

<i>Policy title</i>			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Development
Policy Author	Community Funding Officer	Review Date	2024

Whangarei District Council

*Community Funding
Pūtea a Hapori*

*Policy
#031*

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Purpose

The purpose of the Community Funding Policy is to guide the allocation and management of Council's community grants and loans. It outlines Council's drivers, objectives and approach to providing support to the community.

This policy should be read alongside the annual Community Funding Programme which lists the current funding options available, specific Fund criteria, closing dates and instructions for applying.

The overall objective of the Community Funding Policy is to support effective delivery of the community funding programme to meet the needs of four groups of stakeholders, being:

- **Groups and organisations seeking financial support**, who require clear guidance about Council's intentions and priorities for funding, fair and equitable grants processes, and upfront information about their obligations if they receive a grant.
- **Elected members**, who are responsible for deciding on the allocation of grants in a way that best meets the needs of the community, addresses the priorities they have collectively set, and delivers good value for ratepayers.
- **Council staff**, who need a clear framework within which to work to provide high quality service and advice, stewardship of grant funds, evaluation of their impact and benefit, and effectively deliver the community funding programme.
- **Whangarei residents**, who fund through their rates the community support the council provides, and who receive the benefit of the activities we fund on their behalf.

This Policy was previously titled the Grants, Concessions and Loans Policy.

Definitions

Grants	Financial support for specific community endeavours, made following a contestable process.
Contestable	Where a fixed amount of money is available that applicants can compete for a portion of.
Not for Profit	Any society, association or organisation that is not carried on for the profit or gain of any individual member/s, and whose rules or objects state that any money earned or donated is used in pursuing the organisation's objectives for community good.

Scope

This Policy relates to Council's community funding programme managed by its Community Development Department, which includes all contestable grants and the community loans scheme.

Out of scope is support provided from time to time via other council functions, including:

- Rates rebates, remissions, and postponements
- Koha given in specific cultural situations and settings
- Alternative funding programmes such as the Event Development Fund to support objectives in line with the Whangārei Events Strategy, and the Waste Minimisation Fund to support objectives in line with the Whangarei District Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
- Community service contributions for community groups undertaking activities such as mowing of grounds, roadside rubbish removal, and cleaning of public toilets
- Third party support such as the Creative Communities Scheme that Council administers on behalf of Creative New Zealand, and the Kai Ora Fund in which Council is a partner

- Large, one-off grants towards the purchase, development or maintenance of key district infrastructure, usually approved through Annual Plan or Long Term Plan mechanisms
- Support provided to Council Controlled Organisations or other community organisations with which Council has a strategic relationship
- Incentives and concessions relating to the lease of council-owned property.

Strategic alignment

Whangarei District Council operates under the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019.

Council's community funding programme aligns with Council's Long Term Plan, the Community Outcomes it contains, and our vision for the district.

The programme supports our organisational tikanga, and the Four Well-beings of Local Government, being the promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities.

The Community Funding Policy also aligns with and supports several Council strategies and policies, including:

- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy – He Rautaki Toi a Rohe o Whangarei
- Active Recreation and Sport Strategy
- Community Halls Strategy
- Youth Policy
- Positive Ageing Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Whangārei Events Strategy
- Te Kārearea strategic partnership principles.

Community Development Framework

The community funding programme is a key component of our Community Development Framework, which seeks to support communities to collectively impact positively upon the issues, needs and aspirations identified as important by those communities. This policy supports Council's intent to walk alongside the community to help community achieve its aspirations.

Valuing Te Ao Māori and enabling Māori outcomes

Council is committed to upholding the Mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to developing stronger relationships with tangata whenua. Te Kārearea is the strategic partnership forum between hapū of Whangarei working through Te Huinga and Council.

This policy aligns with Te Kārearea's vision:

He Whenua Rangatira – Whangarei, district of prosperity, well-being and empowered communities.

In the context of this policy, our commitment means that:

- We acknowledge the special role and significance of Māori as tangata whenua;
- We recognise that support to eligible kaupapa Māori organisations is an important way to realise Māori aspirations;
- We will engage effectively with Māori to promote funding opportunities available through council, such as through Te Huinga, Te Karearea, and existing networks and platforms;
- We will obtain a Te Ao Māori perspective from Council's Māori Relationships team to assess applications which seek to deliver outcomes for or by Māori;
- Our support is appropriately recognised in funding decisions which demonstrate equitable funding support for tangata whenua.

Our approach

The community funding programme is delivered in accordance with Council's tikanga and our community funding principles.

Organisational tikanga

Our organisation tikanga (practices) guide how we work and our approach to working with the community. Our tikanga are:

- whanaungatanga (fostering relationships),
- manaakitanga (showing respect and care for others),
- kotahitanga (togetherness and collective action), and
- atawhaitanga (stewardship and trust).

Community funding principles

We endeavour to apply our community funding principles in policy and in practice when delivering our community funding programme. Our principles are:

Effective	<p>We are effective and responsive, providing support in a timely, effective and responsible manner so our community can deliver their mahi successfully for the benefit of the District.</p> <p>We have robust processes appropriate to the level of funding, and we provide a helping hand up rather than sustaining funding dependency.</p> <p>We know that in certain cases Council will remain responsible for supporting key district amenities and we understand that we cannot solve all problems, nor be all things to all people. We can though be brave and bold and kind in our approach and we should enable our communities wherever possible.</p>
Equitable	<p>We seek to provide an equitable division of support across our diverse communities of people, place and interest.</p>
Consistent	<p>We are consistent and fair in the delivery of funding opportunities, including ensuring all eligible organisations can compete for the same support.</p>
Transparent	<p>We ensure our approach, criteria, processes, consideration and decision-making are clear, open, publicly available and can stand up to scrutiny.</p>
Flexible	<p>We are flexible, adaptable and able to be agile in order to support the community when, how and where it is seeks our support.</p>
Inclusive	<p>We support programmes, services, facilities and activities that are inclusive for all our communities of place, people and attribute, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori, hapū and iwi• Pacific people and all our ethnic communities• older people, youth and people with disabilities• the rainbow community.

Our priorities

Council aims to support a balanced mix of social amenities and services that meet the needs of all our diverse communities that make up the Whangarei district.

We also want to support activities coming from outside of the district that will enrich the experience of the people of Whangarei and address local needs.

An open, transparent and equitable process ensures Council puts these funds to good use in serving the Whangarei district.

Funding priorities

Alongside the Four Well-beings, our organisational tikanga and Council's strategic objectives, the community funding programme has four priority areas for funding. Each has a weighting to guide the level of investment from all community funding sources. The weighting reflects funding provided by Council through support mechanisms outside of the funding programme, such as the provision and management of sports fields and facilities through Council's Parks and Recreation department.

Arts, Culture and Heritage – weighting of 30% – To support and celebrate the history, language, culture and art of our diverse communities.

Recreation and Sport – weighting of 20% – To support and deliver a variety of recreation and sporting opportunities for all ages, abilities and life stages.

Environment – weighting of 15% – To support, celebrate and protect our flora, our fauna and our special places for current and future generations to enjoy. We particularly want to see applications that align with:

- waste minimisation objectives
- climate change adaptation or mitigation objectives
- national objectives such as Predator Free 2050
- enabling kaitiakitanga of the district's taiao (natural environment).

Community Wellbeing – weighting of 35% – To support and celebrate happy, healthy, connected communities and individuals. We particularly want to see applications that

- support communities to help themselves
- promote community wellbeing and address disadvantage
- promote and celebrate community participation and identity.

Eligibility

Generally, eligible applicants for Council's support are community organisations that are not-for-profit/charitable with a formal legal structure and founding documents, whose primary aim is to provide services and benefits to the community at large.

These organisations will have appropriate financial management practices for their size, and a bank account in the organisation's name.

Community organisations that do not have a formal legal structure would need to nominate an 'umbrella' organisation which agrees to receive and administer the grant on their behalf and to be accountable to Council for the value of the grant should any issues with its use arise.

Exceptions

Individuals aged 12-20 are eligible to apply to the Youth Fund (new name pending), with the endorsement of an appropriately aligned organisation such as their school, church, youth group, sports club, or other entity the individual is associated with or known by.

We can consider applications from school boards and religious organisations where the request is primarily for the benefit of the wider community.

Ineligible applications

The community funding programme will not support:

- debt servicing, gambling or prize money, travel costs, conference fees, costs related to fines or disputes
- retrospective expenses incurred
- activities or projects:
 - where the primary purpose is to promote religious, political, or commercial activity
 - it considers are the core business of another organisation or service provider
 - it considers the responsibility of central government or other agencies
 - that start before funding decisions are made
 - that are self-funding or for fundraising purposes
- applicants it has significant concerns with, financial or otherwise
- applicants who have not completed their obligations for prior funding received
- applicants that can fund the initiative themselves.

Council's discretion

Council reserves the right to support applications and organisations outside of these criteria where there is clear community benefit, while continuing to use ratepayer funds responsibly.

Funds available

Council's current Community Funding Programme is available on Council's website.

The Programme is updated before the start of our financial year (1 July), and Funds are advertised at least six weeks in advance of closing dates on our website and via print and social media. For some Funds, community groups will also be emailed direct and invited to apply.

Applicants' contact details may be added to a mailing list for the purpose of advising of upcoming funding opportunities.

Application, assessment and approval process

Support for applicants

Council staff will provide advice and support for applicants with language, literacy or other access needs to ensure equitable access to Council's support, whenever possible.

We aim to balance 'funding for success' (supporting an application in full to enable the initiative to be a success) with the need to support a variety of initiatives within a limited budget.

Applying for funding

All requests for support from Council must be made on the appropriate application form or as otherwise stated for each Fund.

Supporting documents are required for most Funds. Applicants who have previously applied for Council's support, do not need to submit supporting documents that Council already has on record, unless otherwise requested.

Multiple and recurring grants

A project, activity or initiative can generally only receive funding once from the community funding programme each financial year (1 July – 30 June). Applicants can seek funding for multiple projects, activities or initiatives in a financial year, however any funding already received will be a consideration and preference may be given to other applicants.

Any support Council provides is not an indication or guarantee of future support.

The community funding programme does not provide multi-year support, and a new application in full must be made for each request.

Assessment

Staff assess each application based on:

- eligibility and alignment with this Policy
- alignment with Council's vision, community outcomes, Four Well-beings, and funding priorities
- alignment with Council's strategies and policies
- community need and impact
- readiness of the applicant, risk, and ability to deliver
- available budget and funding priority weightings
- previous or practiced levels of support for the type of activity that funding is sought for, and
- professional insight.

As demand for Council's support typically exceeds the available budget, Council may apply further prioritisation to deliver consistent, fair and equitable outcomes. When required, preference may be given to:

- local applications and applicants
- volunteer-run organisations
- new applicants
- essential needs such as health and safety and protection of community assets.

Eligible applications that are declined for support may be resubmitted by the applicant in a future funding round.

Decision-making

Decisions on funding allocations are made by the Community Development Committee of Council. This committee may delegate some functions to staff from time to time.

Funding decisions are final and cannot be contested, however applicants can apply again in a future funding round.

Funding decisions are generally advised within 8 weeks of a funding round closing.

Council may withhold the payment of grants allocated until evidence of meeting grant conditions is provided.

Declaring potential conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may exist where any elected member, council staff member, or immediate family member of either, has any interest or involvement in the project or activity proposed for Council's support.

These must be declared by applicants on their application form, and by staff and elected members at the relevant committee meeting where the request for funding will be discussed.

Council's Standing Orders (procedures for the conduct of meetings) outline how potential conflicts of interest will be managed.

Recipient responsibilities

Receiving funding

Recipients of funding must:

- use the funding as intended within 12 months of receiving the funding
- return any unspent funds
- seek approval for any changes that may affect the use of the funds as they were granted

- publicly acknowledge Council's support in any marketing material, advertising and/or on social media
- provide a brief report on the use of the grant as specified for the Fund.

Council will only pay grants into the bank account of the named applicant or their nominated umbrella organisation and upon receipt of a valid tax invoice.

Grant reports

Reporting on the use and impact of funding received is required for most funding allocated. Reports are required within two months of the funded activity being completed, or as otherwise indicated for each Fund.

Council may withhold future funding or request funding to be returned if reports are overdue, incomplete or indicate funds received were not used as intended.

In some instances, staff may waive the need for a full report, such as if the activity or event was attended by or sighted by the Community Funding Officer, is of low financial value, or is otherwise not deemed necessary.

Reporting requirements are:

Community Fund and Community Emergency Recovery Fund – Recipients must complete the Grant Report Form and return it together with copies of receipts.

Partnership Fund – A six-monthly progress update against the original business case is required until the purpose of the grant has been realised. In some cases, a full report may be requested.

Community Facilities Fund – Receipts and photos of work completed are to be provided.

Community Associations Fund – Receipts and photos of work or activity completed are to be provided.

Youth Fund (new name pending) – A brief report including receipts and photos of work or activity completed are to be provided.

District Amenities Fund – Reporting on previous year's activities is completed during the application process.

Community Loans – Annual financial statements are to be provided.

Terms and conditions

This policy outlines the terms in which Council will provide support through the community funding programme and the obligations of those receiving that support. Council may impose additional terms and conditions if required.

The terms and conditions of receiving support from Council are deemed accepted when a recipient presents an invoice to Council or otherwise accepts any payment made.

Community loans require a formal loan agreement to be executed.

Adopted

Policy Review

This Policy was reviewed in 2021 and this revised Policy was updated as follows:

Date of meeting: 18-03-2021

By: Community Development Committee