

kaupapa here hirahira whakatūtaka significance and engagement policy

WHY DO WE ENGAGE?

The Dunedin City Council (DCC) is responsible for making decisions on behalf of its many communities and aims to achieve a high level of community understanding and support for DCC activities.

Engagement provides an opportunity for the public to discuss their views on a decision or proposal being considered by the DCC. The community views expressed through an engagement process will be considered, along with other information, when decisions are made.

Engagement may not necessarily result in consensus. However, engagement should allow for an exchange and examination of information and points of view between affected and interested people and decision-makers before a decision is made. Engagement ensures that decisions are informed by the community's involvement.

Consultation vs Engagement

Consultation involves obtaining public feedback on proposals; it is one form of engagement. The DCC regularly consults communities through processes such as the long-term plan which determine DCC's strategic direction as well as how it sets budgets and prioritises projects. The DCC can also decide to consult at any time on a decision, where it considers that appropriate. For most decisions, there is no statutory requirement to consult the public.

Engagement is a broader and ongoing process of sharing information with the community and seeking its feedback, with the purpose of involving the community in the process of decision making.

The Significance and Engagement Policy (the policy) is required under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). It establishes a general approach for determining the significance of DCC decisions and sets out when and how the DCC will engage the community in its decision-making relative to the significance of the decision.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The DCC aims to engage meaningfully to implement the goals and strategic directions set up in the Strategic Framework.

In particular, the policy aligns with the commitment toward:

- Sustainability, implemented by the Zero Carbon Plan.
- The Treaty of Waitangi, implemented by Te Taki Haruru – The Māori Strategic Framework.



PURPOSE

The DCC will consider community views when making decisions. This policy establishes a general approach for determining the significance of decisions and sets out when and how the DCC will engage the community in its decision-making relative to the significance of the decision.

Figure 1 DCC's Strategic Framework

The objectives of this policy are:

- a. To establish a process for determining the significance of a decision.
- b. To support public involvement in significant decision-making, which will ensure good decision-making.
- c. To promote on-going engagement on the DCC's activities and projects.
- d. To build positive relationships with stakeholders and the wider community, encouraging co-operation, respect and mutual understanding of other points of view.
- e. To ensure that the DCC meets all legislative requirements in terms of consultation and community engagement, including the requirements of section 76AA of the LGA.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The DCC will take a principle-based approach to its community engagement activities, in alignment with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values.

Principle 1: Engage effectively and openly.

- a. **Genuine:** We will engage honestly, and we will respect and listen to the views provided by the community with an open-mind and will give due consideration to them when making decisions.
- b. **Timeliness:** We will engage with the community as early as appropriate and ensure that engagement processes are an integral part of project planning. We will allow enough time for participants to contribute and for them to be able to raise unexpected issues.
- c. **Purposeful:** We will be clear about the purpose of engagement and the ability and scope of the engagement to influence decisions.
- d. **Informed:** We will provide clear, easy to understand and objective information relating to engagement and ensure it is readily available so that participants can make informed contributions.

Principle 2: Ensure appropriate delivery of engagement.

- a. **Recognition of diversity:** We will use engagement methods which are appropriate to the issue and those we are seeking to engage, having regard to their culture, age, ability and time availability.
- b. **Inclusive and accessible:** We will engage in a way which encourages participation of all who are likely to be affected by, or are interested in, a decision.
- c. **Cost-effective:** We will engage in a cost-effective manner, and resource engagement in proportion to the significance of the decision. We will ensure the least possible cost to all involved in the engagement (including the costs to the communities / affected parties).

Principle 3: Make provision for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes actively and effectively.

- a. **Engagement with Māori:** In addition to all other principles, we will engage with Māori in the city in a way that is reflective of tikaka and kawa.

Principle 4: Consider the views, interests, needs and opinions expressed and report on their influence on the final decision.

- a. **Responsive:** We will be transparent about how we record, consider and respond to participants' contributions, and provide clear information on how the community's feedback has been taken into account in decision-making.

Principle 5: Consider the needs of future generations.

- a. **Sustainable:** We will consider the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values

1. 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.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

MĀORI ENGAGEMENT

In Te Taki Haruru – the Māori Strategic Framework for DCC – the value of Autūroa, referring to the concept and practice of mana and the longevity of ongoing influence and leadership in the community, relates to engagement and how we can effectively engage with Māori in Dunedin. Additionally, the value of Autakata, referring to the concept of whakapapa of mana whenua to the whenua of Ōtepoti, highlights why it is important to engage with mana whenua.

The implementation of Te Taki Haruru will provide avenues for DCC to engage with mana whenua and Māori, one of which is Tū Hono - the Māori Engagement Framework. Enabling DCC teams to assess the level of engagement required with mana whenua and mātāwaka Māori in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Furthermore, Tū Kotahi - the Cultural Capability Framework will lift the ability and understanding of teams to engage with mana whenua and Māori communities of Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Finally, Te Pae Māori will provide a mana-to-mana forum in which Council, Mana Whenua and Mātāwaka are able to collaborate in decision making.

WHEN DO WE ENGAGE?

- **Statutory Compliance:** The LGA and other legislation require the DCC to consult with the community in a range of circumstances. The LGA has also sets out principles to guide all consultation and prescribes specific consultative procedures, which must be followed in certain circumstances (refer to the 'How Do We Engage' section of this Policy). At a minimum, the Council will adhere to all legislative requirements.
- **Significant proposals or decisions:** The Council will determine the nature and form of the engagement in accordance with the significance of the particular decision. In general, the greater the significance of the decision, the more we will do to engage the community. A 'significant' decision will not automatically require the special consultative procedure but will require some method of engagement unless there are good reasons not to engage.
- **Reasons not to engage:** The Council acknowledges there are times when it is not necessary, appropriate or possible to engage the community on a proposal or decision. The Council may choose not to engage on a proposal or decision, but will only decide this in accordance with the criteria below:
 - a. The proposal or decision is not of a nature or significance that requires engagement.
 - b. The Council already has a sound understanding of the views and preferences of the persons likely to be affected by or interested in, the proposal or decision.
 - c. There is a need for confidentiality or commercial sensitivity.
 - d. The costs of engagement outweigh the benefits of it.
 - e. The proposal or decision has already been addressed by the Council's strategies, policies or plans, which have recently been consulted on.
 - f. An immediate or quick response or decision is needed or it is not reasonably practicable to engage.
- Whenever the Council does not formally engage, community views will still be considered before a decision is made and as much information will be provided to the public as possible. Figure 2 provides a summary of the factors the Council will consider when deciding when to engage.

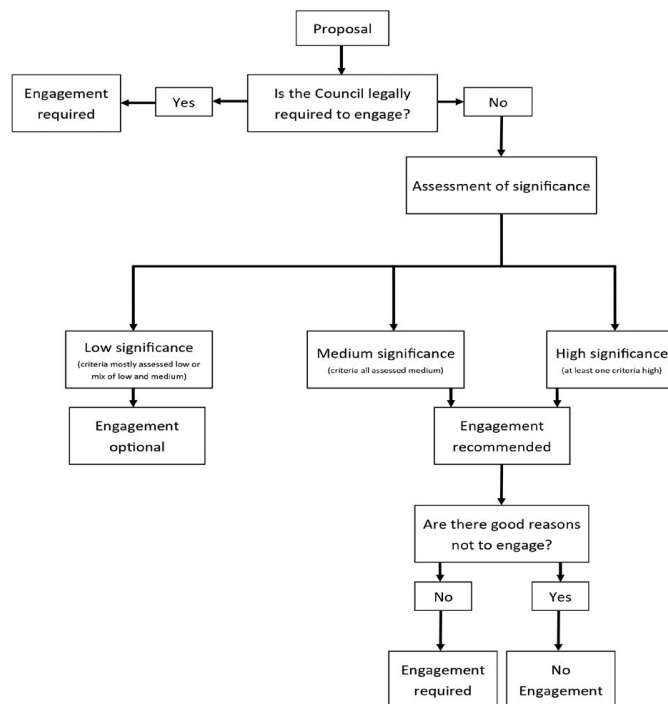


Figure 2 When to Engage Flowchart

Significance

Significance means the importance of an issue, proposal, decision, or matter, as assessed by the DCC, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for:

- Dunedin as a whole.
- The parties and communities who are likely to be particularly affected or interested in the issue, proposal, decision or matter.
- The financial and non-financial costs and implications, or the capacity of the DCC to perform its role/functions.

In considering DCC's strategic commitment to sustainability, climate change should be treated as an overarching issue that impacts all areas of work at DCC.

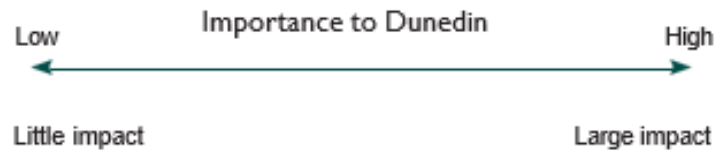
DCC staff and elected members will be responsible for assessing the significance of a potential decision, in accordance with legislation and this Policy. Except as provided in the 'Water Services' section of this Policy, when determining the significance of an issue, proposal, decision or other matter the criteria in the section below will be considered.

Criteria for Significance

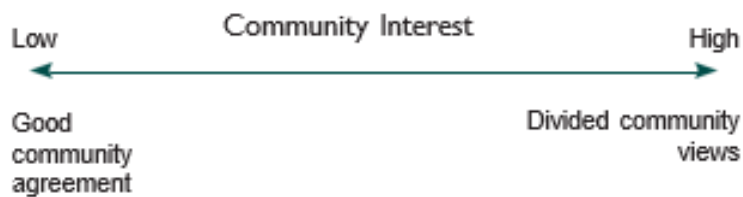
The DCC has identified criteria to assess the degree of significance. The significance of an issue, proposal or decision lies somewhere on a continuum from low to high. Where the significance of a proposal or decision is unclear against one criterion, then the DCC will treat that criterion as being more, rather than less significant. If any of the following criteria are met, the proposal or decision may be 'significant'. However, the criteria should be considered collectively to get to this point.

- **Importance to Dunedin:** The extent to which the matter impacts on DCC area, now and in the future. Factors to be considered include:

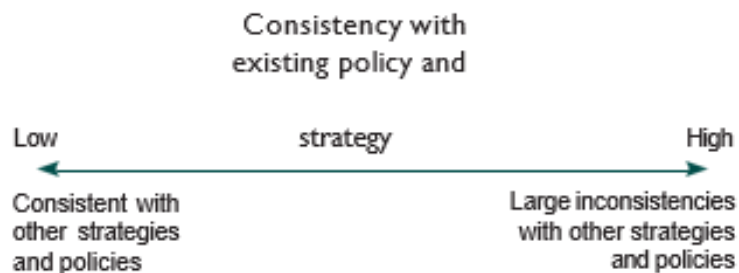
- a. The effect on existing levels of service provided by the DCC for significant activities (including a decision to begin or cease a significant activity).
- b. The long-term social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of the decision on the needs of current and future generations.
- c. The opportunity costs, the level of risk and how difficult it would be to reverse the effects of the decision.



- **Community interest:** The extent to which individuals, organisations, businesses, groups, communities and sectors within the community are particularly affected by, or are interested in, the matter. Factors to be considered include:
 - a. The number of individuals, organisations, businesses, groups, communities and sectors within the community that are affected.
 - b. The extent of the impact on affected individuals, organisations, businesses, groups, communities and sectors within the community.
 - c. The level of public interest, or the potential to generate interest or controversy.
 - d. The extent to which community opinion is divided on the matter.



- **Consistency with existing policy and strategy:** the extent to which the matter is consistent with the DCC's community outcomes, Strategic Framework and policies (refer to Schedule 1). Factors to be considered include:
 - a. The extent to which the decision is consistent with the DCC's community outcomes, Strategic Framework priorities and policies.
 - b. The extent to which the decision is consistent with previous DCC decisions.



- **Impact on DCC's finances, capacity and capability:** The impact of the decision on the ability to achieve the objectives set out in the DCC's Long Term Plan and Financial Strategy. Factors to be considered include:

HOW DO WE ENGAGE?

Level of Engagement

The DCC will determine which engagement tools, activities or processes to use based on the individuals, organisations, businesses, groups, communities and sectors within the community that are affected by, or interested in the proposal; and the extent of that interest/impact.

In the first instance, DCC staff will be responsible for assessing the appropriateness of engagement activities for each proposal or decision at the project planning stage. The DCC will be flexible in its engagement approach and be responsive to new ideas. Reports to the Council and its Committees will outline a proposed engagement plan, to be approved by the Council or Committee.

The DCC recognises that differing levels of engagement tools, activities or processes may be required during the various stages of decision-making on an issue and for different stakeholders.

Figure 3 is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of engagement and sets out some engagement activities. It describes when these activities may be appropriate for particular kinds of decisions and when the community can expect to be involved in the decision-making. However, this does not commit the DCC to using specific tools or activities in any specific circumstance.

Engagement concerning local issues

Some local issues will be considered highly significant for particular communities. In these cases, the DCC will engage with affected communities directly. The DCC will take a flexible approach on how it engages with the community on local issues according to the community's preferences for engagement. This approach will often involve DCC staff, Councillors and, where relevant, Community Boards.

Level	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal of engagement	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns are constantly understood and considered.	To partner with the community and stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Examples of issues, decisions or matters where this engagement might be appropriate	Temporary road closure District Plan monitoring reports Council reports	Long Term Plan consultation Dog Control Bylaw	Review of the Community Grants Policy Revitalisation of an area (e.g. Warehouse Precinct)	Development of a Strategy (e.g. Economic Development Strategy) Upgrade of playgrounds	Triennial council election
Engagement activities the DCC might use – both in person and/or online	Public notice Letter drop Media release Discussion paper DCC website Multilingual radio FYI story Dynamic Social media Animated videos Augmented reality	Exhibition Expo Public hearing Survey Special consultative procedure People's Panel Roadshow 'Graffiti' suggestion wall Social media	Community Board meeting Hui a iwi / public meeting Working party Workshops Focus group Drop-in sessions Social media	Multi stakeholder process Advisory group Round table meeting Market pop-ups World cafe	Referendum Citizen juries Participatory budgeting
When the community can expect to be involved in the	The DCC will advise the community when a decision has been	The DCC will advise the community when a draft decision has been made and will	The DCC will provide the community with opportunities to be	The DCC will provide the community with opportunities to be involved throughout	The DCC will provide the community with the power to make the

decision- making	made.	provide the community with an opportunity to participate and respond before a final decision is made.	involved throughout the decision-making process, before a final decision is made.	the decision- making process, including when the options are being considered before a final decision is made.	final decision.
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Figure 3: Types of Engagement Activities (IAP2 spectrum of engagement)

Engagement linked to day-to-day DCC business

DCC staff, in consultation with the relevant Councillors and Community Boards, will identify and manage community engagement activities associated with the organisation's usual work and projects. The responsible department will establish the most appropriate engagement activities at the project planning stage. The department will then be responsible for providing information to the community on the issue and facilitating the community involvement.

Ongoing engagement activities:

The DCC recognises that engagement is not a one-off activity, and uses a number of initiatives regularly to engage with the community. Such activities enable early engagement on issues, and include:

- a. Advisory and stakeholder groups – The Council establishes advisory and stakeholder groups to engage with individuals, organisations, businesses, groups, communities and sectors within the community. These advisory and stakeholder groups may be ongoing or established for a particular timeframe. All advisory and stakeholder groups will be established by a Council resolution, have specific terms of reference and regularly report to a relevant Council Committee.
- b. Community Boards – The Council partners with Community Boards, which provide advice on matters affecting their communities and advocate for the interests of their communities. Community Boards may also make submissions to the DCC and other organisations on matters affecting their areas.
- c. Partnerships – The DCC facilitates a range of partnerships and networks between all levels of government, business and community organisations, including informal engagement with staff and key stakeholders.
- d. Place-based approach - The DCC works with a number of specific communities and neighbourhoods to set priorities in their area, improve the co- ordination of services being delivered within their area and enable consideration of all issues relating to their area.
- e. Online engagement – The DCC uses digital tools for engaging with the community, such as the People's Panel, social media and the DCC's website.

Special Consultative Procedure:

The DCC will engage with the community using the special consultative procedure when required by legislation, and when it is the most effective engagement tool for a particular proposal or decision. The special consultative procedure is outlined in section 83 of the LGA, and is summarised below.

- a. The DCC will prepare and the Council will adopt a written statement of proposal, and if relevant, a summary of that proposal, which will: clearly identify what the proposal is and the reasons for it; and provide an analysis of feasible options.
- b. The DCC will provide an opportunity for people to give feedback on the matter and will: ensure the summary and statement of proposal is widely available; enable interaction between the community and the Council, or its representatives; provide an opportunity for people to present their views to the Council; and provide at least one month for feedback.

Water Services

This section of the Policy applies if the DCC is considering whether a proposed water services contract is a “significant contract” under section 24 of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 (LGWSA). The DCC will determine whether a water services contract is a “significant contract” by using the “criteria for significant contracts” (as set out below) rather than the general criteria set out earlier in this Policy under the heading “Criteria for Significance”.

Note: “water services” is defined in section 4 of the LGWSA to mean any or all of the following:

- a. Water supply services;
- b. Stormwater services;
- c. Wastewater services.

This section of the Policy also applies to “strategic water services assets”. Under the LGWSA, a “strategic water services asset” is defined as meaning water services infrastructure or another asset or group of assets without which the provider is unable (i) to meet its regulatory requirements; or (ii) to maintain its capacity to achieve the outcomes set out in its water services strategy; and includes an asset or a group of assets listed as strategic water services assets in the provider’s significance and engagement policy.

Criteria for “significant contracts”

The DCC will determine whether a water services contract is a “significant contract” under section 24 of the LGWSA by using the following criteria:

- a. Whether the proposed water services contract is of high value relative to the revenue that the DCC receives from providing the water service to which the contract relates; and
- b. Whether the proposed water services contract will create a public-private partnership (as defined in section 23 of the LGWSA); and
- c. Whether the proposed water services contract will have a significant adverse effect on DCC’s ability to meet its obligations under the LGWSA; and
- d. Whether the proposed water services contract will be for a period that is longer than 15 years; and
- e. Whether the proposed water services contract involves any significant changes to the DCC’s ownership or control of strategic water services assets (as defined in section 4 of the LGWSA and under this Policy).

If the answer to each of the above questions in (a) to (e) above is “no” then the proposed water services contract will not be deemed to be a “significant contract”.

Subject to the following paragraph, if the answer to any of the above questions is “yes” then the proposed water services contract will be deemed to be a “significant contract”.

If the answer to question (a) above is “yes”, then Council will consider whether funds are budgeted for the proposed water services contract in a long-term plan, annual plan, water services strategy or water services annual budget. If funds are budgeted in a long-term plan, annual plan, water services strategy or water services annual budget, then the answer to question (a) will be treated as “no”. This means that the proposed water services contract will not be deemed to be a “significant contract” if the answers to questions (b), (c), (d) and (e) are also “no”.

Where a proposed water services contract is considered a “significant contract” then engagement will be in accordance with all statutory requirements, including those set out in the LGWSA.

Strategic water services assets

The DCC’s strategic water services assets are those defined under the LGWSA, including the group of assets identified in Schedule 3.

The DCC will, at a minimum, engage the community in accordance with the requirements set out in the LGWSA and/or LGA (as applicable) when considering transferring ownership or control of a strategic water services asset or receiving a transfer of ownership or control of a strategic water services asset.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, and within 12 months following each triennial election.

SCHEDULE 2: STRATEGIC COUNCIL-OWNED ASSETS

Strategic assets are those considered by the DCC to be strategically important to achieve and promote the current or future well-being of the community and the priorities of the Strategic Framework. Currently the DCC's strategic assets are:

Aquatic Facilities

Cemeteries

Community housing

Dunedin Botanic Garden

Dunedin Centre, Town Hall and Municipal Chambers

Dunedin Chinese Garden

Dunedin Public Art Gallery and collections

Dunedin Public Libraries and collections

Dunedin Railway Station

Edgar Centre

Forsyth Barr Stadium

Hereweka Harbour Cone

Logan Park

Olveston House and collections

Parks, recreation and open space network

Regent Theatre

Shares in Dunedin International Airport Limited

Dunedin City Holdings Limited

The Town Belt

Toitū Otago Settlers Museum and collections

Transportation Network

Waste management facilities

Notes:

- The DCC may consider any other asset or group of assets as being 'significant' by using the criteria of significance in this Policy.
- Where a strategic asset is a network or has many components, decisions can be made on individual components within the network without it being regarded as significant, unless that component substantially affects the level of service provided to the community.

- Decisions can be made to physically alter strategic assets that are required to prevent an immediate hazardous situation arising, or repair an asset due to damage from an emergency or unforeseen situation.
- As agreed by the Council, in the case of Council Controlled Organisations (CCO), decisions relating to the management, acquisition or divestment of assets are taken by the independent board of the CCOs under the Statement of Intent.

SCHEDULE 2: STRATEGIC WATER SERVICES ASSETS

Strategic water services assets are defined in the LGWSA as water services infrastructure or another asset or group of assets without which the provider is unable (i) to meet its regulatory requirements; or (ii) to maintain its capacity to achieve the outcomes set out in its water services strategy; and includes an asset or group of assets listed as strategic water services assets in the provider's significance and engagement policy. Currently the DCC's strategic water services assets include:

Stormwater collection and disposal system

Wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system

Water collection, storage, treatment and distribution system.

Notes:

- The DCC may consider any other asset or group of assets as being 'significant' by using the criteria of significance in this Policy.
- Where a strategic water services asset is a network or has many components, decisions can be made on individual components within the network without it being regarded as significant, unless that component (i) substantially affects the level of service provided to the community; or (ii) otherwise affect's DCC's ability to meet the requirements set out in the LGWSA.
- Decisions can be made to physically alter strategic water services assets that are required to prevent an immediate hazardous situation arising or repair an asset due to damage from an emergency or unforeseen situation.