

**QLDC Council
25 September 2014**

Report for Agenda Item: 3

Department:

CEO Office

Draft Significance and Engagement Policy

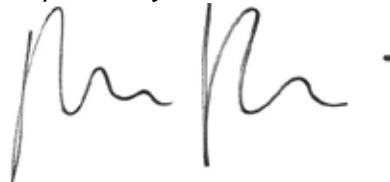
Purpose

- 1 To adopt the Draft Significance and Engagement Policy for public consultation.

Recommendation

- 2 *That Council:*
 - a. **Agree** to adopt the Draft Significance and Engagement Policy for public consultation.

Prepared by:



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Director Chief Executive's Office

9/09/2014

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Adam Feeley
Chief Executive

12/09/2014

Background

- 3 The Council has a Policy on Significance (2009). The Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill requires all Councils to develop a new policy called the Significance and Engagement Policy under the new section 76AA of the Local Government Act 2002. Councils are required to adopt the new policy by 1 December 2014.
- 4 The new policy outlines what the Council will consider when deciding what is significant in terms of decision-making and when the community will have an opportunity to contribute to decision-making and how. The new legislation is deliberately less prescriptive about how we consult so that we can communicate across multiple channels in ways that our communities have told us they prefer.

- 5 In May 2014 the Council took the opportunity to consult with our communities on significance and engagement through the Annual Plan consultation round. The feedback was factored into the policy. It reinforced the community desire to be consulted on:
 - Significant infrastructure projects (88.9%) major changes to the standard and frequency of services Council provides (80%) and new bylaws (74.1%).
- 6 The consultation further identified how the community wanted to receive the information with the top six being:
 - Scuttlebutt (78.3%)
 - Free Community Newspaper (46.3%)
 - Email (42%)
 - Website (39.4%)
 - Daily newspaper (22.4%)
 - Community Forum/ Drop in sessions (19.7%)

Other notable mediums included social media (9.4%), radio (13.2%) and letters (10.7%). Public meetings did not receive any support

- 7 The response to how residents and ratepayers would like to share their opinion with Council was:
 - On-line survey (67.7%)
 - Email (47.9%)
 - Face to face with Councillors/staff (33.7%)
 - Public forum at a Council meeting (29.5%)
 - Drop in sessions (29%)
 - Phonecalls (13.7%)

Scuttlebutt was the other notable mention.

- 8 Additional qualitative research was undertaken by the Director of the Chief Executive's Office through undertaking interviews with community representatives, including the Wanaka Community Board Chair to discuss communication, engagement and consultation. This feedback has also been considered in the development of the draft policy.
- 9 Further context for the Significance and Engagement Policy are the positive results from the 2014 Resident and Ratepayers Survey. There is no question that Council must continue to improve its consultation and engagement but the results suggest that our community is increasingly satisfied with these elements. In 2014 satisfaction with how well residents are kept informed increased by 18.5% from 2013 to 66% satisfaction. The method of communication increased 17.1% from 2013 to 70.8% satisfaction. Satisfaction with consultation increased 13.3% from 2013 to 53.9% satisfaction. It is worth noting that our challenge with this result is the 31.2% who remain neutral.

Comment

10 The draft policy makes clear:

- How Council will assess significance.
- What the Special Consultation Procedure is and when it will be used.
- What engagement is and how we will use it.

11 The purpose of the policy under the Act is included as an appendix to the draft policy (Attachment A) and has been adhered to in the development of the draft policy.

12 The policy adheres to the guidelines as outlined in the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) and in consultation with Elizabeth Hughes Communication.

Financial Implications

13 None

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions

14 The recommendation to consult is consistent with s.82 of the Local Government Act 2002, namely that:

“(1) Consultation that a local authority undertakes in relation to any decision or other matter must be undertaken....in accordance with the following principles:

(a) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be provided by the local authority with reasonable access to relevant information in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons:

(b) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be encouraged by the local authority to present their views to the local authority...”

Council Policies

15 The following Council Policies were considered:

- Policy on Significance 2009
- 2013/14 Annual Plan

Consultation

16 Council consulted on Significance and Engagement in the 2013/14 Annual Plan.

17 Qualitative interviews were undertaken with community group representatives regarding communication, engagement and consultation.

18 It is proposed that Council will consult on the Draft Significance and Engagement Policy from 29 September to 31 October 2014. The feedback and a schedule of resulting recommended changes will be considered in deliberations when Council adopts the final policy in November, 2014.

Publicity

19 The consultation will be widely publicised with the ability to feedback online and in writing.

Attachments

A Draft Significance and Engagement Policy