

GOVERNANCE

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The publicly elected Councillors have overall responsibility and accountability for the direction and control of the Council's functions.

STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council is made up of eleven Councillors, elected as follows:

New Plymouth constituency	Five members
North Taranaki constituency	Two members
Stratford constituency	One member
South Taranaki constituency	Three members

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In formulating its committees, the Taranaki Regional Council is required to take into account the dictates of the Local Government Act 2002. This Act requires that a local authority should ensure that, so far as is practicable, responsibility and processes for decision-making in relation to regulatory responsibilities is separated from responsibility and processes for decision-making for non-regulatory responsibilities.

With the exception of the Executive and the Consents and Regulatory Committees, the Council has decided to appoint non-Council representatives to its various committees as a means to increase the breadth of input to the decisions made by the Council.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is a Joint Committee established under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The Taranaki Regional Council is a member of this Group along with members from the New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki district councils. The Taranaki Regional Council is the administering authority for the Joint Committee.

Te Putahitanga o Taranaki – the Council's Māori liaison committee – was established in the early years after the Council's formation. Its purpose was to act as a forum for discussion and a source of advice to the Council on issues of interest or concern to Māori, particularly with respect to resource management issues, and to ensure those issues were reflected in the Council's policies, plans and activities.

Te Putahi has played a significant role in establishing the Council's policies in regard to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and on resource management issues of significant to iwi. These policies and plans are now firmly in place and continue to guide the Council in carrying out its activities.

However, faced with other demands on matters not directly associated with the Council's business, some iwi have not seen continued representation on Te Putahi as a priority. There have also been issues

with rights of representation which remain unresolved. As a consequence, Te Putahi has been inactive in recent years. A review of the role of the committee initiated by iwi has not been completed. The Council continues to seek to maintain effective working relationships with individual iwi and hapu in its day-to-day activities.

Te Putahitanga o Taranaki will continue as a non-active Standing Committee of the Council until such time as there is greater clarity on its future role.

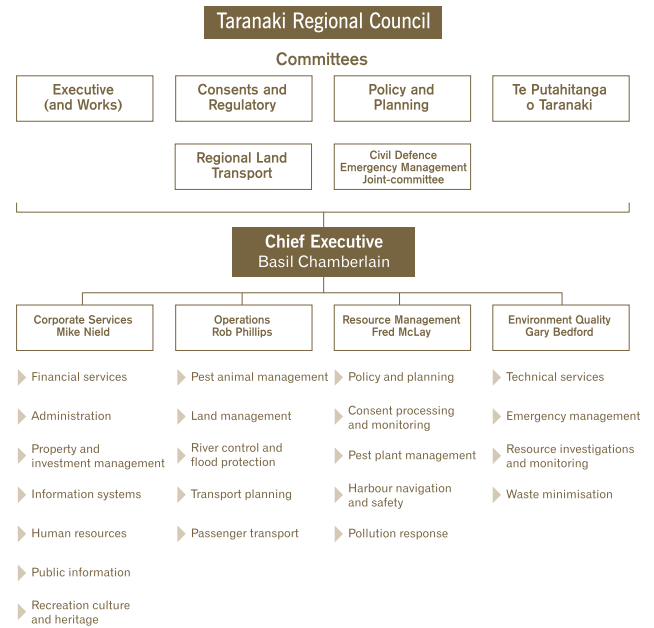


Figure 6: Committee and organisational structure

COUNCIL OPERATIONS

To undertake its activities, the Council employs a permanent staff with wide-ranging professional, technical and administrative skills. In addition, the Council owns the necessary property, equipment and facilities.

Most Council activities are primarily the output of one section or department. However, a number of tasks, particularly those associated with the development of policy, require resources to be applied from throughout the organisation. The departmental structure has been designed in accordance with the Council's fields of activities. It is a flat, compact structure, which results in a high level of delegated authority, productivity and commitment.

GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

The full Council and main Council committees meet on a six-weekly cycle, with other meetings convened as necessary. Agendas and minutes from all meetings are publicly available for scrutiny. The Council is confident that its adopted structure and approach provides an efficient basis for the sound consideration of issues and the making of good decisions, and that the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 are being met.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Council operates a clear division of responsibilities between the role of the Council and that of management as required by the Local Government Act 2002. The Council's focus is on setting strategy and policy together with monitoring its implementation. Management is responsible for the implementation of the Council's policy and strategy decisions.

While many of the Council's functions have been delegated, the overall responsibility for maintaining effective systems of internal control rests with the Council. Internal control includes the policies, systems and procedures established to provide measurable assurance that the specific objectives of the Council are achieved.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

As a regulatory body, the Council administers various regulations and laws. As such, the Council considers it vital that it also complies with relevant legislation. Members and management of the Council are cognisant of the Council's legislative requirements. Where necessary, legal advice is obtained to ensure legislative compliance.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Many of the Council's activities are focused on promoting the sustainable use, development and protection of the environment. Both regulatory and non-regulatory methods are employed, and a range of different types of monitoring is undertaken, to test the effectiveness of these methods.

However, in addition to its overall environmental management role in the region, which is substantially focused on the activities of external parties who use environmental resources, the Council itself occasionally engages in resource use activities in undertaking its functions. Where that occurs, the Council has systems and procedures in place to ensure that its own actions comply with at least the standards expected of all other resource users. These include requirements to apply for and obtain necessary consents, the use of independent persons to make decisions on consent applications, and the implementation and public reporting of effective compliance monitoring.

DEVELOPING MAORI CAPACITY

Steps that the Council intends to take having considered ways in which it might foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the Council are as follows:

FOUNDATIONS OF A RELATIONSHIP

Act cooperatively and in good faith showing flexibility and responsiveness and a desire to engage with Māori for the good governance of the region. This will be done in a manner that is inclusive and makes the best use of the resources of both Māori and the Council.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Provide opportunities to involve Māori in major policy decisions including but not limited to policies, plans and strategies under the Local Government Act 2002, the Resource Management Act 1991, the Biosecurity Act 1993, the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, the Land Transport Management Act 2003, the Public Transport Management Act 2008 and the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

Notify Māori of draft long-term council community plans and draft annual plans under the Local Government Act 2002.

In carrying out these steps the Council will:

- provide sufficient information to Māori to enable them to participate effectively in the decision-making processes of the Council
- provide reasonable time for consideration of the information or advice given
- give full and genuine consideration to the views of Māori in making its decisions.

RESOURCE CONSENTS PROCESS

Continue and further develop best practice in resource consent processing and administration.

In carrying out these steps the Council will:

- encourage applicants to consult where Māori may be an interested party, as part of an assessment of environmental effects
- ensure that sufficient information is provided by applicants on any actual or potential effects on Māori
- consider extending resource consent processing periods to enable adequate consultation and possible resolution of issues with Māori
- have regard to the effects on Māori in assessing whether resource consent applications are to be notified or non-notified and require applicants to obtain written approval to non-notification where Māori are an affected party
- provide information and technical assistance on resource consents and resource consent processing and administration

- arrange and facilitate meetings and undertake other forms of consultation with Māori as part of resource consent processing and administration
- hold meetings and pre-hearing meetings on marae as appropriate
- arrange interpretation services for the presentation of evidence in Māori when requested
- exclude the public from a hearing and restricting the publication of evidence when necessary to avoid serious offence to tikanga Māori or to avoid the disclosure of the location of wahi tapu
- consider the participation of Māori in resource consent monitoring, including input into the design of monitoring programmes and involvement in monitoring activities.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Meet with Māori to discuss any matter of mutual interest or importance at times and venues to be agreed.

Provide opportunities for Māori, within the framework of the Council's standing orders, to appear before and address any meeting of a Council standing committee or meeting of the full Council.

Seek opportunities when appropriate for the Council to be represented before meetings of Māori governance entities.

Establish as necessary, working parties or other informal groups with representatives of Māori and the Council to progress issues of mutual interest.

Contract with Māori to provide specific advice, expertise, information or other services.

Look to develop with the appropriate Māori governance entities, an effective working relationship between the Council and the governance entities, through memoranda of understanding protocols or other means.

REPRESENTATION

Continue to provide opportunities for Māori to be represented on the Council's Policy and Planning Committee and other committees as appropriate.

Consider the need for and desirability of establishing a Māori constituency or constituencies under the Local Electoral Act 2002.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Share information held by the Council, subject to any statutory restrictions on the release or use of that information.

Protect sensitive information provided to the Council by Māori and restrict access to it in accordance with the Local Government Official Information

DEVELOPING MAORI CAPACITY

and Meetings Act 1987 and other relevant legislation. Obtain agreement from Māori to protect any sensitive or confidential information supplied by the Council.

Give due respect and recognition to silent files or plans held by or given to the Council by Māori.

Explore opportunities to develop in conjunction with Māori, databases or wahi tapu sites using information technology where possible.

Maintain a database of iwi contacts including authorized voice, member hapu, and marae and provide to Māori contact details for key Council functions, responsibilities and personnel.

TRAINING

Provide training in tikanga Māori, to Councillors and Council staff.

Provide opportunities within the Council's work programmes and activities for Māori to gain experience, training and skill development.

RESOURCES

Provide technical advice, information and related support in the preparation and review of Council policies, plans and strategies.

Provide staff time and costs in attending meetings, hui or workshops.

Provide technical assistance and advice in preparing iwi planning documents and consider financial or other support for preparing such documents.

Provide technical advice, information and related support in the processing of applications for resource consent.

Provide payments to Māori through contracting for services for the delivery of specific advice, expertise, information, databases, research projects or training services.

STAFF CAPACITY

The Council is committed to being a good employer. This involves:

- providing good and safe working conditions
- operating an equal employment opportunities programme
- ensuring the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment
- recognising the need for greater involvement of Māori in local government employment
- ensuring that all employees maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.

VALUES STATEMENT

The staff of the Council are individually and collectively committed to:

Public service

- behaving with integrity and neutrality in the best traditions of the public sector in New Zealand
- administering our functions for the collective good of our community with consistency, fairness and sensitivity in our treatment of individual situations
- not accepting direct or indirect offers, payment, gifts or bribes in any form and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Service first

- assisting people in a courteous, helpful, accurate and professional manner
- providing people with a better service than they may expect to receive, noting that many people do not have dealings with us out of choice
- recognising the social and cultural diversity that exists and take this into account in our dealings.

Improving the quality of our performance

- ensuring our personal contributions make a real and positive difference to the Council, its mission and performance
- continually improving the quality of our services to customers and the quality of our working relationships with each other
- improving our time management and productivity by increasing our knowledge and experience of our duties, working in a planned and strategic way and focusing on completing assignments
- calling for assistance when required
- being thorough and professional in our work so that we make sound recommendations and decisions based on knowledge and understanding.

Effective communication and teamwork

- informing each other about our tasks and seeking participation and advice
- communicating with simplicity, clarity, and certainty
- recognising that individual achievements are always underpinned by the assistance of others
- constructively assisting each other, being non-possessive and receptive to advice
- trusting, respecting and being loyal to each other and the organisation

- congratulating each other for jobs well done and helping each other through problems
- participative management systems which encourage constructive and timely expression of opinion, noting that having a say differs from having a vote.

Initiative and the right to make mistakes

- challenging the way we do things showing initiative with the aim of improving effectiveness
- being innovative in developing and using new ideas, methods and technologies
- minimising mistakes but accepting that we will make mistakes as we learn and improve
- forgiving well-intentioned errors
- being flexible and responsive to change.

Accountability and results

- being responsible and accountable for our own actions and the quality of our own work
- being collectively responsible for and loyal to the organisation's actions
- achieving results which benefit the community
- not mistaking activity for accomplishment.

Presentation, respect and care

- presenting ourselves for work in a fit state and in appropriate standards of dress and appearance
- respecting and caring for Council property, plant, vehicles and our workplace as if it were our own
- recognising the need to protect the integrity and public image of the Council and our colleagues in our private lives
- remembering that many of the people who are obliged to contribute to the funding of the organisation have low incomes.

Job satisfaction

- being appropriately trained and resourced to do our work well
- being satisfactorily rewarded for our work
- enjoying our work.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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STAFF CAPACITY

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Council has extensive systems in place to assist performance management and continuous improvement.

Performance metrics to measure individual, group and total Council performance across a full range of processes and outputs have been developed. This information is provided to all staff through the intranet and other means, at regular intervals. The Council's individual performance development programme (IDP) incorporates individual performance expectations and appraisal, personal development and training needs.

TRAINING

The Council is committed to ensuring staff have an opportunity to receive training to develop to their full potential in a climate of open communication and teamwork.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Council operates a Health and Safety in the Workplace programme. The target is to have no work-related accidents resulting in staff time being lost.

EMPLOYMENT

One-hundred and two permanent staff were employed by the Council at 30 June 2008. Ninety-three percent were employed under the Taranaki Regional Council Collective Employment Agreement, with the balance employed on individual agreements. Staff employed under the collective agreement are represented by the Taranaki Regional Council Officers Staff Association Incorporated.

The target is to have no disputes or personal grievances which trigger the "employment relationship problems" provisions of the Taranaki Regional Council Collective Employment Agreement.

Staff are encouraged to use organised health programmes.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES/IMPARTIAL EMPLOYMENT/MAORI EMPLOYMENT

The Taranaki Regional Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in the recruitment, employment, training and promotion of its employees. The organisation will provide a welcoming, positive environment.

The organisation will implement a purposeful programme of action to ensure its activities and services are carried out with an awareness of, and an intent to eliminate discrimination in the areas of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, religious beliefs, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, special needs, or age. Specifically the Council will:

- ensure that recruitment policies and procedures are developed which select from the widest possible cross-section of potential staff in a non-discriminatory way
- maintain information sources necessary to provide appropriate detail and information for input into EEO policy development, implementation and evaluation, whilst ensuring confidentiality
- ensure all staff have the opportunity to participate in training and educational opportunities, including occupational safety and health issues, both inside and outside the organisation
- raise awareness of EEO issues throughout the organisation.