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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy and Council
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Māori involvement in the decision making processes of Council

1. Purpose

To provide Committee with the agreed processes from Ara Tahi for involving Māori in the decision-making processes of Council.

2. Background

On 7 April 2004, iwi and councillors participated in a joint workshop at Raukawa Marae to discuss the requirements in the Local Government Act 2002 relating to Māori. At the workshop, it was resolved that further discussion between iwi representatives was required. The discussion took place at a hui in the council offices on 22 June. This hui provided an opportunity for iwi representatives to define a process for Māori involvement in council processes. No councillors or staff were present at this hui.

Although the hui was very productive, a second hui was required to finish the discussion. This took place in Greater Wellington's Wairarapa office on 7 July. Councillor's Shields and Buchanan were invited to attend, along with Jason Kerehi and Rawiri Faulkner.

The workshops focused on sections 81(1) and 82(2) of the Local Government Act which state:

81(1) A local authority must—

Establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and

Consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and

Provide relevant information to Māori for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b).

Use of the term “Māori” in the Act is new. The Act seeks to promote the active engagement of Māori in the decision-making processes of local authorities. The obligations placed on councils are intended to develop broad and inclusive processes for Māori, and not just tangata whenua.

3. Summary of key outcomes from the workshops

It was agreed that ‘other Māori’ should be encouraged to participate in Council business. However, the process needs to recognise the significance of the current relationships and the tikanga surrounding current practice. At the conclusion of the two workshops, the following outcomes were agreed:

- The process would acknowledge the Council’s commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- If groups or individuals who identify as Māori indicate an interest to being involved in Council business, they should be encouraged to approach iwi to discuss their concerns. If the individual or group prefers not to consult with tangata whenua, the Council should advise local iwi.
- The process will be clearly defined in line with tikanga Māori, and Ara Tahī members will provide this clarification.

4. Iwi representation on Committees

The representatives felt that iwi representation on Council committees requires further investigation. The matter has been raised in the past, but it was difficult for Ara Tahī to agree on a single iwi representative to represent the views of all tangata whenua of the Region. Iwi representatives felt that this process would still be problematic.

If an iwi representative were to sit on a Council committee, they would not be able to ‘make decisions’ on behalf of other iwi. However, they would be part of the decision making process, and be able to provide a tangata whenua perspective. An iwi representative on a Council committee could perform a liaison role between the committee and Ara Tahī, providing iwi with feedback on Council business. The views of all iwi could then be raised with the relevant committee. Iwi representatives would develop skills in their relevant area of Council business e.g. transport, and this increased knowledge would benefit Ara Tahī overall.

It was agreed that no further discussion would take place on this matter until after the local body elections in October. It was suggested that a workshop be held after that time to discuss the topic in more detail.

5. Ara Tahi

Ara Tahi adopted this process at their hui on 25 August 2004, however it was acknowledged that work was required to actively involve Māori in the decision making processes of Council. This included developing processes that recognised other Māori groups and assessing their interest in the decision-making processes of the Council.

6. Conclusion

The Local Government Act 2002 requires that Greater Wellington provide opportunities for Māori to participate in its decision-making processes. By developing a process that includes Māori, both the Council and iwi will have the opportunity to benefit from inclusive representation.

The outcomes from the two hui will provide opportunities for other Māori groups to participate in Council processes, while acknowledging tikanga Māori and the significance of the current relationship between Council and tangata whenua. Groups and individuals can participate in decision-making processes of Council through existing mechanisms like community consultation. However, if a group identifies as Māori then the process (tikanga) outlined by this policy will be applied.

The outcomes of the hui are consistent with current practices and acknowledge the rights of individuals to participate in Council processes, while ensuring that iwi are aware of any requests that come from other Māori groups. Capacity building still requires investigation. However, there is now an opportunity to promote the involvement of Māori in the decision-making processes of Council.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that Policy Finance and Strategy and Council Committee:

1. *receives the report; and*
2. *notes the contents; and*
3. *adopts the process outlined in this report*

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