

Whangarei District Council Advisory Groups Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the advisory groups is to support Council's vision of Whangarei being a vibrant, attractive and thriving District for all people living here. Advisory groups contribute to this vision by providing advice to Whangarei District Council on the following areas:

- Council policies, plans, strategies, design and capital works projects
- Matters of particular interest or concern to the communities they represent.

2. KEY GOALS

The advisory groups will:

- Contribute to improving the outcomes of the communities they represent
- Develop and deliver on strategic work programmes that align with Council's key strategies and planning documents
- Build effective working relationships between their respective communities and the Council
- Connect Whangarei District Council into the youth, disability and positive ageing communities, and any other groups deemed to have a positive role to play.

3. STRATEGIC WORK PROGRAMME

Each advisory group will develop a strategic agenda and work programme. These will be aligned to:

- Council strategies and policies relevant to the communities they represent
- National and regional strategies relating to the youth, disability and positive ageing sectors
- Council's consultation and engagement work programme.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications are open to people living within the Whangarei District. Members are selected on the basis of their:

- Lived experience with relevant diverse communities
- Individual competencies
- Ability to offer policy and strategic advice
- Understanding of the range of diverse communities within Whangarei District
- Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

5. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process for advisory groups is outlined in Appendix A of this document.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- Each advisory group will have between 8 -12 members.
- Members of the Youth Advisory Group will be aged between 15 and 24 years old.
- Members of the Disability Advisory Group will have lived experience with an impairment whether personal or through caring for someone with an impairment.
- Members of the Positive Ageing Advisory Group will have lived experience of positive ageing or expertise on issues affecting older people in the District.

- Each group will have at least one member with lived experience of Te Ao Maori and knowledge of the issues facing Maori communities.

7. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The role of members, chair/co-chair, deputy chair, liaison Councillor, lead officer and supporting officer are outlined in Appendix B of this document.

8. MEETINGS

- Each advisory group will aim to meet between 8 - 10 times per year.
- Scheduled meetings will be a mix of open meetings, closed workshops, site visits community forums and, where it makes sense, joint advisory group meetings.
- Half of the current number of members, not including vacancies, must be present for the group to have a quorum. No resolutions can be passed without a quorum.
- Should conflict occur, the Chairperson / Co-Chairperson and group will work with the lead officer to resolve the conflict. If necessary, mediation can be requested.
- Advisory group meetings will be attended by liaison Councillors, Council staff, and, if required, support people of individual advisory group members. Councillors, Council staff and advisory group members' support people are not members of the advisory groups.

9. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- The standard term of appointment will be two years. Members can be considered to serve an additional term. The advisory group Chair and Community Development Manager must approve extended terms of appointment. The maximum term of service will be two terms.
- The term of appointment will be re-evaluated if a member moves out of the district boundaries or misses more than three consecutive meetings without apology during any one calendar year.
- If an advisory group member resigns, a replacement will be sought through the current selection process that Council has in place. The youth advisory group will retain an annual shortlist of applicants from which replacement members will be sought.
- Members may request a leave of absence of up to three months due to sickness or injury.
- To ensure continuity from the existing advisory group structure, members terms will be staggered.

10. OPERATION AND OTHER MATTERS

- Whangarei District Council will oversee the administration of the advisory groups.
- In return for their commitment, the Council will provide members with training relevant to their roles (i.e. Chair, Deputy Chair, members), opportunities to attend conferences/seminars relevant to the work of the advisory group, and, where appropriate, opportunities to represent their communities on Council working parties/project teams.
- Chairs/Co-chairs will be elected annually by secret ballot.
- Advisory Groups will report to the appropriate Council committee annually, outlining work undertaken with Council staff, the group's achievements and any issues it wishes the Council to consider further.
- If a situation arises where an advisory group is not functioning effectively, or there is a disagreement regarding membership eligibility, the Whangarei District Council will have final approval of the membership and composition of the groups.
- All members are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct as outlined in Appendix C of the document.

11. REMUNERATION

Advisory group members will receive a \$40 attendance fee per meeting.

12. REVIEW

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years at a formal advisory group meeting. All changes to the Terms of Reference will be subject to the approval of the Whangarei District Council.

Whangarei District Council Advisory Groups

Appendix A: Selection process

Recruitment of new members will be managed by the allocated lead officer.

The Council will call for nominations using contacts through relevant community networks, Council's website and local print media.

Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by a selection panel consisting of:

- The lead officer
- The advisory group's chair
- A liaison Councillor.

The role description for members included in Appendix B and the advisory group's selection criteria as stated in the terms of reference will be used for the selection process. The selection panel will make the final decision about all appointments to the advisory group.

Replacement of Vacancies

Council will work to fill any vacancies as they arise.

The Youth Advisory Group will retain an annual shortlist of up to 6 previous applicants from which replacements may be recruited to ensure the group always has 8 – 12 members.

Appendix B: Roles and responsibilities

All members

Advisory group members are to:

- Provide advice to Council that is informed by the communities they represent
- Consider issues on their merits to ensure the best advice is provided to Council
- Be openminded and display a willingness to listen to differing points of view
- Treat others, including staff, with respect at all times
- Actively engage with members of the communities they represent
- Establish and maintain relationships within their respective communities
- Comply with the Code of Conduct as outlined in Appendix C.

Chair/Co-chairperson

The chair or co-chairperson is to:

- Facilitate advisory group meetings to enable considered yet efficient decision making
- Encourage open communication from all advisory group members
- Work with lead officers to compile meeting agendas
- Work with members and the lead officer to develop and implement the group's work programme
- Be the spokesperson and contact point with Council for their respective group and represent the views and recommendations of that group
- Work with the lead officer to review the performance of the advisory group against their respective work programme.

Deputy Chairperson

The deputy chairperson is to:

- Support the chair in their role
- Act in place of the chair if the chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest.

Liaison Councillors

Liaison Councillors are to:

- Ensure that at least one liaison Councillor is present for the duration of all advisory group meetings
- Actively listen and ensure the flow of information between Council and advisory groups
- Take key messages as identified by advisory groups to the governing body
- Ensure that the governing body is aware of advisory groups' feedback and advice on how to address the issues of specific communities
- Report back to advisory groups on any outcomes relating to the advice they have provided to the governing body.

Lead officer

The lead officer is to:

- Advise the chair on the strategic agendas
- Coordinate development of advisory group strategic work programmes
- Follow up on meeting actions and resolutions
- Act as a conduit with relevant parts of Council for the group
- Support liaison Councillors
- Highlight potential issues and risks
- Sit next to the chair in meetings to provide advice as appropriate

- Ensure guidance and advice from the group is clearly captured
- Provide subject matter expertise
- Meet regularly with advisory group chairs/co-chairs.

Supporting officer

The supporting officer is to:

- Take minutes in formal meetings and community forums
- Take notes in closed workshops.

Appendix C: Code of Conduct

Objective

The objective of the code of conduct is to:

- Support the development of mutual trust and respect amongst advisory group members, liaison Councillors and Council staff
- Clarify the standard of behaviour expected from members of Council advisory groups.

Relationships

Members are expected to conduct their dealings with each other, elected members and Council staff in ways that:

- Are open, honest and maintain integrity
- Focus on issues rather than personalities
- Maintain confidence in their group
- Keep focus on issues of their respective communities that directly relate to Council business.

Should conflict occur, the Chair/ Co-Chair and group will work with the lead officer to resolve the conflict. If necessary, mediation can be requested.

Public comment

All media enquiries will be directed to the lead officer. Where appropriate a view may be expressed by an advisory group with Council agreement. In these circumstances:

- Only the chair, co-chairs or deputy chair can represent the group to the media
- The chair will work with Council's communications team in relation to any public comments
- Members must support the official view of the group and refer any further enquiries to the lead officer.

Members are free to express a personal view in public. When doing so, they should make it clear that:

- They are expressing a personal view
- Their comments do not represent the views of the advisory groups.

In addition, public comments should comply with all other expectations as outlined in the advisory groups' Code of Conduct.

Conflict of interest

Advisory group members are expected to report any conflicts of interest to the Council as soon as possible.

General Conduct

Advisory group members are expected to:

- Act with honesty and integrity at all times
- Be prepared for meetings and arrive at meetings on time
- Provide apologies in advance when attendance at a meeting is not possible
- Abide by the direction of the chair
- Maintain a positive public image and not bring the Council into disrepute
- Avoid publicly criticising any Council employee in any way
- Raise concerns about Council employees through the employee's employer
- Ensure that any confidential information received remains confidential.

Review of position

Any behaviour that is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct may result in a review of advisory group membership and will be required to go through Council process for a decision to be made.

The group member in question may represent themselves, with or without support, but the Council will have the final say and no further discussion will be entered into.