

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
- 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
- develop key priorities for the year/term.

3. Selection criteria

Advisory groups will reflect the diverse communities of Whangarei District where possible.

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
- ability to work within a team dynamic.

4. Selection process

The selection process for advisory groups is outlined in [Appendix A](#) of this document.

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

6. Role descriptions

The role of members, chair, deputy chair, liaison Councillor, lead officer and supporting officer are outlined in [Appendix B](#) of this document.

7. Meetings

- Each advisory group will aim to meet between 8 - 10 times per year.
- Scheduled meetings may 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 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. Advisory group members' support people are not members of the advisory groups.
- Members of the public may attend open meetings at the discretion of the chair.

8. Terms of appointment

- The standard term of appointment will be two years. If existing members wish to serve an additional term they must reapply. The maximum term of service will be two consecutive 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.
- Members may request a leave of absence of up to three months due to sickness or injury.

9. Operation and other matters

- Whangarei District Council will oversee the administration of the advisory groups.
- Chairs and Deputy Chairs will be elected by group members. The standard term of appointment will be approximately 12 months or one calendar year. Circumstances may impact on timings and as such flexibility is required.
- 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.

10. Remuneration

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

11. 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.

Amendments to [Section 9 - Operation and other matters](#), and [Appendix A – Selection Process](#) can be approved by the Manager Community Development as required. Elected members will be informed through the Community Development Committee.

Any proposed changes outside operational procedures will require the approval of elected members through the Community Development Committee.

Whangarei District Council Advisory Groups

Appendix A: Selection process

Recruitment of new members will be managed by the allocated lead officer using Council's communication channels.

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

- a Community Development Advisor responsible for another group
- the Chair or if the Chair is unavailable, a person nominated by the group
- an elected member of Council.

Where circumstances demand, in the event a panel member is unable to attend, Whangarei District Council will appoint an alternate in their stead.

The selection panel will make recommendations to the General Manager – Community, who will make the final decisions about all appointment.

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 objectively
- be openminded and display a willingness to listen to differing points of view
- treat others, including staff, with respect at all times
- 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

The Chair:

- facilitates advisory group meetings
- encourages open communication from all advisory group members
- works with lead officers to set meeting agendas
- works with members and the lead officer to develop key priorities for the group
- is the spokesperson and key contact for the group members
- works with the lead officer to review the performance of the advisory group annually.

Deputy Chairperson

The deputy chairperson:

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

Liaison Councillors

Liaison Councillors:

- attend the meetings and to arrange their calendars to do so
- arranges an alternate elected member to attend in their absence
- ensures the flow of information between Council and advisory groups
- ensures that the governing body is aware of advisory groups' feedback and advice on how to address the issues of specific communities
- reports back to advisory groups on any outcomes relating to the advice they have provided to the governing body.

Lead officer

The lead officer:

- is the primary administrator for the group
- advises and supports the chair
- acts as a conduit with relevant parts of Council for the group
- highlights potential issues and risks
- ensures guidance and advice from the group is clearly captured
- provides subject matter expertise
- meets regularly with advisory group 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

Objectives

Support the development of mutual trust and respect amongst advisory group members, liaison Councillors and Council staff

Clarify the standard of behaviour expected from all attendees.

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
- focuses on issues rather than personalities
- maintains confidence in their group
- focuses on issues of their respective communities that directly relate to Council business.

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

In the event of escalating an issue or matter arising, the first escalation point will be the Manager – Community Development. The second escalation point will be General Manager – Community.

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 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, including those on social media 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 is not possible
- abide by the direction of the chair
- maintain a positive public image and not bring the Council and the group into disrepute
- avoid publicly criticising any Council employee in any way

- raise concerns about Council employees first with the Chair or lead officer; and, if not resolved, with the Manager Community Development
- ensure that any confidential information received remains confidential.
- all communications relating to advisory group business, including emails must be respectful.
- use the Advisory groups emails for advisory group matters only
- abide by the Privacy Act 2020.

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.