

## DEVELOPMENT OF MĀORI CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING POLICY

<b>Policy Title:</b> <b>DEVELOPMENT OF MĀORI CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING</b>	
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### Introduction

Council is committed to working with Maori and Tangata Whenua to build internal capacity and capability, not least to support the requirements given effect to by the Treaty Settlements. While required to have this policy under the Local Government Act, Council is committed to having working relationships with Maori which go above and beyond what is required under the legislative framework.

Clause 8 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires that the Council outline any steps it might take to foster the development of Māori capacity building to contribute to its decision-making processes, over the period covered by this plan.

The key provision in the Local Government Act 2002 regarding the Council's relationship with Māori is section 81, which requires all councils to fulfil three primary tasks:

- a) Establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and
- b) Consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and
- c) Provide relevant documentation to Māori for the purposes of the above two paragraphs.

### **The Memorandum of Understanding: Tutohinga**

The Memorandum of Understanding, initially signed in 1998, recognises the fundamental role of Iwi in the District and the essential partnership between Iwi and the Rangitikei District Council. The key mechanism for delivering on the partnership intent of the Memorandum is Te Roopu Ahi Kaa, a standing advisory committee of the Council. Tangata Whēnua of the District are represented on the Komiti, as is the Ratana Community. Komiti members are regularly briefed on Council matters and specifically offered a lead role in reviews of policies/statements of particular relevance to Māori. Members of the Komiti are also provided with a training budget in order to build capacity and capability among the group.

To give effect to the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding: Tutohinga, the Council and Te Roopu Ahi Kaa are committed to looking for more effective ways to ensure that Māori are well informed, have an ability to have input into processes and, when they do so, understand the reasons for the Council's response.

A Māori community development programme was undertaken during 2011-2014, and provided for facilitated Hui of iwi/Hapu from the northern rohe to pre-caucus before Komiti meetings. A budget is allocated for the Māori Community Development Programme and is to be distributed by the Komiti in accordance with its own processes. This programme is designed to increase the capacity of Māori to contribute to local decision-making, and strengthen relationships between iwi organisations/marae and Council (including through the development of individual MOU). As a result, Council developed a policy for unlocking Māori landlocked land and a policy to recognise iwi/hapu interests in Council-owned land that is declared surplus.

The Memorandum of Understanding: Tutohinga is subject to review at the same time as each Representation Review. The last review was in 2012 and the next will begin in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

### **Strategic Planning**

Te Roopu Ahi Kaa has adopted a strategic plan which is subject to regular review. This plan identifies a number of actions to achieve three goals – building stronger relationships between Council and Te Roopu Ahi Kaa, building stronger relationships between Council and Iwi, hapu, whanau and Māori communities, and building cultural awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> In between these times of comprehensive review, the Komiti may recommend changes to its membership to reflect the needs and views of Iwi/hapu of the District.

Every three years, Council adopts the Long Term Plan, supplemented annually with an Annual Plan. Council will ensure that there is an annual opportunity for iwi to engage with Council's strategic planning process, including the schedule of capital and renewal works, major programmes, policy review development etc.

Council will also ensure that other tributary strategies – for example, arts, heritage, and economic development – receive particular input from iwi/hapu and from Te Roopu Ahi Kaa

Council will welcome the opportunity to receive the strategic and other management plans from iwi/hapu in order to ensure alignment of its own strategies and plans where possible and appropriate, and with particular reference to the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991.

### **Iwi Liaison Officer**

Te Roopu Ahi Kaa suggested that this new role would facilitate effective communication with Tangata Whenua and manage relationships in order to assist with the development and analysis of Council policy. Implementing and potentially reviewing Te Roopu Ahi Kaa's strategic plan forms part of this role. Details are currently being worked out.

### **Representation**

One of the early components of the Representation Review is consideration whether one or more Māori wards should be established in the District. Assuming the current statutory provisions remain in force, Council will continue to refer this matter to the Komiti for its consideration at each Representation Review. At the most recent review in 2017, the Komiti did not make a recommendation on this proposal. Instead it resolved that the future of Te Roopu Ahi Kaa as an advisor group be considered against the value of direct relationships between Iwi and Council.

This is not an 'either-or' question but one of establishing complementary relationships, understanding both the potential advantages and disadvantages of both. The Komiti advocates that Te Roopu Ahi Kaa achieves a sense of tribal accountability, which is important for a district with multiple iwi. The Komiti is therefore in agreement that Maori Wards would not negate the need for Te Roopu Ahi Kaa. Council expects this discussion to be ongoing and to develop as the relationship between Council and iwi organisations in the district matures.

In 2017, Council decided to invite Te Roopu Ahi Kaa to nominate one of its members to be a member of the Assets/Infrastructure Committee with full voting rights. This arrangement will be extended in 2018 to include representation on the Policy/Planning and Finance/Performance Committees. This is viewed by the Komiti as being a form of meaningful participation in Council business.

### **The Post Treaty Settlement Environment**

Finalisation of Treaty claims is a significant development in the Rangitikei. The Council is aware that in a post-settlement phase, iwi with Mana Whēnua have obligations to all people in the rohe.

Ngati Apa's claim is the first claim to be settled in the District and so is of particular significance to the District. It has resulted in addressing a number of longstanding grievances that some Iwi and Hapu in our District have had with the Crown. The settlement will also result in commercial and cultural redress that is likely to change the business, and cultural landscape within the region. Council will seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Ngati Apa which supports the realisation of these benefits and Ngati Apa have also expressed interest in seeking closer working relationships with Council.

Ngati Rangi settled their claim on 10 March 2018 and the Taihape claims are anticipated in the near future. Once these settlements are complete, they are likely to promote stronger working relationships with Council, particularly in the economic and industry space. The impacts of the Settlements/Acts on Council's business, resourcing levels and processes are not fully known at this stage.

The Iwi Advisory Komiti is an opportunity for Iwi/hapu without the capacity to engage independently to engage in a relationship with Council. However, the Iwi Advisory Komiti does not pre-empt the opportunity for individual Iwi/hapu to have a direct relationship with Council.