te reo words updated	Glossary and definition	Updated to be consistent with definitions in other strategic documents (e.g. Biodiversity Strategy), and to reflect Local Dialect
Definitions updated and some added (e.g. 'participatory democracy')	Glossary and definition, Section 2.5	To add clarity to the policy
Consideration of impacts on future communities added	Section 4.5 - significance assessment criteria number 2	This was identified as a gap during the review. Council has a legal requirement to consider future communities and well-being
Threshold for assessing significance updated – high significance is now triggered by five criteria, rather than four	Section 4.5	To update significance assessment in line with having an additional criteria

What	Where	Why
Consideration of wider Manawhenua values	Section 4.5 - significance assessment criteria number 4	Updated to better reflect Manawhenua values (other than just land or water bodies)
Change made to the special consultative procedure trigger for Elderly Persons Housing	Schedule 1 – Strategic Assets	Reduction of trigger means Council would be required to use the special consultative procedure if the Elderly Persons Housing stock increases or decreases by 30% (rather than 50% in current policy). This is a way to ensure that consultation would be done in the appropriate circumstances.

How has the draft policy been prepared?

This draft policy has been prepared through a process that has considered the way we have previously applied the policy and assessed significance levels, other local authority policies, and engagement methods we have previously undertaken.

Sections that include te reo Māori or mention of Manawhenua have been prepared in partnership with Aoraki Environmental Consultancy, who engage with Council on behalf of Te Rūnaka o Arowhenua.

Draft policy

The full draft policy is available at itsourplace.nz

Review process and timeline

We're accepting feedback from the community until Sunday 28 April 2024.

From 13-16 May, submitters will have the opportunity to present their views to Council in person at the hearing, after which Councillors will consider and deliberate on all the submissions received.

Wednesday 27 March – Sunday 28 April 2024

Community Consultation

13-23 May 2024

Submission hearings and deliberations

May - June 2024

Policy finalisation

June 2024

Final Policy adoption

Have your say

Your feedback will help us to know whether we are on the right track.

Please note all submissions are public documents and will be made available on Council's website with the names of submitters included.

Submissions presented in the form of a petition or accompanied by multiple signatures will be processed as a single submission.

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at itsourplace.nz

Alternatively, you can provide feedback by filling in the attached submission form and getting it back to us using one of the following methods:

Freepost to Ashburton District Council

Freepost 230444

PO Box 94

Ashburton 7740

Email to submissions@adc.govt.nz

Hand in to Council reception at Te Whare Whakatere, Baring Square East

You have until Sunday 28 April 2024 to get your feedback in.

Please note that by making a submission, your information will be used in the following ways:

- Submission material, including your name and organisation (if applicable) but excluding your contact details, will be included in material available to Council, media and the public at our office and on our website.

- The contact details you provide will be used for administration of the consultation process, including informing you of the outcome of the consultation.

- The information you have provided will be stored and held by Council. If you would like to request access to, or make a correction to your personal information, please contact the Council staff.

Submission Form

Your details

Name* _____

Organisation (if appropriate) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email* _____

**these fields are required*

Do you wish to speak in support of your submission at the hearing?

(if no boxes are ticked, it will be considered that you do not wish to be heard)

☐ **Yes:**

The hearing will be held at Hine Paaka (the Council Chamber) between 13-16 May.

If yes, Do you wish to be heard: ☐ **In-Person** or ☐ **Virtually**

☐ **No:**

I do not wish to speak in support of my submission and ask that the following written submission be fully considered.

You can submit on any or all of the questions below. You don't have to complete every question and you can comment on any aspect of the draft policy. You can provide attachments to support your submission. The full draft policy is available at itsourplace.nz

We are proposing to consider the environmental / climate change impact when assessing the significance of a proposal. Do you agree with this?

Yes/No

Please explain:

Do you agree with the proposed section on implementation of the policy?

Yes/No

Please explain:

Do you think the following buildings should be considered as strategic assets?

EA Networks Centre	Yes/No
Te Whare Whakatare	Yes/No
Ashburton Art Gallery & Museum	Yes/No

Please explain:

Are there any other assets you think should be considered strategic?

Yes/No

Please explain:

Do you agree with our other proposed changes?

Yes/No

Please explain:

Any other comments or feedback:
