



SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Reference Number:	A1156356
Authorised by: Invercargill City Council	Effective Date: 1 December 2014 Supersedes: Significance Policy 2012
Policy Owner:	Invercargill City Council
Purpose: This defines the statement of intent of the policy.	To let the Community know when and how they can expect to be engaged in Council's decision-making processes. To act as a guide to Council and council staff as to what extent, form and type of engagement is required from the beginning of a decision-making process. To identify Council's approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions in relation to issues, assets, or other matters.

DEFINITIONS

(of any terms or acronyms)

Community, may be a community of place or a community of issue. The 'community / communities' to be engaged with on any particular decision will be identified in light of the issue being discussed.

Significance, 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 Council, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for:

- Invercargill City.
- Any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision or matter.
- The capacity of the Invercargill City Council to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.

Significant, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that it has a high degree of significance.

Strategic Asset, is an asset or group of assets that Invercargill City Council needs to retain if it is to maintain its capacity to achieve or promote any outcome that it has determined to be important to the current or future wellbeing of the community. The assets that Council considers 'strategic' are listed in Schedule 1.

APPROACH TO DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE

The decision on a matter's significance rests with Council.

If the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter concerned involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, Council will take into account the view of Māori and their culture and traditions, recognising their cultural values and their relationship to land and water.

When undertaking a process to determine the extent to which issues, proposals, decisions or other matters are significant; staff will prepare a report against the thresholds and criteria listed below for consideration by and presentation to Council.

Council will evaluate the significance of each proposal or decision it makes on a case-by-case basis. Decisions of low significance, including some decisions made under delegated authority, may not explicitly state the degree of significance.

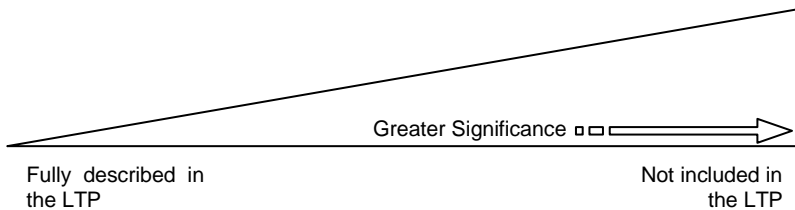
Significance and engagement will be considered in the early stages of a proposal before decision making occurs and, if necessary, reconsidered as the proposal develops. Differing levels of engagement may be required during the varying phases of decision-making on an issue, and for different stakeholders.

THRESHOLDS AND CRITERIA

A: Contribution to Community Outcomes or Key Project

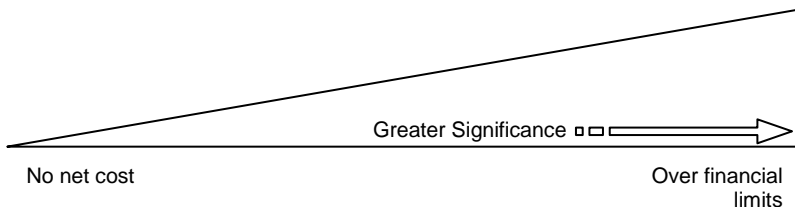
Council will consider the extent to which the decision contributes to its Community Outcomes or any key project. If a matter clearly contributes to several Community Outcomes or a key project and is borderline in regards to the other thresholds and criteria for determining significance, this will mitigate in favour of the decision being treated as “less significant”. If, however, a decision does not clearly contribute to Community Outcomes or a key project and is borderline in regards to the other thresholds and criteria for determining significance, Council will adopt a precautionary approach and treat the issue as being “more significant”.

B: Consistency with the LTP



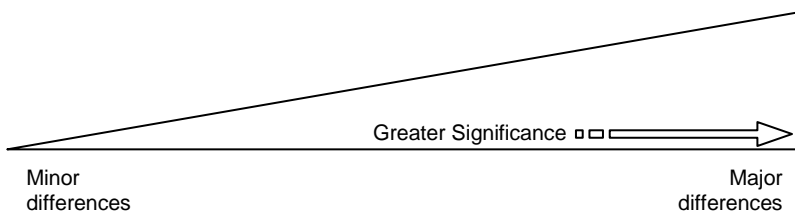
Council will consider the extent to which the decision flows logically and consequentially from a decision already made in the LTP or Annual Plan.

C: Net Cost to Council



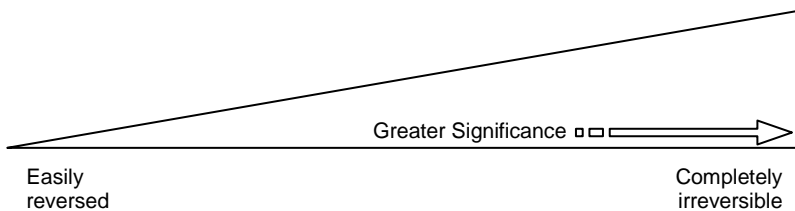
Council will consider the magnitude of the decision in terms of its net cost to Council. Most major spending decisions will be made in the context of the LTP or Annual Plan. As a general guide, any individual decision involving more than \$5 million of unbudgeted capital expenditure or \$500,000 of unbudgeted annual operating costs may be regarded as significant.

D: Variation of Options



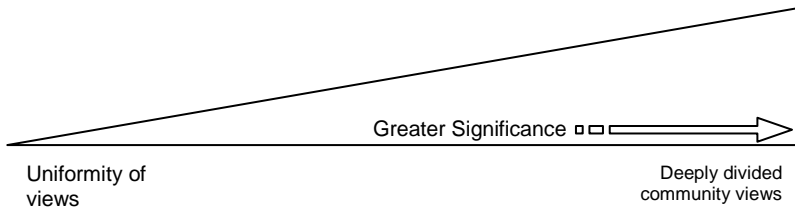
Council will consider the variation in impact of the options identified (including a “do nothing” option) on the community. The greater the variation, the greater the degree of significance.

E: Reversibility



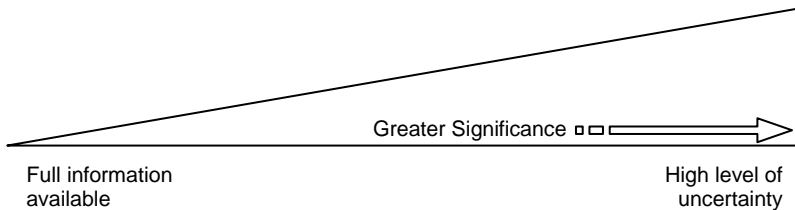
Council will consider the reversibility of the outcomes arising from the decision. In general, the degree of significance will increase as the difficulty of reversing a decision’s outcome increases.

F: Level of Controversy



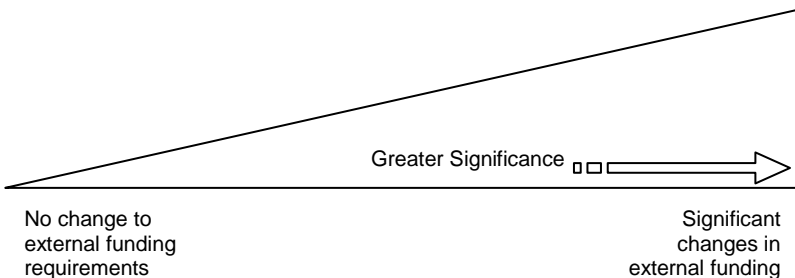
Council will consider the extent to which the matter under consideration may be controversial within the community. A high level of controversy indicates a greater degree of significance of the matter.

G: Precautionary Approach



Where there is a level of uncertainty as to the outcomes or significance of a decision, Council will adopt a precautionary approach and treat the issues as being “more significant”.

H: Impact on Funders



Council will consider the extent to which a decision impacts on general rates, targeted rates, and user fees / charges. A decision requiring an increase of 2% or more to general or targeted rates will be treated as significant. Likewise, a decision requiring an increase in user fees / charges of 10% or more will be considered significant.

APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

Council is committed to engaging with our communities in a way that is effective, meaningful and timely. When making decisions Council will give consideration to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or to have an interest in, the matter. To ensure that our approach to engagement is targeted at the right level Council will consider:

- the extent to which the current views and preferences of persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter are known to the local authority;
- the nature and significance of the decision or matter, including its likely impact from the perspective of the persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter;
- if any circumstances exist in which there is good reason for withholding local authority information (in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987); and
- the costs and benefits of any consultation process or procedure.
- that Maori are a stakeholder in any engagement and we will work with Maori to determine the level of engagement required on each issue or matter.

Council requires that an Engagement Plan is prepared for any significant decision. If a decision is not deemed to be significant an Engagement Plan may still be prepared, but is not mandatory. An Engagement Plan will be developed by the Council Department responsible for the decision or matter, in collaboration with Council’s Communications Team.

An Engagement Plan will outline the:

- engagement objectives – the feedback that is sought from communities,
- timeframe and completion date,
- communities that are to be engaged with,
- engagement tools and techniques to be used,

- resources, including budget, needed to complete the engagement,
- communication planning needed,
- basis of assessment and feedback to the communities involved,
- team roles and responsibilities.

ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Community engagement occurs across a spectrum at differing levels, Council has adapted the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement for our use. Council will determine what level of engagement is appropriate for each decision or matter on a case by case basis using the approach to engagement above. The five levels Council will consider are:

Level	Goal	Council's Promise
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities or solutions.	At this level, Council's promise is that we will keep the Community informed.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.	At this level, Council's promise is that we will keep the Community informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure the public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	At this level, Council's promise is that we will work with the Community to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	At this level, Council's promise is that we will look to the Community for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate the Community's advice and recommendation in to the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	At this level, Council's promise is that we will implement what the Community decides.

It will not always be appropriate or practicable to conduct processes at the participatory / empower end of the consultation continuum. Many minor issues will not warrant a participatory approach and constraints of time and money will also limit what is possible on some occasions.

There are a range of situations where engagement is necessary or desirable and a wide selection of approaches to choose from for any given situation. Council will assess each situation and determine the appropriate engagement tools. The range of tools that Council will consider using at each level of the spectrum is included in Schedule 2.

MANDATORY CONSULTATION

In certain circumstances, Council is legislatively required to consult using the Special Consultative Procedure prescribed in Section 83 of the Local Government Act. One example of circumstances where the Special Consultative Procedure must be used is when making decisions on transferring the ownership or control of strategic assets, as listed in Schedule 1.

When using the Special Consultative Procedure, Council prepares a proposal and advertises it for public submission. Submissions on the proposal can be received from anybody and the time period for receiving submissions is at least a month. People who have submitted can also request to speak to the Council regarding their submission and this is done through a Hearing Process. After considering all submissions the Council then makes a decision to adopt, amend or reject the proposal.

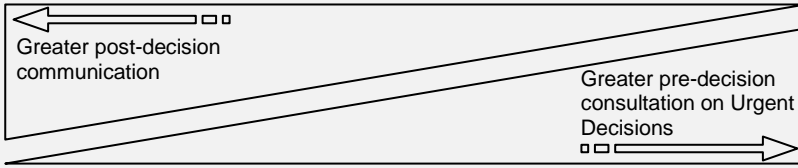
EXCEPTION TO PROCEDURE FOR DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE AND UNDERTAKING ENGAGEMENT

The Local Government Act provides for Council to consider the practicality of undertaking extensive consultation, considering the range of options, and obtaining the views and preferences of other people. In some circumstances, failure to make an urgent decision would result in an inability to achieve the intended outcomes and a loss of opportunity.

Where an urgent decision must be made, Council will tailor its decision-making process to include as much consultation and evaluation as is practicable within the specified timeframe. If, due to time limitations, a potentially significant decision is made without extensive consultation, Council will communicate the details of the decision to the public at a level appropriate to the nature of the matter.

Where a decision is made or is to be made that is significantly inconsistent with this policy, Council when making the decision will identify the inconsistency and the reason for the inconsistency.

Practicality and Urgency



Revision History:	<i>Nil</i>
Effective Date:	1 December 2014.
Review Period:	This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years, following the Triennial Local Government Elections, unless earlier review is required due to legislative change, or is warranted by another reason. New review due 1 December 2017.
Associated Documents / References:	<i>Nil</i>

SCHEDULE 1

STRATEGIC ASSETS

- Civic Theatre Complex
- Electricity Invercargill Limited
- Invercargill Airport Limited (97.2% Council ownership)
- Invercargill City Holdings Limited
- Invercargill Public Library and Archive – buildings and collections
- Invercargill Waste Transfer Station
- Parks and Reserves
- Public Toilets
- Roothing Network and connected infrastructure
- Sewerage Networks and Treatment Plants
- Splash Palace
- Stormwater Networks in Invercargill and Bluff
- Stormwater system in Otatara
- Water Treatment, Storage and Supply Network

Under Section 97 of the Local Government Act, any decision to transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from Council can only be made if the decision has been explicitly provided for by a statement of proposal in Council's Long Term Plan. The strategic assets defined above are the asset in total and not any individual element of the asset. Section 97 will only apply to any decision being made on the strategic asset as a whole or a major sub-part of the asset. The strategic asset is the asset that is listed as a strategic asset in the above list. For example, Council's strategic asset for Electricity Invercargill Limited (EIL) is the shareholding in the parent company (EIL) and not its shareholdings in its associates or joint ventures (for example, PowerNet, Otago Power Services Limited).

SCHEDULE 2

Please note: This is not a definitive list. Techniques not listed here may be used in addition to those listed below.

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT

INFORM

- Social media
- Newspapers / public notice / noticeboard
- Websites / internet / facebook
- Radio
- Flyers / posters
- Letter drop
- Public meetings
- City Talk Back
- Telephone Information Service
- Press statements

CONSULT / INVOLVE

- Written submissions
- Oral submissions
- Written surveys
- Telephone surveys
- Face-to-face interview surveys
- Referenda
- Formal public meetings
- Focus groups / working panels / Local action groups / task groups

COLLABORATE / EMPOWER

- Interactive web sites
- Multi Stakeholder Processes such as:
 - Open house events
 - Meetings with existing groups
 - World cafes
- Citizens Juries / Panels / Charette (Group of 12-25 people representative of a community, brought together for three to five day to consider an issue)

Note: Techniques listed as appropriate in one level may be used in any of the other levels where this will best achieve the purpose of the engagement.

SCHEDULE 3

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) is an association that works with different groups whom undertake public consultation and engagement. They are involved in the public participation process by supporting clients, colleagues and citizen's decision-making process.

The Invercargill City Council has determined to base its Engagement on the core values established by IAP2 as outlined below:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Council has adapted the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement for its use (included in the main Policy). IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum is designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement process. The Spectrum shows that differing levels of participation are legitimate depending on the goals, time frames, resource and levels of concern in the decision to be made.

You can find out more about IAP2 by visiting their website - www.iap2.org.