

Sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

OUR COMMITMENT

Sustainability is a process of ensuring the wise use and management of all resources within a framework in which environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being are integrated and balanced. It means meeting the needs of today without adversely impacting on the needs of future generations.

Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future.

The Council, in partnership with the community and tangata whenua, recognises its responsibility of stewardship for the environment of Wairoa, for the District's current and future prosperity and for the health and well-being of its people. We recognise that sustainability is a local, regional, national and global responsibility.

The Council will make decisions by assessing short and long term financial and non-financial risks. Decisions will recognise the interconnectedness of environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being and will aim to produce multiple benefits.

The Council will meet its commitment to sustainability through the services it provides and in the way it operates as an organisation.

Policy objective

To embed a culture of sustainability into all areas of Council by having an overarching policy to be given effect through Council decisions, strategies, plans and actions and against which future Council actions will be evaluated.

Why a sustainability policy?

The Local Government Act 2002 requires councils in their decision making to take a "sustainable development approach" (Part 1, Section 3). The Act places a legal requirement on the Council to consider sustainability in all decisions. The sustainability policy helps clarify what sustainability means for the Council. It gives a commitment by the Council to adopt sustainability best practice and to show the way for others.

Where does the sustainability policy fit?

The sustainability policy will help to guide Council's decision making processes, strategic direction, policy development and activity management plans. The policy will also assist Council to achieve the Community Outcomes. It is an internal Council policy focusing on matters that the Council can control rather than a statement on behalf of the Wairoa community. However, a key to implementing the policy will be working in partnership with others.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for this policy rests with the full Council and all employees. The Chief Executive and Managers are personally committed to its success.

The Managers and their teams have a key role in understanding and leading the implementation of this policy in their departments.

The Council is committed to monitoring and reviewing this policy in its Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Reports.

SCOPE

The purpose of the sustainability policy is to provide guidance on:

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- how the Council, as an organisation, performs in terms of sustainability (e.g. internal resource efficiency);
- the decisions that Council makes (e.g. providing a sustainability lens through which all proposals can be viewed); and
- enabling our community to be sustainable (e.g. addressing the present and future environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of our community).

CONTEXT

The Council recognises that sustainability is a journey, not a destination. It is not a point that is reached, but a process of continual improvement, where society adapts and responds to changes over time, in a way that recognises the fundamental relationships of the four well-beings.

This policy forms an important part of Council's commitment to sustainability. It has been designed to capture both the moral and legal responsibilities of Council in terms of incorporating sustainability into its activities and decision making.

At the heart of a democratic society is the responsibility for community leaders to make decisions on behalf of, and in the best interests of, present and future generations. Democratic governance, therefore, encompasses key elements of sustainability, such as, stewardship for the community and for the environment on which it depends.

The Local Government Act 2002 also places a legal imperative on Council to adopt a "sustainability approach". This is expressed when the Act defines the purpose of local government (Part 2, Section 10), the principles that relate to local authorities (Part 2, Section 14), and in the requirements for decision making (Part 6, Section 77). The Act identifies four components that the Council must take into account and these are the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of present and future generations.

AIMS

Demonstrate leadership in sustainability across the district

- Achieve best practice standards
- Meet and strive to surpass requirements of environmental legislation targets
- Build partnerships and projects that create learning networks
- Take account of the impact on future generations when making decisions
- Provide decision makers with the information they need to deliver sustainable outcomes

Accountability in Council performance

The Council will:

- Optimise the efficient use of resources and minimise waste
- Increase the use of renewable resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Operate in ways that minimise any adverse impacts on the environment or the local community
- Require employees to incorporate informed sustainability perspectives within their work
- Encourage contractors, Council Controlled Organisations and other partners to adopt sustainable best practice
- Deliver an improved quality of life for the current and future residents of Wairoa

Accountability in service delivery

Each department will:

- Implement sustainable procurement procedures taking account of whole of life costs
- Repair, reuse and recycle ahead of the responsible disposal of surplus materials, and minimise waste generation while taking into account the economics of the work

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- Take positive actions promoting continual improvement in sustainability performance
- Set and achieve clearly defined sustainable development objectives and targets
- Recognise, celebrate and reward achievement in order to promote the Council as a sustainable organisation
- Develop the capacity of staff to promote the principles and practice of sustainability

Measuring progress and impact

The Council will:

- Set targets
- Set indicators to measure progress
- Carry out a review of this policy

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RISK MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Council has adopted a Risk Management Policy which provides the framework for assessing and managing risk. The framework takes an integrated approach that contributes towards sustainability and assists in demonstrating a sustainable development approach. Because risks in each area of Council's operations are assessed within the context of the 4 well-beings (social, cultural, economic and environmental), we can be assured that we are addressing the most important impacts on the community, whether they are social, the environmental, the economic or the cultural impacts. By managing risks in an integrated way Council is moving towards a more sustainable position.