



Active Citizenship Plan

Palmerston North

SMALL CITY BENEFITS, BIG CITY AMBITION

2018/21

Te Kaunihera o Papaioea
Palmerston North City Council



To fulfil the vision of small city benefits, big city ambition the Council has adopted the five goals. The Connected Community Strategy was developed to achieve **Goal 3: A connected and safe community**, and this plan shows how the Council will contribute to achieving this goal. The purpose of the Active Citizens Plan is to show how Council will engage residents and organisations in its decision making and elections.

Greater community participation in decision-making can result in better planning and in more collaboration and community partnerships. Failing to engage appropriately can mean community aspirations are not heard by decision-makers, and that decision-making becomes disconnected from what Palmerston North people think is really important. People participate in decision-making about the things that are important to them by taking the opportunity to vote in government and local body elections, making formal submissions, and being involved in local projects and initiatives. Council has an opportunity to build on the growing enthusiasm for social media engagement and more informal means of contributing to Council decision-making. Council is committed to engaging in a variety of ways to maximise the opportunity for Palmerston North people and organisations to participate in decision-making. In particular, it will focus on ensuring Council understands and responds to the concerns and needs of Māori.

As part of its Vision and Goals, the Council has adopted some principles that guide its engagement and leadership. Three of these are particularly relevant to how Council engages people in decision making:

- **Inclusive:** We will celebrate diversity and be inclusive and collaborative in our engagement, planning, decision making and service provision, to ensure our actions are fair and equitable.
- **Open:** We will be accountable to our community and transparent in our decision making. We will make decisions in public whenever possible and clearly communicate the reasons behind them.
- **Bold:** We will provide visionary leadership, take considered risks and make tough decisions where needed to benefit our community and sustain our future..



The purpose of the Active Citizens Plan is to *build community capacity to take ownership and encourage community leadership of solutions, including better co-ordination between community organisations and groups* (Priority 3: Connected Community Strategy).



Where we are now



- Residents are fairly satisfied with the opportunities they have for involvement in Council's decisions. Focus Groups reveal that many people are not really interested in being involved unless they are directly impacted by the decisions, so this is often a passive satisfaction.
- Council has a wide range of formal and informal opportunities for residents to engage with Council.
- Council holds bimonthly engagement meetings with Rangitāne o Manawatū.
- Council works with village residents through Village Planning.
- Council has a Youth Council to hear youth views and to encourage youth participation in decision making.
- Council has fora to engage with sector and interest groups.
- Council provides information to people and organisations through a wide range of means.
- 39% of Palmerston North people voted in the last local body elections – this is average for large cities.

Where we want to be



- People and organisations from all sectors in Palmerston North are actively involved in a wide range of Council decisions because they can see the relevance of the decisions to them, and because it is easy and worthwhile. They have a wide range of formal and informal engagement methods to choose from.
- Council understands what people and organisations are interested in, and uses this to get them engaged in decision making.
- Māori have a voice at the Council table.
- There is a wider participation by ethnic and other minorities in Council's decision making.
- People and organisations understand how Council's policies and services affect them and hence are more engaged in decision making.
- People and organisations understand how Council's governance processes work. (The Council also encourages better understanding of the governance processes for community groups and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs). Actions for this are in the Community Support Plan.)
- People and organisations have a well understood process to suggest new ideas to the Council.
- The Council uses innovative tools and takes advantage of new technologies and new ways of engaging and communicating.
- Council and Committee meetings are live-streamed.
- Council makes inclusive, collaborative, accountable and transparent decisions, and clearly communicates the reasons behind these decisions.
- More people vote in the local body elections.

How we're going to get there

Day to day / ongoing actions to achieve the purpose

- Councillors have portfolios, with responsibilities for community engagement in these areas.
- Councillors hold a wide range of public 'Let's Talk with a Councillor' sessions.
- Use innovative social media campaigns, and other tools, to engage a wide range of people in a wide range of topics.
- Provide information about the Council's policies, services and decisions in a wide range of fit for purpose ways that suit people's expectations.
- Strengthen engagement with Rangitāne o Manawatū (current main mechanism is through the Bi-monthly engagement meetings).
- Youth Council meets regularly and recruits members annually.

- Work with village residents on Village Plans.
- Work with community groups to encourage ethnic and other minority populations to participate more in Council's decision making.
- Engage using Council's Community Engagement Principles (see Significance and Engagement Policy).
- Engage in ways that match the significance (importance) of the issue and the preferences and needs of interested and affected people and organisations. (Council's Significance and Engagement Policy sets out more details on how this will occur.)
- Review the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy every three years (as part of the 10 Year Plan).
- All reports to Council describe the engagement on the issue and the outcomes of this engagement.
- All reports to Council include an assessment of the Significance of the recommended decisions. If a decision is Significant the Council formally confirms it has met the decision making requirements of the Local Government Act.
- Hold 'Meet the Candidates' meetings and carry out social media campaigns to encourage residents to vote in local body elections.
- Advocate for and support on-line voting for local body elections to encourage more people to vote, particularly young people. Also work with groups and organisations who encourage participation in local body elections.

New ongoing actions to achieve the purpose

- Create and maintain an online central hub for Council's community engagement that is based around peoples' interests in Council, and that has a wide range of social media and other options for people and organisations to easily participate in Council's decision making.
- Develop and promote a mechanism for people and organisations to bring new ideas to the Council.
- Hold an annual "Council governance open day" so people understand how the Council's governance works and how they can be involved.
- Set up post-Treaty settlement formal relationship arrangements with Rangitāne o Manawatū as mana whenua.
- Implement the outcomes of the 2018 Representation Review for the 2019 Local Body elections.
- Implement the outcomes of the Māori Ward Review for the 2019 Local Body elections.
- Engage on a wide range of Council decisions and projects as they emerge.

Specific programmes to achieve the purpose (with timeframe)

- Develop and implement a terms of reference for a Council led disability reference group (by December 2018).
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Actions contributing to Council's strategic themes

a) Smart city practices

- An online engagement hub, including the ability for people to get targeted engagement from Council.
- More use of social media in all of Council's communication and engagement.

b) Sustainable practices

c) Iwi partnerships

- Establish more formal relationship arrangements with Rangitāne o Manawatū as mana whenua.
- Formal engagement structures and processes with Rangitāne o Manawatū provide a meaningful expression of a strengthening partnership with the Iwi.

d) Strategic partnerships

- Proactive engagement with Rangitāne o Manawatū.
- Collaboration with the Te Tihi Whānau Ora Alliance, in particular around the Whānau Ora principle of 'whānau fully participating in society'.



Measures of success



- Positive feedback from residents on Council's community engagement (measured in years 1 and 2. Year 1 through focus groups (qualitative feedback) and Year 2 through Communitrak Survey (quantitative feedback))
- Increase in social media activity – eg Number of Facebook followers
- More community-initiated deputations at Council and Committee meetings

Related policies



- Significance and Engagement Policy
- Māori Contribution to Decision Making (in 10 Year Plan)
- Appointment of Directors Policy
- Signs and Use of Public Places Bylaw

Long-term Plan levels of service

Council engages on a wide range of decisions and projects to get people and organisations from all sectors in actively involved in Council decision making.

Long-term Plan KPIs

Positive feedback from residents on Council's community engagement (Qualitative measure).
Description of the range of engagement techniques used by Council (Qualitative measure).

Actions considered but not included in this plan

Additional support for 'Let's Talk with a Councillor' meetings and Councillor portfolios
Live-streaming of Council and Committee meetings





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