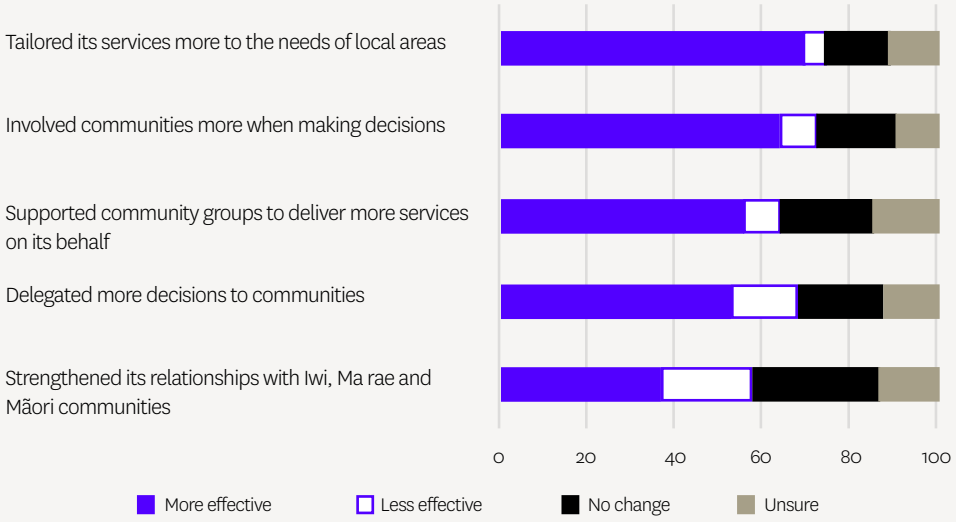
WHIRIA TE HAPORI WHĀNUI

LOCALISM: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Localism: A practical guide

Localism is the opposite of centralisation; it moves decisions and delivery closer to communities, when that makes sense. We know communities would see councils as more effective if they took localist approaches.[1] And localism is more efficient because bureaucracy is stripped out.

What would make your council more effective?



Councils are doing everything they can to reduce costs for ratepayers – and adopting localist approaches, by involving communities more in making decisions and taking action themselves, can save money. Although addressing local government's funding and financing challenges requires broader change, if councils want central government to devolve funding, power and responsibility, they need to demonstrate that they can make localism work.

Councils are also doing localism right now. This guide includes many detailed case studies of localism in action that makes a difference to communities. By pooling knowledge and experiences, we can all save time and money.

This guide sets out practical steps to implement localist approaches. It offers a comprehensive menu of 17 different tools, from which you can choose an approach that suits your council, community or specific situation. It sets out different approaches for:

- involving communities more when making decisions
- delegating more decisions to communities
- supporting community groups to deliver more services on behalf of councils
- strengthening their relationships with iwi, marae and Māori communities
- tailoring services more to the needs of local areas.

The guide explains why and how to use each tool, and is brought to life by case studies. Each tool can be used or adapted by council staff, so that your council doesn't have to reinvent the wheel.

[1] Poll on localism conducted by Curia between Sunday 5 May to Tuesday 7 May 2024 on 1,000 adults aged 18+ who live in New Zealand and are eligible and likely to vote.

What localism delivers

Localism leads to more effective and efficient solutions and decisions. It also increases trust in local government and improves the credibility and legitimacy of local government decisions. Greater trust in decisions drives people's confidence that getting involved locally can meaningfully affect outcomes.

Localism can deliver:

- improved effectiveness of council expenditure
- better and more sustainable social and economic outcomes
- committed partners and allies to assist councils to achieve their objectives
- a more engaged society with stronger communities, where people feel connected to decisions that impact them, their whānau and their communities
- re-energised local democratic processes, systems and structures.

It's win-win for the public, local government and central government. And this guide sets out exactly how local government can put localism into practice, with many examples of outstanding work councils are already doing.

How to use this guide/

The tools and approaches in this guide sit under four broad topics:

CHAPTER 1/

HONONGA | COLLABORATION, ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT:

Use localism to make better decisions

CHAPTER 2/

MAHI TAHI | INVOLVING COMMUNITIES IN PRIORITY SETTING:

Use localism to better plan and deliver services

CHAPTER 3/

WHAKAMANA | DELIVERING THROUGH DEVOLUTION:

Devolve decision-making, governance and management

CHAPTER 4/

HUHUTANGA | IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH LOCALISM:

Grow and develop the local economy and community

These four chapters set out 17 tools and approaches. The tools range from easy to complex and cover a wide variety of situations. Many approaches are scalable and can be used individually or in combination with others.

EACH TOOL INCLUDES/

- a description of the tool, its benefits, and how to use the tool
- an indicator for:
  - where it sits from easy to advanced
  - how much cost or resource it needs
  - the type of devolution involved
- case studies from communities where the tool has been used
- resources and guidance for further reading.

About localism

Localism is all about harnessing the power, knowledge, skills and views of local people to strengthen decision making and service delivery. It develops better solutions to problems, fosters stronger connections and makes local places work for people. Localism in action means communities are supported by councils to develop local and regional solutions. It gives people greater influence over the decisions that shape their daily lives.

Communities can be both communities of place (from local neighbourhoods to large regions) and communities of interest (networks of people brought together by a common concern, issue, or experience).

In practice, localism means:

- strengthening opportunities for citizen participation in local and regional decisions
- unlocking the power of communities to develop local and regional solutions
- devolving funding and control of local and regional matters to community organisations and Iwi/Māori organisations.

These Te Ao Māori values are intertwined with this guide's key concepts.

- **Manaakitanga** – Uplifting the mana of others through care, respect and kindness, and showing hospitality and generosity to other people.
- **Kaitiakitanga** – Showing care of land, sea and sky; guardianship and protection of people and place.
- **Whanaungatanga** – Building meaningful, reciprocal connections and relationships with others.
- **Kotahitanga** – Being unified in your goals; taking collective action – togetherness and solidarity; and working together by bringing all skills, tools, knowledge and resources together for the good of the collective.

Localism is an opportunity to ensure decision making and local action is accessible and welcoming to everyone. Building trust and relationships across multiple communities takes time and commitment, but the outcomes are worth the effort.

How localism fits into the roles, powers and requirements of local government

The Local Government Act 2002 (the LGA) sets out the purpose and powers of local government and local government's accountability to their communities. Many provisions aim to connect councils with their communities and both enable and encourage the use of localist approaches.

For example, the purpose of local government, as specified in section 10 of the LGA alongside promoting the 'four wellbeings', is to "**enable** democratic local decision-making and action **by**, and on behalf of, communities." This section specifically provides for direct decision-making by communities, and is sometimes referred to as the fifth wellbeing: democratic wellbeing.

What elected members can do

Strong political leadership is essential to support a greater use of localism. This includes shifting the way risk is perceived and managed, while continuing to ensure good governance. As well as setting the tone and expectations for council staff to embrace localism, elected members have the power to:

- adopt policies or processes which facilitate staff devolving management and delivery of services to community organisations
- appoint non-elected members to committees
- delegate many decisions to committees with external appointees, community boards where they exist, or external organisations
- transfer decisions between regional councils and territorial authorities.

What staff can do

Council staff have two main roles: to provide advice to decision makers and to implement their decisions. Council staff leadership can co-create a vision for localism in partnership with their local community, and then empower and train their staff to incorporate localist approaches into the way they work.

This includes shifting from a risk-management approach to one focused on partnership and devolution. This should occur both within councils (by breaking down siloes and hierarchical structures) and between councils and their communities.

Councils can create the conditions for localism to flourish by:

- building strong relationships with their communities, particularly by taking time to understand communities (their culture, language and values, what is important to them, and what their aspirations are)
- supporting community networking and communication systems
- mapping neighbourhood governance, assets and participation, to understand the potential for local ownership and delivery
- investing in the capacity, resources and infrastructure of their communities, community organisations, Iwi and hapū to engage and participate in local decision making and deliver services (this may include training, funding, partnerships, provision of venues, and administrative support)
- providing flexible funding for local social action to build the blocks for further community action
- replacing hierarchical ways of working with new forms of place-based collaboration that enable communities to lead
- being willing to share and devolve decision-making – through many of the tools and approaches outlined in this guide
- empowering front-line managers to devolve responsibilities to the community
- embedding localism in accountability and performance measurement systems.

As the 2018 report *People Power* on the findings from the United Kingdom's Commission on the Future of Localism found, "councils who are ambitious about strengthening the power of community are leading the way, building local capacity, embracing co-production and community delivery, and devolving power and resources to neighbourhoods."[2]

Further information on how local government can create the conditions for locally led change can be found in *Make the Move*, a resource put together by Inspiring Communities.

Localism encompasses three types of devolution

Devolution of local decision making and service delivery is central to localism. Devolution can be understood as the combination of the following three types:

- **POLITICAL (OR DECISION-MAKING) DEVOLUTION (D)** refers to functions or responsibilities transferred from higher to local levels of government, or from local levels of government to local communities
- **ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION (A)** refers to transferring the administration and delivery of services to local communities or organisations
- **FISCAL DEVOLUTION (F)** refers to transferring the allocation and use of financial resources to local communities or organisations, including providing the authority to levy local taxes.

A truly localist approach combines all three types of devolution. The tools and approaches included in this guide are a mix of each type of devolution, and we have indicated for each tool which type of devolution it primarily represents.

[2] LOC-Localism-Summary-Report-24pp.pdf (powertochange.org.uk) page 4.

CHAPTER ONE >

HONONGA / COLLABORATION, ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa

Let us keep close together, not wide apart

Taking a localist approach to collaboration, engagement and community input

Genuine and meaningful engagement with local communities and citizens is the baseline of localism – and a good place to start if you're at the beginning of your localism journey. When it comes to local government collaborating with local communities and seeking community input into decisions and service delivery, taking a localist approach means:

- creating mutually respectful relationships in which community engagement is seen as an ongoing partnership
- creating opportunities for communities to exercise their voice in the manner that they choose and on any topic that they choose
- engaging citizens in a much broader range of policy and operational matters.

Taking a localist approach to collaboration and community input also means recognising the unique status of your Te Tiriti partners in the area in which you are working - acknowledging their rights (Article 2) and creating the conditions for them to collaborate on community issues important to local iwi and hapū. As was noted in the *Final Report of the Future for Local Government:*

> there is a lot we can learn from existing practices in our own communities. Across the motu, Māori and Pacific peoples' communities have long used their own collective decision-making and considered deliberation processes. Local government can learn from existing Māori and Pacific tools for decision-making, such as embedding wānanga and talanoa as ways to reach consensus on decisions that have intergenerational impact.

Benefits of taking a localist approach to collaboration and community input

The overarching benefit of taking a localist approach to collaboration and community input is greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness of decisions – because you're getting decisions right the first time (and avoiding expensive course corrections) and delivering services in a way that reflect what communities want and need.

Other benefits include:

- increased trust in local government and improved credibility and legitimacy of local government decisions
- better, more creative decisions due to incorporating a wide range of community knowledge and expertise
- greater input from those who have not traditionally been engaged with in the past
- public services that respond to the real needs of citizens and communities
- increased understanding of the financial constraints of local government
- closer connections between communities and councils, ensuring that councils are informed about local issues.

Tools for taking a localist approach to collaboration and community input

Chapter One outlines five tools and approaches for taking a localist approach to collaboration and community input:

Tool 1/ Citizen governance – appointed citizen representation

Tool 2/ Citizen advisory committees

Tool 3/ Community-led engagement

Tool 4/ Citizens' panels

Tool 5/ Citizens' assemblies.

These tools span the use of targeted input and advice from experts in the community, through to the representative deliberative process of citizens' assemblies to help decide complex or contentious local issues. If localism is viewed as a continuum, the tools in this chapter are generally early in the continuum of devolving decision-making and control to communities – with the exception of Tool 5: Citizens' Assemblies, which can be used to devolve a targeted decision to a group of citizens.

TOOL 1:
Citizen governance – appointed citizen representation

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

MEETING FEES AND OTHER REASONABLE COSTS FOR PARTICIPATION. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION COSTS, AND POTENTIALLY SOME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL STAFF.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Citizen governance refers to the active involvement of citizens in shaping public decisions and policies. Appointed citizen representation is essentially where one or more local citizens are appointed to serve as a member of a council committee or sub-committee, to be involved in decision-making about particular public services or public policy.

Appointed citizen representation allows for greater representation on decision-making committees, particularly where specific constituencies need representation or particular expertise would be useful to the issues being considered by the committee.

Representation on a committee can be made through selection and appointment, co-option, or direct invitation.

Why use this tool

This tool is best used when a council committee would benefit from greater demographic representation or particular expertise, knowledge or experience. Having greater representation or expertise on a council committee can result in improved agendas, better questions being asked, improved monitoring and oversight, greater community trust in the decisions made, and generally improved decision making.

Appointed citizen representation could be used for all council committees or for select committees where there are particular shortfalls in demographic representation or issue-specific expertise and knowledge.

How to use this tool

When making citizen representation appointments to council committees, there are some key choices councils can make, including: what selection and appointment process to use, whether there will be remuneration and how much, and whether the council code of conduct and other policies will apply to appointees.

STEP

01 | Determine whether an existing or new committee would benefit from having appointed citizen representation.

02 | Determine what representation, skills or knowledge would be the most useful for the committee, how many representatives are required, and whether the representative(s) need to come from specific communities or demographics. Consider developing a position description.

03 | Determine the most appropriate process to find and secure appointees – whether that be direct approaches, elections, seeking recommendations from the relevant community, or asking for applications.

04 | Make formal appointment(s), supported by relevant communications.

05 | If necessary, design the representative or committee's terms of reference, including its purpose, scope, powers/delegations, accountabilities to local communities, processes and timeframes.

Case studies

Taupō District Council: Mangakino-Pouākani Representative Group

The Mangakino-Pouākani Representative Group represents and acts as an advocate for the interests of the Mangakino-Pouākani area. The activities of the group include: providing local input into the development of Council policy and planning documents that will impact on the Mangakino Ward; maintaining an overview of service delivery, operational and capital expenditure, within the Mangakino Ward; and exercising some of the Council's statutory regulatory functions that relate to matters within the Mangakino Ward (such as road naming and stopping and closing roads). The Group has a published terms of reference, set meeting dates, and provide a public forum at each meeting. The Group is chaired by a Taupō District Council councillor, and its members include the mayor, two further councillors, two community representatives, a Marae representative, and a Māori representative. External representatives are appointed after a recruitment and selection process and are paid meeting fees.

SEE MORE HERE

Selwyn District Council and Te Taumutu Rūnanga relationship agreement

Selwyn District Council and Te Taumutu Rūnanga signed a relationship agreement, and as part of that agreement established mana whenua representation. Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu and Ngāi Tūāhuriri hold mana whenua over Waikirikiri Selwyn. The mana whenua representative will bring a te ao Māori view to council decision making and have speaking rights (but not voting rights) during council hui.

Kāpiti Coast District Council mana whenua representation

The Kāpiti Coast District Council has provided for iwi representation within the Council's governance structure with the three Kāpiti Coast District mana whenua iwi – Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki and Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust – being appointed to some of its committees and subcommittees. The Council has appointed one representative from each of its three iwi mana whenua partners to the Council's Strategy and Operations and Finance Committee, the Social Sustainability Subcommittee, the Climate and Environment Committee and the Grants Allocation Committee, with full voting rights. The Council has also provided a seat at all Council meetings to representatives from the three iwi, with speaking rights only (in line with the LGA).

SEE MORE HERE

Greater Wellington Regional Council's Upper Ruamahanga River Management Advisory Committee

Greater Wellington Regional Council operates a number of advisory committees, one of which is the Upper Ruamahanga River Management Advisory Committee – an advisory committee of the Wairarapa Committee. It provides oversight on the implementation of the Te Kaūru Upper Ruamāhanga Floodplain Management Plan (FMP). This includes periodically reviewing the effectiveness of implementation and delivery of the FMP and recommending any changes to the Wairarapa Committee, overseeing public involvement during implementation of the FMP, and ensuring the methods adopted through the FMP to manage the effects of flooding and erosion consider the river/stream environment, recognising the unique nature and the role that rivers/streams play in the lives of the community.

The membership of the Advisory Committee is made up of two regional councillors, five councillors in total from Masterton and Carterton District Councils, two mana whenua representatives (one nominated by Ngati Kahungunu ki Wairarapa and one nominated by Rangitāne ō Wairarapa), and seven representatives from the river management groups of the Upper Ruamahanga river schemes.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

Greater Wellington Regional Council's policy on the appointment of non-elected members to committees and subcommittees provides an overview of how to go about making such appointments:

HERE

The Far North District Council's policy for the appointment of non-elected members to committees of council is also a good overview for making appointments:

HERE

TOOL 2:
Citizen advisory committees

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY


MEETING FEES AND OTHER REASONABLE COSTS FOR PARTICIPATION. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION COSTS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL STAFF.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Citizen advisory committees are committees or groups established by council, where the members are all local citizens with particular demographics, experience, special knowledge or expertise, and do not include councillors.

The committees provide advice and recommendations to council, generally focussed on the council's policy objectives, and represent and advocate for the interests, needs, and voices of the communities they represent. Examples include Youth Councils, Māori Advisory Committees, Rainbow Committees, Older Persons Committees, Accessibility Advisory Groups, and Homelessness Advisory Groups. Citizen advisory committees ensure that councils have dedicated engagement with, and input and expert advice from key communities and those with lived experience.

Committees are usually permanent, but could be used for short-term, project-based purposes in response to an issue that has arisen at Council and needs a comprehensive, locally-informed response.

Different committees can also have different functions, including developing a strategy or work programme, making recommendations to council, monitoring and oversight of an existing strategy or work programme. Councils should support the committees to be well connected to the communities they are representing and to grow and strengthen engagement and input from their communities.

Why use this tool

Citizen advisory committees are best used where specialist knowledge and expertise would be useful to Council – such as issues affecting a particular area, population group, or on which expert knowledge exists. Citizen advisory committees are also especially useful where input and expert advice is needed on an ongoing basis from a particular community, and where input and advice from that community is necessary across a wide range of council policies and operations.

Drawing on the knowledge of residents who have specific experience or expertise can be extremely valuable, particularly where the governing body and staff lack the expertise needed to make fully informed decisions. This tool also provides a useful mechanism for engaging with groups that are under-represented on councils or who local government do not traditionally manage to engage with.

THE PARTICULAR BENEFITS OF THIS TOOL INCLUDE:

+ enabling Council to make decisions that take account of the different needs of particular constituencies
+ helping Council address problems and come up with solutions through input and insight based on lived experience
+ providing an ongoing source of advice and expertise to Council
+ developing the capabilities of committee members.

How to use this tool

When forming citizen advisory committees, there are some key choices councils can make, including: what selection and appointment process to use, and whether there will be remuneration and how much.

STEP

01 | Consider what type of citizen advisory committee might be useful to your council – based on gaps in advice, expertise and engagement.

02 | Determine the amount of time involved for advisory committee members, whether there will be a budget for remuneration, and what representation, skills or knowledge would be the most useful for the committee. Consider developing a position description.

03 | Determine the most appropriate process for selecting and appointing advisory committee members – whether that be direct approaches, elections, seeking recommendations from the relevant community, or asking for applications.

04 | Make formal appointments, supported by relevant communications.

05 | In partnership with advisory committee members, determine the committee's terms of reference, including its purpose, scope, powers/delegations, accountabilities to local communities, processes and meeting frequency.

06 | Determine the purpose, role and scope of the committee, accountabilities to local communities, processes and timeframes. Design and agree a terms of reference.

07 | Determine initial and ongoing support and resourcing needed from council.

Case studies

Waikato Regional Council: Advisory Committee for the Regional Environment | Te Pae Tiaki Taiao ā Rohe (or ACRE)

The Advisory Committee for the Regional Environment | Te Pae Tiaki Taiao ā Rohe (or ACRE) was originally formed in 1989. The committee's members represent environmental and conservation groups regionally and nationally as well as mana whenua, and its purpose is to be an environmental advocate, to act as a forum for ideas and concerns on environmental matters, to act as a stakeholder and community reference group for the Waikato Regional Council, and to monitor progress on any environmental matters and recommend on any matters that need extra investigation and research. It also advises the Regional Council on environmental policy and environmental matters in need of attention, advocates to central government on matters of environmental concern to the region, and collaborates with groups that share similar aims to identify potential partnership initiatives. The Committee promotes Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including the responsibilities, promises and obligations outlined in the articles.

The Committee has a conflicts of interest policy, committee rules, and a code of conduct policy. Interested parties can complete a nomination form to register their interest in becoming a committee member.

SEE MORE HERE

Case studies

Wellington City Council advisory groups

Wellington City Council operates five advisory groups. Each advisory group has a different purpose, but are all involved in advising Wellington City Councillors and officers in their area of expertise. The current advisory groups are the Accessibility Advisory Group, the Environmental Reference Group, the Pacific Advisory Group, the Takatāpui Rainbow Advisory Council, and the Youth Council. Each year the council recruits for open positions on the advisory groups, which are open to anyone with the relevant knowledge or experience. The Council has recently voted to also establish a local ethnic advisory group, reflecting the fact that ethnic communities make up about 20 percent of the city's population.

SEE MORE HERE

Kapiti Coast District Council Older Person's Council

The objective of the Kāpiti Coast District Council's Older Person's Council (Council of Elders) is to be an independent voice for older people in the community and to advise Council on issues that concern and affect older people. Its primary function is to work with the Council and wider community to shape ideas and influence and initiate policy. Other focuses include creating opportunities for inclusion, promotion of services for older people and their families, holding community forums to inform older people about issues affecting their everyday living, and undertaking projects to improve older people's wellbeing.

The Older Person's Council meets monthly and is supported by council staff.

SEE MORE HERE

Clutha District Council Youth Council

The Clutha Youth Council is made up of two representatives from each of the district's five secondary schools, two young people from Telford (a division of Southern Institute of Technology), two young people from the workforce, and two Councillors. It is a standing committee of the full Council, which enables its views to be regularly heard at the full Council table. Its objectives include:

- encouraging youth involvement in the planning and development of Council services
- acting as a consultative link between young people and Council
- providing a forum where the views of young people are voiced and heard.

The Clutha Youth Council plays a significant role in the Clutha District by facilitating youth engagement and leadership through various impactful projects. For instance, the *Diversity Clutha* initiative promotes inclusivity and cultural awareness, celebrating the diverse backgrounds of the district. The *Acceptance & Culture of Alcohol* project addresses issues related to alcohol use and peer pressure, aiming to create a safer and healthier environment for young people. Additionally, the *CACTUS (Combined Adolescent Challenge Training Unit & Support) programme* was kick started in Clutha in 2023, fostering personal development and resilience through physical training and team building activities. These projects exemplify the Youth Council's commitment to addressing relevant social issues and enhancing the wellbeing of the Clutha District.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

This 2022 article by the International City/County Management Association provides suggestions for how to achieve diversity on citizen advisory committees:	HERE
For more on Youth Councils see guidance from the Ministry of Youth Development at:	HERE
This toolkit by the Urban Institute in the United States provides practical guidance, questions, and approaches for integrating a Citizen Advisory Board into a project or initiative:	HERE
For an Australian perspective see the Waverley Council's Multi-Cultural Advisory Council at:	HERE
The Global Youth Council Guide, published by the National Democratic Institute, can be found at:	HERE
For an example of an advisory group representing a distinct area go to:	HERE
This Public Participation Guide by the United States Environmental Protection provides advice for forming and using citizen advisory boards:	HERE

TOOL 3:
Community-led engagement

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

THIS TOOL INVOLVES A SMALL INVESTMENT IN TIME AND RESOURCES THAT MIGHT INVOLVE A STAFF MEMBER IN THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM MAINTAINING ONGOING RELATIONSHIPS WITH A RANGE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND WORKING WITH THEM ON HOSTING, FACILITATING AND/ OR LEADING ENGAGEMENTS FOR UPCOMING CONSULTATIONS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Community-led engagement is a simple tool aimed at increasing and improving Council's engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders and community members. It involves identifying community organisations and groups – particularly ones that represent or include communities whose voice is not traditionally heard from in council consultations or as part of council decision making – and working with them to engage with communities. At one end, this may be simply hosting engagement events on behalf of councils for issues the council is consulting on, through to leading, designing and facilitating engagement events on a wide range of community issues.

Why use this tool

By using the networks of existing community groups to access a wider range of citizens, community-led engagement can be useful for extending the reach of council community engagement and consultation. When community groups host engagement events, more residents may feel comfortable attending and participating. And where community groups lead, design and facilitate engagement events, this may result in more creative ideas for engaging with their communities and hearing and capturing their voices and ideas – whether these are ideas about specific council consultations or their own areas of focus. Community-led engagement may also elicit a greater range of ideas and suggestions for councils to consider.

How to use this tool

The most important prerequisite for using this tool is that councils maintain ongoing and meaningful relationships with a wide range of community groups and organisations. By building these relationships, it is easier to call on these groups to lead community engagements.

STEP

01 | Identify and maintain relationships with a wide range of community groups and organisations.

02 | When a consultation is planned, identify which community groups may be particularly relevant for, and interested in, undertaking a community-led engagement. This may be due to their geographic area of their particular demographics (for example, young people leading a consultation for a young people's service).

03 | Work with the organisation to determine to what degree they would like to be involved – from hosting an engagement event, through to leading, designing and facilitating engagement event(s). If the organisation is interested in leading engagement, discuss what ideas they have and what support, guidance and resources they need from council in order to communicate, plan and run the engagement process or event(s).

04 | Work with the organisation to reflect on the successes and areas for improvement, changes that could be made in subsequent engagements, and to identify future opportunities for community-led engagements.

Case studies

Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan

In developing the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan, a district-wide community workshop roadshow ran from 4-27 November 2019 in seven key areas, co-hosted with local resident associations and other groups such as the Queenstown Young Professionals. These conversations were an opportunity for these communities to provide meaningful input and gain an understanding about why a plan for the future was needed.

The co-hosts were involved in early planning stages for their event (including in deciding on dates, timing, venue, outline of event) which helped them feel included and gave them a sense of ownership in part of the process. Each workshop was run by an external facilitator, presented by a project team member, and had staff support to help facilitate group work and guide the session. The council found that involving resident associations, community and business groups as cohosts improved participant numbers to these events and enabled more diverse conversations with differing viewpoints to be captured.

SEE MORE HERE

TOOL 4:
Citizens' panels

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

COSTS VARY DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE PANEL AND HOW OFTEN IT IS USED. PAYMENT IS NOT USUALLY PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS, BUT THERE WILL BE COSTS IN ANALYSING THE RESULTS AND REPORTING ON THE FINDINGS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Citizens' panels are a representative sample of the local community – anywhere from 500 to 5,000 people – who have agreed to participate in consultation activity, usually on an ongoing basis, and usually online. Participants are invited to complete regular surveys or questionnaires, some of which may be targeted to particular demographic groups. Surveys and questionnaires can be used for both large-scale quantitative research and small-scale qualitative research on a wide range of issues.

They provide local governments with an efficient and effective way to consult with their communities – either as a standalone consultation method or to complement more formal consultation approaches.

Participants are usually recruited through self-selection or random sampling methods. The aim is to have a panel that reflects the community, with broad representation across demographic and geographic variables. Unlike Tool 1: appointed citizen representation and Tool 2: citizen advisory committees, they are representative of the local community rather than being selected for their specific area of expertise.

Why use this tool

Citizens' panels are best used where the Council sees value in a regular forum for seeking representative community input on a variety of topics – possibly prior to, or to complement, traditional consultation methods. They provide a ready-made community-wide sample for councils to consult on key issues.

Citizens' panels can often lead to increased public engagement on Council issues and improved representation from communities that often don't participate in traditional consultation processes. They are usually faster and more cost effective than traditional consultation methods. Online citizens' panels, in particular, encourage greater levels of participation as people find it easier and more convenient to offer their views.

As well as being useful for one-off consultations, they can also be used to track changes in participants' attitudes to particular issues over time. Citizens' panels also offer opportunities to conduct more focussed research by exploring the views of subsets of participants (eg, library users or parents of young children).

How to use this tool

It is important to ensure that panel membership is broadly representative of the community population.

STEP

01 | Open recruitment to the panel, encouraging a wide range of participants. Randomly select participants, potentially using a sorting method to ensure the sample reflects local demographic and geographic characteristics.

02 | Ensure panel participants are aware of processes, timeframes, privacy requirements, and how information will be collected and used.

03 | Develop and test surveys and questionnaires on relevant issues, as needed. Regularly invite panel participants to participate in surveys and questionnaires via an email link.

04 | Collate and analyse panellist responses and report on findings to decision makers.

05 | Ideally, councils should report back to participants with findings and any decisions made following their input.

Case studies

Hutt City Views – Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt Citizens' Panel

Hutt City Council operates a citizens' panel, Hutt City Views, to help guide and inform the evolution of Hutt City on a wide variety of topics and issues. The Panel is comprised of a representative sample of over 3,000 residents from the local community who have agreed to participate in consultation activity. Anyone aged 16+ can sign up and are then sent surveys and questionnaires on a regular basis to have their say.

Participants can choose which surveys to fill out. Findings are then presented to Council decision-makers to ensure that the public is heard on key issues. The goal of the Panel is to help give decision-makers confidence that community feedback is representative of the views of Lower Hutt's diverse population.

The citizens' panel is administered by a Lower Hutt-based public engagement consultancy, Public Voice, on behalf of Hutt City Council.

SEE MORE HERE

Southland District Council's People's Panel: Make it Stick!

Southland District Council offers a way for residents to have a regular say in topics that affect the Southland District, that is quick and easy. The Make it Stick People's Panel is an online consultation platform where residents can share ideas and opinions. It is sometimes used for testing ideas for engagement around projects first to see whether they work or not. If residents sign up, a maximum of two short surveys a month will be emailed out, and summarised results and updates shared. The panel operates as a complement to usual consultation and engagement processes.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

A description of the Paris City Council's permanent citizens' council: HERE

An article by the University of Tennessee on creating effective citizen advisory committees to help resolve short-term local issues: HERE

This 2020 article, *Co-Producing Local Policies Through Citizens' Panels*, reviews current experience with citizens panels as a tool to enable local communities to engage with local decision making: HERE

TOOL 5:
Citizens' assemblies

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
ADVANCED

HIGH. RUNNING A CIVIC LOTTERY AND CONVENING A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY IS TIME AND RESOURCE INTENSIVE. THEY CAN TAKE BETWEEN SIX WEEKS AND SIX MONTHS (OR LONGER), AND REQUIRE A HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIALIST SKILLS TO OVERSEE THE PROCESS AND ENSURE THE MEMBERS HAVE THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO MAKE THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS. COSTS INCLUDE VENUE HIRE, PLANNING AND ORGANISING, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, PAYING PARTICIPANTS AND EXPERTS FOR THEIR TIME, ARRANGING SUPPORT SUCH AS CHILDCARE SO PARTICIPANTS CAN ATTEND THE ASSEMBLY, AND A RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY TOOLS AND SUPPORT.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
POLITICAL DEVOLUTION AND, POTENTIALLY, FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION.

A citizens' assembly (also known as a citizens' jury) is a form of *representative deliberative processes* that originated in ancient Greece. A group of people are selected from the general population to deliberate on an important public policy question or challenge – often ones that are difficult, contentious, or complex – and make recommendations. The assemblies (or 'juries') are loosely modelled on the way juries in the legal system work, but involve the wider community in the policy decision-making process. Participants are engaged as citizens with no formal alignments or allegiances.

The process of selecting the members of the assembly (or 'jury') is usually through a civic lottery, in order to convene a broadly representative group from the local community. The principle behind a civic lottery is that everybody has an equal chance of being selected.

Once selected, the members of the citizens' assembly are provided with time, resources and a broad range of viewpoints from experts to learn deeply about an issue. Through skilled facilitation, the assembly members weigh trade-offs and work to find common ground to develop a shared set of recommendations for what they think should happen.

Representative deliberative processes are still relatively new to Aotearoa New Zealand, but citizens' assemblies and juries are increasingly used in Europe, North America and Australia to address complex issues and involve citizens in policy making. We note that in the final report of the Panel for the *Review into the Future for Local Government* in 2023, the Panel recommended that local government develop and invest in democratic innovations, including participatory and deliberative democracy processes.

Why use this tool

Citizens' assemblies work particularly well for resolving issues that are polarising or emotionally charged – but doing so in a way that avoids divisive debates and a highly political environment, while strengthening social cohesion and building institutional and social trust. They are equally valuable for complex problems with solutions that require trade-offs, and long-term issues that go beyond the short-term incentives of electoral cycles. They are also commonly used for participatory budgeting (see Tool 8 in Chapter 2).

To justify the cost of administering a civic lottery and citizens' assembly, it is best that the topic is an important question that is critical to resolve.

Because assembly participants must learn about an issue in-depth and consider the pros and cons of different options before making recommendations, they tend to provide better and more informed public conversation than a survey or opinion poll. They can also lend support and legitimacy to making policy changes, even on contested topics.

Citizens' assemblies can be a slow and expensive process, so it is important to use them for appropriate decisions. They are not well suited for urgent decisions or problems in the late stages of decision making (where possible solutions are limited). Further, a lot of care needs to be taken to ensure true representation, remove barriers to participation, and ensure skilled facilitation. However, despite concerns about their speed and cost, citizens' assemblies can ultimately achieve community buy-in for complex and contentious policy issues, resulting in a decision that is thoroughly considered, widely accepted, and unlikely to be undone – which is cost-effective in the long term.

Civic lotteries – the mechanism used to select members for a citizens' assembly – are one of the best ways to achieve a representative group of people who mirror the wider population and give everyone an equal chance of being chosen. Civic lotteries lead to a more diverse group of people, including many who do not typically participate in public policy consultations or processes. This gives the resulting assembly greater legitimacy and credibility, and people are more likely to trust a process where they see ordinary people reflecting all parts of society rather than people representing interest groups, companies or political parties. As was noted in the *Final Report on the Future for Local Government*:

> "Research across the field has shown that a well-facilitated group of citizens can make better decisions than a group of experts, even on issues with technical elements. Citizen groups come to the topic with an open mind, and the cognitive diversity and range of views can lead to smarter, more legitimate decision-making (Hartz-Karp and Carson 2013)."
>
> **(p83).**

How to use this tool

To create a meaningful and effective citizens' assembly, the key ingredients include:

- a very targeted, narrow and specific question or policy problem as the focus of the citizens' assembly
- participants that are representative of the population
- good quality information
- sufficient time to digest the information and deliberate
- skilled facilitators
- a well-designed process that is procedurally fair and enables quality deliberation
- clarity from the beginning on what the authority will do with the group's recommendations (ideally, they will be bound by the recommendations).

STEP

01 | Consider whether a citizens' assembly would be a useful and cost-effective tool for reaching a decision on a particular policy issue – ensuring that the policy question is targeted, narrow and specific.

02 | Thoroughly consider the wording of the question to be considered by the citizens' assembly and the scope of their inquiry and recommendations.

03 | To conduct a civic lottery, invite a large number of people to be part of the civic lottery for a citizens' assembly, using a random selection method. They can then volunteer by opting into the lottery. Those that opt in can then be stratified to ensure final participants reflect the community across a range of criteria (for example, age, ethnicity, gender and education level).

04 | From these volunteers, members of the citizens' assembly are chosen to be broadly representative of the public. The number of members can vary from 8-12 up to 50 or more.

05 | The members of the assembly should be briefed in detail on both background and current thinking on the policy issue. This may include setting out key policy questions or a series of policy options to consider, and bringing in experts to brief the members and answer their questions. Experts should include those providing a Māori voice from mana whenua. It is useful to provide information in different formats and at different complexity levels so it is useful for everyone. Ideally these sessions are held over a series of days, with a few weeks' break in between.

06 | Once the assembly has been provided with information and advice, and had sufficient time to ask questions from experts, a facilitator should assist the processes of deliberation. This can be carried out publicly or in a closed session. The assembly should then be asked to make a judgement in the form of a report and recommendations.

07 | The assembly's report should be published, and members can be asked to present their report and recommendations to the authority.

08 | Ideally, the authority should respond to each recommendation and report back on the decisions they made as a result of the assembly's report and recommendations.

Case studies

Edmonton (Canada) Citizens' Jury on internet voting

A citizens' jury process was used in 2012 by the Centre for Public Involvement at the University of Alberta, in collaboration with the City of Edmonton, on the question: Should the City of Edmonton adopt Internet voting as an option in future general elections?

The jury process took place over a three-day period, involving about 20 hours' work. Jurors were given an honorarium of $400 dollars and were provided with childcare, travel assistance, and meals. Eighteen jurors were selected using a stratified random selection method to ensure the jury reflected the city's population and the community's values and attitudes toward internet voting.

The Centre recruited academics to be on a committee that designed the deliberative process and information resources for the jury. The process was moderated by two independent facilitators and included presentations by expert witnesses, with time set aside for structured deliberations. On the last day, the jurors evaluated the evidence, moderated by both facilitators. This final session was closed, except to researchers and observers from Elections Canada and Elections BC.

In addition to the jury process, the wider project included a public voting security test, roundtable advisory meetings with stakeholders, and a series of online questionnaires. Six surveys were designed to measure public attitudes toward internet voting: two for the general public, two for jury participants (during and after the selection process), and two for citizens who participated in the roundtables. Taken together, these processes took place over a four-month period.

The final jury verdict, achieved by consensus, favoured introducing online ballots as an additional voting method. During the jury event, the Edmonton City Clerk made a formal commitment to follow through with the Jury's verdict.

SEE MORE HERE

Dublin Citizens' Assembly on the type of directly-elected mayor and local government structures best suited for Dublin

The Dublin Citizens' Assembly on the type of directly-elected mayor and local government structures best suited for Dublin took place during 2022. There were 80 members, made up of an independent Chairperson, 67 randomly selected members of the public, and 12 Councillors, who met on five occasions over six months. All meetings were streamed live publicly. The assembly was given the freedom to agree its own rules of procedure and work programme, informed by learnings from previous Citizens' Assemblies and international best practice. Members received payment for their time, and staff were assigned to provide secretariat support.

The assembly recruitment process was based on invitations to 14,000 randomly-selected households who were asked to nominate one adult from that household to apply to become a member – a process designed to improve the geographic spread of members and to increase inclusivity.

The assembly considered a range of issues, including: the strengths and weaknesses of the current model of local government in Dublin; having a directly elected Mayor; what functions could be transferred from central government to regional or local government; and structures for local and regional government. The work of the assembly culminated in a report and a series of recommendations – based on majority vote – to the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Government then provided a response to each recommendation and timeframe for implementation for those recommendations that were accepted.

SEE MORE HERE

Koi Tū and Watercare Citizens' Assembly

In 2019, the team at *Koi Tū: The Centre of Informed Futures* were awarded an MBIE Endeavour SmartIdeas Grant to develop and test an Aotearoa New Zealand adapted deliberative democratic model (Bukiljas et al 2023). They collaborated with Watercare (New Zealand's largest water utility that supplies drinking water to Auckland) to design and implement a deliberative democracy process that would answer the question 'What should be the next source of water for Auckland, post-2040?'. The project also aimed to explore how to make deliberative democracy consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the rights of mana whenua while also recognising the increasingly multicultural nature of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

12,000 invitations were sent to Aucklanders inviting them to participate in a citizens' assembly. 320 people responded and 40 were selected through a randomised sortition process. Those selected reflected the city's adult population in the 2018 Census, with regard to age, gender, education, ethnicity and home ownership.

The citizens' assembly took place over seven weeks. In the first session, Watercare presented the problem and committed to honouring the assembly outcomes. The assembly was given six options, along with the ability to add any other option. Over the following sessions, participants were provided with information and different perspectives on the topic, including presentations from Auckland Council planners and a hui with the Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum.

Participants worked in groups to delve further into options and discuss the criteria they would use. The assembly decided on eight initial recommendations, which they reduced to four. After further discussions, the assembly recommended direct recycled water as the next source of water for Auckland, with education about recycled water starting immediately.

Participants were provided with childcare, transport, assistance for visually or otherwise impaired participants, and food that suited a variety of dietary and cultural needs.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

Information on Newham Council's approach to citizens' assemblies in the UK:	HERE
Advice from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on citizen juries:	HERE
Information from New Democracy in Australia on using a citizens' jury:	HERE
Information from Mosaic Lab in Australia on using deliberative engagement methods:	HERE
An explainer of deliberative processes, including citizens' juries and citizens' assemblies, by the Public Service Commission:	HERE
An article by Politico on the pros and cons of citizens' assemblies and how best to use them:	HERE
A guide by the OECD for public officials and policy makers outlining eight models for institutionalising representative public deliberation:	HERE
The OECD also offers a deliberative democracy toolbox, that provides a wealth of information on deliberative processes:	HERE HERE
The website for Involve, an organisation in the United Kingdom, has information on public participation and deliberation processes:	HERE
A comprehensive guide to engagement techniques collated by the Victorian government:	HERE
Effective Engagement: building relationships with communities and other stakeholders: Book 3 – the engagement toolkit:	HERE

CHAPTER TWO >

MAHI TAHI / INVOLVING COMMUNITIES IN PRIORITY SETTING

Te tōia, te haumatia

Nothing can be achieved without a plan, workforce and way of doing things

Taking a localist approach to priority setting, planning and delivery of services

Chapter Two details some of the ways that local government can take a localist approach to priority setting, planning, and service delivery. This can include councils involving communities in the monitoring of assets and services, or the design, management and delivery of local services to ensure they are responsive to the community's needs and preferences. It can also include collaborating with communities on community plans, council planning processes, and participatory budgeting processes to involve citizens in decision-making in tangible ways.

Benefits of taking a localist approach to priority setting, planning and delivery of services

The overarching benefits of taking a localist approach to priority setting, planning and delivery of services, through the tools outlined in this chapter, include:

- the use of local knowledge and expertise to inform and improve local services or projects
- better information and data on the condition and performance of assets and services
- large numbers of community members volunteering their time to a variety of projects and services
- services that better meet the needs of users
- increased levels of participation and engagement from the community that deepens democracy and builds stronger links and networks within communities
- enhanced community trust and confidence in councils and their democratic processes
- more innovative ideas and solutions arising from the direct involvement of people and communities in priority setting, planning and delivery
- local citizens have the opportunity to build new skills and there are avenues for new community leaders to gain experience.

Tools for taking a localist approach to priority setting, planning and delivery of services

Chapter Two outlines four tools and approaches for taking a localist approach to priority setting, planning and delivery of services:

Tool 6/ Using citizen science to improve assets and services

Tool 7/ Involving communities in the management and delivery of services

Tool 8/ Participatory budgeting

Tool 9/ Collaborative community planning.

These tools range from involving communities in the management, operation and delivery on services, through to shared decision-making processes such as participatory budgeting.

TOOL 6:
Using citizen science to improve assets and services

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

THIS TOOL INVOLVES SMALL AMOUNTS OF STAFF TIME AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES TO ENGAGE WITH SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES TO SEEK THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BE INVOLVED. IT MAY INVOLVE SOME TRAINING AND CAPABILITY BUILDING AT A COMMUNITY LEVEL.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Asset management is often seen to be the domain of experts only, but this tool is about recognising that asset management can often benefit hugely from the active involvement of communities and from mātauranga Māori from iwi and hapū (who, as mana whenua, hold kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga over natural assets – such as waterways). Communities are often best placed – and with a potentially huge volunteer base – to provide information on asset conditions, how well assets and services are working, and where issues need to be addressed. This is sometimes called 'participatory monitoring' – although we note that citizen science approaches can also be used in the planning and design of new assets and services.

In the face of mounting financial and global pressures, effective asset management has become more critical than ever. Good asset management should be an integrated approach in order to maximise benefits, reduce risks, and provide satisfactory levels of service to the community in a sustainable manner. Good asset management practices are fundamental to achieving sustainable and resilient communities.

This tool is about simplifying the process of asset management and offering opportunities for communities to contribute directly to the assessment of assets and service performance. It can look like:

- using communities to provide regular information on the condition of local assets such as footpaths, roads, and waterways
- involving communities in deciding levels of service, particularly in the context of wider budgetary decisions (for example, how often rubbish should be collected or how often parks and reserves should be maintained)
- involving communities in determining the most important performance measures for a service or asset (for example, reliability, availability, safety, compliance, responsiveness, and accessibility).

Why use this tool

The primary benefit of this tool is that better quality information and more comprehensive data on the service, performance or condition of the asset or service in question is collected when communities participate in monitoring and providing feedback. Better information and data allows for more timely improvements to assets and services. Other benefits are that citizen science can:

- offer a cost-effective alternative to other forms of monitoring and data collection
- facilitate data collection in places and at scales that would otherwise be impossible
- involve the community in prioritising and making trade-offs against other priorities to determine where investment should be made to improve services and asset performance
- create a feeling of empowerment among citizens involved
- enhance citizens' knowledge, awareness of issues, understanding of the scientific process, and contribute to positive behaviour change.

How to use this tool

This tool can vary hugely depending on what it is being used for. At a base level, the following steps could be considered.

STEP

01 | Determine the asset or service that would benefit from a citizen science and mātauranga Māori approach and identify the question that needs to be answered or the information being sought. For example, is the information required about condition or performance, or about what the performance measures should be, or about whether there should be a change in service levels?

02 | Determine whether a committee or partnership is needed to drive this work forward, and if so, which groups should be represented on the committee or in the partnership.

03 | Determine what mechanisms or processes are needed to get the input on the service or asset. For example, it might be community meetings, online surveys, a stocktake or service gaps analysis, monitoring kits and guidance, an app, a public campaign, or a co-design process.

04 | Determine the necessary actions, resources, technology, and funding required to undertake the required approach.

To more fully integrate citizen science approaches into the work of local government, and across a wider variety of services and assets, councils could also consider developing a wider citizen science programme with a dedicated citizen science position.

Case studies

Protecting Wellington's waterways: Whaitua Committees

Whaitua committees are groups of local people tasked with recommending ways to maintain and improve the quality of the Wellington region's fresh water and receiving environments. The committees are made up of local community members, iwi representatives, local authority representatives, and Greater Wellington representatives, and are responsible for developing a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) together with their communities.

Whaitua Committees achieve a community vision for water by combining Mātauranga Māori, citizen science, community knowledge, and expert information to fulfil the requirements of the Essential Freshwater package. The WIPs then describe the communities' aspirations for freshwater and help set a platform for collective effort to improve the health of waterways, implemented through new regulations and actions on the ground.

There are five whaitua committees in Wellington. WIPs have been completed for Ruamāhanga, Te-Awarua-o-Porirua, and Te-Whanganui-a-Tara. The Whaitua Kāpiti committee was established in late 2022, and a Wairarapa Coast whaitua process is to follow.

Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Committee produced its Whaitua Implementation Programme in 2021, which contains a long-term vision, and short, medium and long-term steps to restore wai ora (healthy water) within 100 years. Alongside this programme, Committee representatives from Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa Rangatira produced *Te Mahere Wai*, a Mana Whenua Whaitua Implementation Programme. It describes Mana Whenua values, establishes a Mana Whenua assessment framework, *Te Oranga Wai*, for measuring and managing freshwater.

The co-chair of the Committee, Louise Askin, noted that "collaboration was core to our process in drafting the recommendations and reports and it will be key in the implementation too. Mana Whenua, councils, water services agencies, and the wider community all have a role to play."

After the launch of the WIP for Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Greater Wellington built an interactive website that shares information about the catchments, including interactive maps, photos, and water quality targets. The public is encouraged to take their own actions such as finding out where the wastewater and stormwater goes from their properties and checking pipes on their properties for leaks and incorrect or illegal connections.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

CoastSnap: Hurunui District Council

CoastSnap is a community science monitoring project (designed by the Water Research laboratory at the University of New South Wales, Australia) being delivered by Hurunui District Council.

In 2020 the Hurunui District Council commenced a project to identify the current coastal hazards that impact Hurunui's coastal communities and to understand how these hazards will change over the next 100 years. The project seeks to establish a long-term approach for managing the risk of coastal hazards at each of the settlements in partnership with the local communities.

The aim is to involve the local community to help monitor change in the coastal environments through regular photos taken at the same location. CoastSnap stands are installed at Leithfield Beach, Amberley Beach, Motunau and Gore Bay. Community members are invited to take photos of the beach from these fixed-point photo stands (which have smartphone camera cradles) and either upload photos onto the CoastSnap app, email them to the Council, or share them on social media using the hashtag #coastsnapbeachname.

These repeat photos track how the coastlines are changing over time due to human activity and natural processes such as storms, rising sea levels and day-to-day changes in the beach structure. The monitoring will help the council and scientists better understand, research, manage and plan for the coastal environment.

SEE MORE HERE

Citizen water quality monitoring in Britain

Over four days in June 2024, over two and a half thousand volunteers from around Britain measured their local water quality as part of the 'Great UK WaterBlitz', collecting more than 1,300 datasets. Participants were provided with easy-to-use testing kits to measure the levels of nitrates and phosphates in their local river, stream or lake. Participants then submitted their results online, which then appeared on a public event map.

The results showed that 75 percent of Britain's waterways are in poor ecological health.

The 'Great UK WaterBlitz' is a biannual campaign to help build a national picture of water quality across the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom's Office for Environmental Protection noted that the data would not have been available without the support of people across the United Kingdom and called for more citizen science testing.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

A bulletin from the Office of the Auditor-General on good asset management:	HERE
For an overview of the value of community involvement in decision-making see Community Power:	HERE
To understand the different processes involved in managing infrastructure see *Managing Infrastructure assets for sustainable development – a handbook for local and national governments*:	HERE
For an introduction to building community resilience through asset management see:	HERE
A report on the international landscape of citizen science by the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor:	HERE

TOOL 7:
Involving communities in the management of services

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

THE TIME AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOOL CAN VARY CONSIDERABLY DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE PROJECT, BUT THE INVESTMENT IS USUALLY WARRANTED GIVEN THE VALUE OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY TIME AND EXPERTISE RECEIVED.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

This tool is about giving communities a role in managing and/or delivering local services. To meet community expectations at a time in which budgets are constrained and external challenges, like climate change, are growing in significance, councils can create a lot of value by working in partnership with their communities. Many councils do this by enabling and supporting their communities to define their needs and together develop policies and programmes to meet them, through co-production and co-commissioning.

> Building good relationships with communities is an excellent way of strengthening a council's licence to operate and building public confidence. It also increases respect for elected members and council officers as they are seen as working for, rather than against the community.
>
> **(Peter McKinlay, unpublished paper).**

Councils may decide to devolve or delegate management or delivery of a project or service to the community and/or iwi and hapū for a number of reasons, including:

- after a section 17A review, which requires a council to review if their services are effective and efficient
- in response to a community or community board request that management of a service is transferred to the community
- where a council and the community believe that a service could better meet the needs of it users if managed by the community in question
- where making use of a ready and willing volunteer base is the most cost-effective and efficient option.

Why use this tool

There are significant benefits to working closely with communities. Where good relationships have been established, communities can be a council's eyes and ears, alerting it to problems which need attention before they become too expensive and giving it local knowledge about what works and what doesn't. Communities can also contribute a significant amount of voluntary resource to a variety of projects and services.

As well as benefiting from a volunteer base to deliver projects or services, there are a number of other good reasons for councils to invite communities to take a direct role in the management or delivery of services withing their own communities. These include:

- community groups and their members often become strong champions and advocates for services that they have a role in managing or delivering, and a strong commitment to ensuring the services achieve the desired outcomes
- local services or projects benefit from local knowledge and expertise, and where the service users are involved in design, delivery and management, services tend to better meet the needs of users
- local citizens having the opportunity to build capability and new skills.

How to use this tool

When seeking to involve communities in the management and/or delivery of local government services, councils should go through a process to ensure that any involvement is meaningful rather than token. A typical process would involve:

STEP

01 | For a given project, service, or asset, determine whether there is sufficient community interest to consider involving the community. The service needs to be important enough to a community to warrant local interest. In addition, community involvement must also include the opportunity/authority to exercise discretion and make changes to the quality and quantity of the service.

02 | Identify existing relevant community groups or citizens with expertise, interest and/or commitment. Hold initial discussions to identify options by which individuals/groups could be involved in the management or delivery of the project, service, or asset, and seek agreement on an approach that meets both the council and community's objectives.

03 | Once agreement has been reached on the role of the community in the management or delivery of the project, service, or asset, consider what roles and responsibilities could be devolved, and what guidance, resourcing, financial, and/or administrative support the council could provide.

Case studies

Bike Taupō: building and maintaining cycling tracks

Taupō District Council works alongside Sport Waikato, Bike Taupō, and cycling clubs to promote and encourage cycling and improve cycling infrastructure. In addition, Bike Taupō, a non-profit cycling advocacy group, has taken on the role of building and maintaining tracks across the Taupō district. The organisation manages over 200kms of trails. Most of their work relies on volunteers and funding partners (including Taupō District Council). One of their biggest ongoing projects is the building of the NZCT Great Lake Trail.

Bike Taupō, with the support of Taupō District Council, also undertook rehabilitation of Craters Mountain Bike Park following Cyclone Gabrielle, which left the park closed with hundreds of trees down and many trails in need of rebuilding.

SEE MORE HERE

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board responsible for water monitoring functions

In 2020, the Waikato Regional Council transferred a number of its water quality monitoring functions, specifically in relation to Taupō Waters, to the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board under section 33 of the RMA. This marked the first time in Aotearoa that any part of section 33 has been used by a council to formally transfer any function to an iwi authority (for the purposes of the RMA), setting a precedent for future delegations of functions in resource management. The public engagement process on the transfer was thorough and inclusive, ensuring that the community had ample opportunity to provide input. The result is a situation that enables Ngāti Tūwharetoa to be directly involved in state of the environment monitoring for their moana (Lake Taupō) with the Council playing a supporting role. The Council provides ongoing funding for the costs associated with the transferred functions.

The section 33 transfer of monitoring functions was the result of the long-standing collaborative relationship between the Council and the Trust Board and recognises Ngāti Tūwharetoa as kaitiaki of Taupō Waters. The monitoring involves activities such as taking weekly water samples from Lake Taupō beach sites during summer months, monthly assessments of water quality at 12 regional rivers that are tributaries to Lake Taupō, regular groundwater monitoring, analysing data and results, and alerting the authorities to areas of concern and ensuring action is taken.

There are benefits of the transfer of functions including enhanced local engagement, cost efficiency for Council and more streamlined processes for delivering monitoring functions, a deeper understanding for both Ngāti Tūwharetoa and the Council on the health of Taupō moana, and increased technical capability and knowledge – both within the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board and Council.

The successful transfer of monitoring functions to the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board earned Waikato Regional Council and the Trust Board the Buddle Findlay Award for Bicultural Leadership at the Taituara Local Government Excellence Awards in 2021.

SEE MORE HERE

Catchment community groups, Marlborough District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council

The Marlborough District Council launched the Catchment Care Programme in 2020 as a way to work together with the communities of Marlborough to invest in protecting and enhancing river catchments, and in recognition that the biggest improvements in water quality are achieved when every contributor to the water body works together.

The Catchment Care programme is a voluntary programme focused primarily on the non-regulatory opportunities the Council has, to support and invest in the people and communities of Marlborough, to facilitate the responsible use of natural resources. Alongside central government, Marlborough District Council provides financial support to implement solutions for the highest priority catchments where the waterways have been identified as degraded or at risk of degradation.

There are currently six catchment care groups. Each Catchment Care project is unique and often involves a mix of solutions, such as riparian fencing, native planting, and the use of dung beetles to improve manure and water absorption.

SEE MORE HERE

In the Wellington region, the Catchment Community Group initiative was established in the Wairarapa approximately seven years ago as a result of the Ruamāhanga Whaitua and a nationwide movement for catchment groups. In the Wairarapa this was supported and funded by Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, central government, Wairarapa Pukaha to Kawakawa, Beef + Lamb NZ and DairyNZ. A wide range of groups have been established. The landowner-led Wairarapa Catchment Collective is the newly formed entity whose purpose is to continue and expand catchment community action into the future. This is a partnership project with the Ministry of Primary Industries, Greater Wellington and Mountains to Sea NZ.

Each catchment community group is led by landowners, farmers and community members, who decide how the group operates and what actions it will take to achieve a long-term vision for the catchment.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

Community buy-backs – the English approach

More than a decade ago the British parliament passed a law that enabled communities in England to buy back underused public assets. The Localism Act 2011 included a provision that allowed a community to apply to take over the ownership, or management, of a community asset which, in the community's view, was either under-utilised or neglected by the council.

At the time the legislation was passed, many councils were faced with growing budget deficits and willingly chose to transfer local neighbourhood assets, such as recreation centres, libraries, and other forms of social infrastructure, to community control. In fact, by 2019, it was estimated that there were 6,325 community assets (defined as land and buildings with long-term ownership rights and control by local people) that had been transferred to community control. It has been estimated that 56p of every 1 pound spent by community-owned assets stays local.

While no such provision exists in New Zealand, all councils have a level of discretion over the future of their assets and a local policy could be developed that enables communities to bid for under-utilised community assets.

For more information, see the Report of the Community Ownership Commission at:

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

For an overview of how communities and councils can work together in co-production see: HERE

For a discussion on shifting how the management of public services can be shared, see: HERE

To understand the benefits of working with communities see: HERE

For Wellington City Council's policy on support for community centre committees go to: HERE

TOOL 8:
Participatory budgeting

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

REQUIRES CHANGES TO THE WAY IN WHICH COUNCIL BUDGETS ARE TRADITIONALLY SET, AND CONSIDERABLE STAFF TIME MAY BE INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING A JOINT PROJECT TEAM, CREATING THE PROCESS FOR REGISTERING PARTICIPANTS, PROVIDING ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY SUPPORT TO ASSIST CITIZENS TO MAKE ALLOCATION DECISIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Participatory budgeting is a shared decision-making process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. It is about sharing responsibility more widely, and gives people real power over real money. As a tool, it aims to promote community empowerment by shifting power from governing bodies to the community.

Participatory budgeting originally began in Brazil, in 1989, where it was successfully used as an anti-poverty measure that helped reduce child mortality by nearly 20 percent.[3] The approach is now used in thousands of cities around the world, for budgets from states, counties, cities, housing authorities, schools, and other institutions. It is recognised as good practice by international institutions, including the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, and the United Nations.

The Participatory Budgeting Network in the United Kingdom defines participatory budgeting as:

> “...directly [involving] local people in making decisions over how public money is spent in their community. This means engaging residents, community groups and representatives of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities, make spending proposals, and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in scrutiny and monitoring.[4]

[3] See https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/22/brazil-let-its-citizens-make-decisions-about-city-budgets-heres-what-happened/?noredirect=on.

[4] See https://pbnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PB-Network-Booklet-Sept-2015.pdf.

Why use this tool

Participatory budgeting is a powerful tool for involving residents in decision-making processes, increasing local government responsiveness to the needs expressed by the community and incorporating residents' innovative spending ideas.

It helps to deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and create a more equitable distribution of public resources. Participatory budgeting has a proven track record of increasing levels of participation, engagement and empowerment in a range of community settings, and aids in developing new community leaders.

Like many other localism tools, participatory budgeting can enhance community trust and confidence in local government. As with Tool 5 in Chapter One (citizens' assemblies), evidence suggests that people are more likely to support decisions when they feel that they have had a genuine voice in the process. A paper published by The Young Foundation describes the benefits in this way:

> The implementation of participatory budgeting offers local authorities a potentially powerful tool to involve residents in their decision-making processes. Involvement can build residents' confidence and enhance trust in the local authority's democratic processes. Increased contact with neighbours, bringing people together from different backgrounds, and familiarity with local institutions can build social capital and community cohesion.[5]

Participatory budgeting can also be particularly useful when authorities are facing stretched budgets, where communities can be involved in defining local priorities, and prioritising spending and allocating resources accordingly. Innovation is particularly important in these contexts, and the best innovation usually comes from the direct involvement of people and communities in processes such as participatory budgeting.

The report from the 2011 study, *Communities in the driving seat: a study of Participatory Budgeting in England*,[6] identified benefits of participatory budgeting as:

- improving the transparency of information available to service providers and communities, enabling them to meet local priorities more effectively
- attracting additional funds into deprived areas by providing an effective means of distributing resources
- improving individuals' and organisations' self-confidence in addressing neighbourhood issues and in negotiating with public sector organisations
- pooling the knowledge, skills and experience of people from different backgrounds, enabling them to address local concerns.

[5] See https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Devolving-funds-to-local-communities-August-2008.pdf.

[6] See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74e0804ofob65c0e845331/19932231.pdf.

How to use this tool

Participatory budgeting techniques can be used for – and adapted to suit – a wide range of situations. For example, budgets for certain neighbourhoods or areas, local authority wide for a specified theme (for example, children and young people), or to set the priorities for an entire budget or to allocate part of that budget for projects.

There is no set way to carry out participatory budgeting, but it is recommended that the process should be designed on the basis of local circumstances and local priorities. Some of the models that have been used include:

- A community grant pot, where a discrete pot of money for a particular area or theme is allocated for participatory budgeting
- 'Top-slicing', where an agreed proportion of a public service investment budget is set aside for community members to decide how it is spent (this approach is usually implemented in neighbourhoods or local council wards)
- Funding levels for mainstream services are prioritised and allocated through participatory budgeting methods.

A typical process may use the following steps:

STEP

01 | **Allocating a budget.** A council allocates a certain amount of its annual budget for allocation through a participatory budgeting process.

02 | **Planning.** A project team, and/or steering group, is established to design and deliver the participatory budgeting process. Ideally this team involves council staff, representatives from community groups, and local residents who are able to mobilise resources and drive the process forward. The project team may undertake a range of tasks, including:

- setting the scope or themes for the process
- determining and designing the most appropriate process based on the local situation
- preparing a communications plan and materials, including clear instructions for residents about the process, the available budget, and any constraints
- determining and designing any necessary capacity building to support participants to engage in the process.

03 | **Identifying priorities and calling for ideas.** The next step is then to call for ideas for what to use the allocated budget for. Sometimes, this may begin with a priority-setting process – neighbourhood charters and community plans can sometimes be used as a first phase to help identify a community's priorities, or priorities may be determined at an initial public meeting. Councils may then invite formal applications for projects, and/or use a range of forums, including face-to-face meetings and online forums (where people may make presentations or 'pitches'), to generate ideas for projects and spending. All meetings should be well structured and engaging, and may benefit from a professional facilitator.

04 | **Deliberation and shortlisting.** Consideration needs to be given for how to build space into the process for deliberation, both at the shortlisting step and during the voting process. Enabling people to discuss the merits of the bids/projects can strengthen engagement and lead to more informed decisions. During shortlisting, ideas and applications are refined to a shorter list. This list may then be assessed by council advisors (such as engineers) for feasibility and to estimate costs. The information from this assessment should be communicated to the public prior to voting.

05 | **Deliberation and voting.** Voting can take place online, at a single event, or across multiple events and forums. Voting often involves a voter dividing the available budget up between their preferred projects, or using preferential ranking of projects.

Case studies

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council's School Sustainability and Resilience Fund

'By the community, for the community'

The School Sustainability and Resilience Fund, established by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, makes small grants to schools, kura, kōhanga, kindergartens, early childhood education centres and other education organisations across the Bay of Plenty rohe to support environmental sustainability. Unlike many other grant programmes, funding decisions are made by the community, and young people themselves, through a participatory process.

The Council begins by inviting applications for funding from schools, kura, kōhanga, kindergartens, and early childhood education centres to undertake projects they have designed. The Council then assesses all applications against the eligibility criteria before online public voting begins.

In the public voting, each voter can allocate $25,000 towards different projects (each project application has a cost estimate associated with it). Each time the voter selects the 'fund this' button of an application, the cost of that item will be deducted from their budget. Once public voting has finished, the Youth Panel voting begins, involving projects from the public voting round that were not successful (second chance opportunity). Each Youth Panel members also has a 'voting budget' of $25,000.

Online meetings are held before the Youth Panel voting day to inform the process and provide guidance to panel members before making decisions. The public voting round for the 2024 grant-making process involved 781 individuals who cast a total of 8,074 votes on 38 projects.

Past funded projects have included edible gardens, chicken coops, a sustainable seed library, compost bins, and promoting active modes of transport.

SEE MORE HERE

Iceland

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis in Iceland, Icelanders' political trust was at an all-time low. Citizens wanted more transparency from government and a greater role in decision-making. Against this backdrop, a not-for profit civic technology provider, Citizens Foundation, developed a platform to rebuild the relationship between elected officials and their constituents. The platform – 'Better Reykjavik' – included a tool for annual participatory budgeting – 'My Neighbourhood' – in districts across the city.

The approach was praised by the Council of Europe as an example of how "thousands of citizens had a real influence on their environment." All neighbourhoods of Reykjavík have been visibly improved through the 'My Neighbourhood project'. In 2017, funding for the projects totalled approximately 7 million Euro, amounting to about 0.35% of the city Reykjavik's total budget. The city's objectives were to:

- build a different way for politics to be done, where engagement was more fun, and where the effects of taking part were tangible to citizens
- ensure that the reduced financial resources of the city were put to their best use.

A Project Management Team in the Mayor's office runs the Better Reykjavik project, including its promotion and engagement campaigns. The city has established a Construction Board to review proposed projects suggested for funding via the process for feasibility and cost.

SEE MORE HERE

Christchurch City Council's *'What Matters Most?'* input process

In mid-2023, Christchurch City Council ran the *'What Matters Most'* campaign to find out residents' priorities ahead of developing the Council's Long-Term Plan for 2024-2034. The campaign ran over five weeks, with Council staff out and about in the community – at markets, events, public meetings and forums to hear as wide a range of viewpoints as possible. As part of the campaign, residents were invited to show their support for different priorities by placing a vote with a token in rotating voting boxes around the city.

The Council also made online digital tools available for people to share and discuss their views in ways that were interactive, accessible and easy to use.

Four thousand people from across the city completed the activity, by allocating 100 points across 17 of the Council's core services. In analysing the results, the Council looked at both how many people allocated points to each of the core services and how many points those people allocated on average (out of 100 points), ranking the 17 services. The Council published findings from the campaign, which showed that the five services that matter most to Christchurch and Banks Peninsula residents are climate change, drinking water, roads and footpaths, travel choice, and parks and gardens.

While not a traditional participatory budgeting process, the campaign did provide a key input into the development of the Council's Long-Term Plan and decisions about what the Council will fund over the next ten years.

SEE MORE HERE

Saint Petersburg, Russia

Saint Petersburg is the second-largest metropolis in Russia. It started using participatory budgeting in 2016 and it currently takes place in six out of the city's 18 districts (referred to as 'Your Budget'). While participatory budgeting is practised in multiple municipalities in Russia, the approach used in St Petersburg is fully deliberative, with citizens making the final decision about budget allocations. The members of district-based Budgeting Committees, who are selected from amongst the citizens who proposed projects, make the final decisions.

The process is supported by numerous activities to inform and mobilise citizens through a month-long information campaign, using both online and offline communication channels.

SEE MORE HERE

Porto Alegre (Brazil)

Participatory budgeting was made famous by the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil, which began making extensive use of the process from the late 1980s. It is widely considered to be the most successful use of participatory budgeting anywhere in the world, with 17,200 citizens involved at its peak in 2002, having distributed around $160 million of public money.

Budgeting happens annually, beginning with the presentation of accounts from the previous year. The Government also presents its plan for the current year, which had been decided at the meetings from the year before. Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre involves three streams of meetings:

- neighbourhood assemblies
- thematic assemblies
- meetings of delegates for citywide coordinating sessions (the Council of the Participatory Budget).

The neighbourhood assemblies discuss the funding allocations for the 16 districts of the city for the city government's responsibilities including schools, water supply, and sewage. The meetings are divided into 16 'Great Assemblies', held in public spaces such as churches and union centres across the city, open to all. These debates decide the criteria for which the budget is allocated in the districts – for example, whether it is by population, an index of poverty, or a measure of shortages.

At the end of the deliberations, each of the 16 districts provides two sets of rankings. One for things that affect the district specifically, such as the building of schools or sewers; and another for things that affect the entire city, such as transport or beach cleaning. They also elect delegates who proceed to the Council of the Participatory Budget (COP) with the districts' suggestions.

The role of the COP is to refine and apply the budget rules developed by the neighbourhood and thematic assemblies and put forward by the government administration beforehand. At this point, elected councillors can accept or reject the budget, but in reality have a fairly limited role.

In their overview, the English Local Government Association describes the process as an enormous success, bringing those usually excluded from the political process into the heart of decision making and significantly increasing the power and influence of civil society as well as improving local people's lives through the more effective allocation of resources.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

The beginners guide to participatory budgeting:	HERE
For Scotland's framework for participatory budgeting, see:	HERE
For a simple step-by-step guide to setting up a participatory budgeting event, see:	HERE
For an overview of international practice, read the OECD Guidelines for participatory processes:	HERE
For practical examples of how to use participatory budgeting in a community, see:	HERE
For information on participatory budgeting in Puxing Subdistrict, Shanghai, see:	HERE
For an in-depth review of the effectiveness of Glasgow City's Participatory Budgeting toolkit, see:	HERE
For information on the Citizens' Summit in Amersfoort, Netherlands, see:	HERE
For a description of Large-Scale Participatory Budgeting in Chengdu, China, see:	HERE

TOOL 9: Collaborative community planning

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM TO ADVANCED

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING APPROACHES CAN VARY CONSIDERABLY IN SIZE AND COMPLEXITY, AND WILL VARY DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF PLAN AND THE UNIQUE CONTEXT OF THE DISTRICT, CITY OR REGION, BUT ARE LIKELY TO INVOLVE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN BOTH TIME AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILS TO SUPPORT DEEP AND GENUINE COLLABORATION ACROSS MULTIPLE COMMUNITY GROUPS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Collaborative community planning in the context of this guide is not about formal planning under the RMA 1991 but about involving communities in defining their aspirations and priorities as they plan for the future. Collaborating in this way is an opportunity to bring together relevant organisations (including maata waka groups, voluntary organisations and public agencies from both local and central government) to agree priorities, goals, actions, programmes and services to improve the wellbeing of regional and local communities.

Collaborating with communities on their priorities for local areas may inform a wide range of council and public policy needs, functions, advocacy roles, and decisions on the allocation of resources, including inputting into processes like the development of long-term plans. It may also result in dedicated community plans.

Collaborative community planning is central to localism – as it's about sharing power and decision making between governments and communities, to achieve outcomes that matter locally and regionally. Local government, instead of driving change, can focus on enabling and supporting local community action – by working collaboratively with community groups with flexibility, commitment and trust.

Taking this role of regional and local enablement requires civic leadership and the mobilisation of the diverse actors that constitute a community, including local networks, Iwi and hapū, and other partners in a collaborative approach to identify and achieve common aspirations. As Peter McKinlay writes:

> The future of local government lies in acting as the governance of its communities including facilitating/enabling resilient communities. **It's a future in which councils become the pivotal intermediary between central government (and other stakeholders delivering services at a community level) and communities, ensuring that central government and its agencies understand the diversity of the council's communities, and their respective needs and preferences** and ensure those factors are properly taken into account in the design targeting and delivery of central government services. It's a future grounded in the statutory expression of the purpose and role of local government.[7]

[7] Building A Stronger Relationship Between Central and Local Government: A Report prepared for Local Government New Zealand by McKinlay Douglas Ltd, December 2022, unpublished.

Why use this tool

Collaborative community planning has the potential to effect meaningful and systemic long-term change in communities – both in community outcomes and in how communities and government work together. Some of the benefits include:

- building community resilience, trust, and cohesion, and building community leadership
- empowering communities through a sense of belonging, connection, and purpose
- developing an in-depth understanding of local needs and achieving agreement on local priorities
- developing actions based on what local knowledge shows will make a real difference for the community
- harnessing local community leadership, ideas and capacity to develop tailored and long-term solutions to local challenges
- reducing fragmentation and duplication in services and facilitating better alignment of public and private investment
- achieving greater buy-in for plans and their impacts.

Collaborative community planning also provides opportunities to use some of the deliberative and participatory tools outlined in this guide (such as Tool 8: Participatory budgeting), which can lead to greater social capital and more trust in public institutions.

Collaborative community planning approaches can be particularly useful in circumstances where an issue, problem or opportunity faced by a community is multifaceted and complex; does not have a clear solution and needs the local community to be actively involved to develop meaningful responses; or requires a cross-sectoral and long-term response.

How to use this tool

Collaborative community planning is not always easy, as it involves bringing together multiple participants and groups to work together in new ways, building trust, determining and agreeing a collective purpose, resolving potentially conflicting and different goals, and implementing change. It is generally a long-term process. The process will not always be linear – in fact, to be most effective, collaborative ways of working should be flexible and adaptable.

These steps may be different also if the collaborative community planning is being done as an input into statutory processes such as for a Long-Term Plan or a Regional Policy Statement or District Plan.

STEP

01 | Identify an existing planning process that would particularly benefit from a collaborative community planning approach – or a locality that could benefit from a bespoke collaborative community plan. Work with local community stakeholders to assess if a collaborative community approach would be an appropriate response to local opportunities or challenges and assess if it is ready to, or is already, self-mobilising around an opportunity or issue.

02 | Identify Iwi and hapū, community groups, and other local or regional stakeholders who may be interested in collaborating. Spend time building relationships and establishing trust with the community and demonstrating genuine intent to collaborate.

03 | Agree the scope and parameters for the plan (which may depend on whether the approach is being used for an existing Council planning process or a bespoke community plan) and any limitations to decisions. Also agree a collaborative, shared decision-making process (including whether a representative planning group needs to be established). Decision-making should be effective, and based on trust, openness, and mature relationships between partners. At this point, there should also be agreement on the role council will play in the process, from driving and running the process through to enabling and supporting it, and how the process fits into other council planning processes (such as the long-term plan).

04 | Determine the level of resources the council will need to provide support and enable the collaborative community planning process.

05 | Agree a vision, based on common understanding and shared values.

STEP

06 | Map the current situation, including what is currently in place and what the gaps are. This may involve capturing evidence about what has been achieved or not. The wider community could be invited to participate in this process.

07 | Identify the change the community wants to see, agree priorities and develop an action plan. At this point, consultation with the wider community is recommended.

08 | Agree the measures and indicators for success and how progress will be monitored and assessed. Evaluation methods, including processes for data collection should be included to support ongoing learning and adaptation. It is important to embed a culture of learning and continually encourage new ideas.

09 | Form a delivery plan and agree timelines. Local partners such as community organisations, businesses, philanthropy and government should work collaboratively to resource and implement the plan. Ideally a local collaborative governance group would oversee implementation, monitoring and adaptation.

Case studies

Hastings District Council's community plans

Hastings District Council describes community planning as "the voice of a community". It obtains local people's views on the place that they call home, celebrates the things that make their community special, highlights their goals and aspirations, and creates a future vision for the community.

Led by the community, community plans are about community members coming together to develop a local plan to shape the development of their community into the future. Agreement is reached on objectives, actions, delivery responsibility, and timeframes, all with the aim of improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of a local community. Community-led plans have a vision, actions, and an implementation plan. They are endorsed by the Council, so can guide decision-making by the Council and other agencies.

An example of the district's community plans is the Maraekākao Community Plan. The plan builds on initiatives that were identified in an earlier community plan and sets out new and emerging projects. It sets the vision for Maraekākaho as a connected, strong rural community, centred around a social, environmental and economic hub which links the past with the future.

The priorities identified are viewed and considered in planning and funding plans for Hastings District Council, stakeholders, funders and community partners which results in the community's project plan.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

Ahu Ake – Waipā Community Spatial Plan

Waipā District Council is engaged in developing a spatial plan for its community. The purpose of a spatial plan is to guide future planning and investment in a district, help determine what it will look like in 30+ years' time, and to map out how it will be achieved. Ahu Ake, Waipā Community Spatial Plan, will consider things like whether more walking and cycling infrastructure is needed in the district's towns and villages, or parks and open spaces, whether the district should allow for more development in its rural spaces or intensification in its centres. It will map out how the environment will be looked after, how climate change will be tackled, how more businesses will be attracted to the district.

In the first half of 2023, the Council sought feedback on what its communities wanted the future of their towns, villages and the district to look like. More than 2000 pieces of feedback were received, via community events, surveys, social media channels, community groups, and conversations with Mana whenua and Iwi representatives and key stakeholders. In partnership with the University of Waikato, an enhanced community participatory process using world café workshops was undertaken in late 2023. The recommendations made by the randomly selected community group were presented to Elected Members and these, together with the earlier feedback received, are currently being used to refine the draft community spatial plan. A Special Consultation Procedure is to follow later this year.

SEE MORE HERE

Community planning in Scotland

Mandated by the Scottish Community Empowerment Act 2015, Community Planning Partnerships (or CPP) is the name given to all the services that come together to take part in community planning. There are 32 CPPs across Scotland – one for each council area. Each CPP focuses on where partners' collective efforts and resources can add the most value to their local communities, with particular emphasis on reducing inequality. There are two types, Local Outcomes Improvement Plans which cover the whole council area, and Locality Plans, which cover smaller areas within the council area.

Community participation lies at the heart of community planning, and applies in the development, design and delivery of plans as well as in their review, revision and reporting. The legislation makes it clear that consultation is no longer enough. It also recognises self-identifying communities.

Community Partnership Plans are based on the principle of co-production, which is aimed at combining the mutual strengths and capacities of all partners.

See the Scottish community planning guidelines:

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

A paper on place-shaping in a post-Covid world, by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU):	HERE
A guide to place-based working in Scotland by the Corra Foundation:	HERE
A guide for the Victorian Public Service on place-based approaches:	HERE
A circular from the Scottish government providing guidance to communities and planning authorities on the preparation, submission and registration of Local Place Plans:	HERE
A toolkit for co-production in community planning by the Carnegie Foundation in the UK:	HERE
A guide to making a neighbourhood plan by Locality in the UK:	HERE
A community-led action plan toolkit:	HERE

CHAPTER THREE >

WHAKAMANA / DELIVERING THROUGH DEVOLUTION

He kai kei aku ringa

There is food at the end of my hands

Taking a localist approach to community decision making

Localism begins within the communities in which we live, so effective localism needs ongoing and permanent mechanisms through which communities can exercise voice and choice. This can look like bringing decision-making closer to citizens and increasing opportunities for people and communities to become directly involved in the process of government and governing.

When building a localist approach to community decision making, we can look to the Scottish government, which has adopted a "place principle" to guide public agencies working in place-based communities. The principle states that:

- Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities.
- Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them.
- A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

The place principle requests that all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities. The aim is to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and create more successful places.

If localism is to be a serious objective, councils must invest in their communities, particularly community organisations, hapū and iwi, social infrastructure (such as libraries and community centres), and neighbourhoods. This is essential in order to build partnerships for the future. Investment can involve capability building, leadership training, administrative support, and small grants to support community events, partnerships and community-led initiatives.

Localism in the context of Chapter Three is about creating opportunities for communities – whether of place, interest, or identity – to have a voice so that they can both articulate their needs and aspirations to councils and play a direct role in making those decisions.

Benefits of taking a localist approach to community decision making

The overarching benefit of taking a localist approach to community decision making is the strong and authentic relationships created between councils and their communities. Stronger relationships, with individual citizens, communities, and local government working more closely together, lead to improved decisions and outcomes for local residents. Other benefits include that:

- communities are empowered to collaborate and work collectively to fund and implement improvements to their communities
- local services and projects benefit from local knowledge and expertise, and services are better tailored to the needs of users
- councils and their communities benefit from the time and expertise of volunteers, who also build capability over time
- more innovative ideas and solutions arising from the direct involvement of people and communities in decision making.

Taking a localist approach to decision making may also enable councils to more effectively pursue the needs and interests of communities at regional and national levels.

Tools for taking a localist approach to community decision making

Chapter Three outlines five tools and approaches for taking a localist approach to community decision making:

Tool 10/ Empowering community boards

Tool 11/ Business improvement districts

Tool 12/ Empowering communities (community committees and neighbourhood associations)

Tool 13/ Partnership arrangements between councils and iwi, hapū and Māori

Tool 14/ Neighbourhood budget devolution.

These tools focus on approaches that devolve a range of decision making, often with dedicated funding, to community organisations.

TOOL 10:
Empowering community boards

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

LOW. THE TIME AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOOL ARE LARGELY ADMINISTRATIVE. IT REQUIRES A POLICY DECISION FROM THE GOVERNING BODY TO DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES TO COMMUNITY BOARDS (OR TO ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY BOARDS) AND THEN TO RE-ALLOCATE STAFFING AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE BOARDS HAVE ACCESS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO UNDERTAKE THEIR ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
POLITICAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Community boards are statutory bodies that provide a voice for, and advocate on behalf of, smaller geographic communities within a council area. As well as their legislative role (outlined in section 52 of the LGA), community boards can undertake any other responsibilities that are delegated to them by their territorial authority. Common responsibilities include managing community facilities, local parks, hearing committees, resource management functions, community liaison, and creating community plans.

There are currently 111 community boards in Aotearoa New Zealand, ranging in size from those representing only a few hundred residents to more than 60,000 residents.

Community boards have usually been established where communities have felt unrepresented at the council table, or for communities that have specific circumstances (such as a rural community in a predominantly urban council) that might mean their needs risk being overlooked by the governing body.

If local government bodies become larger, new avenues are needed for people to engage directly in the decisions that shape their future. When considering the role of community boards in achieving greater engagement in local decision making, this tool encourages councils to consider:

- what actions they can take to further empower and enhance the role of existing community boards (such as delegating decision-making responsibilities)
- whether establishing community boards – or additional community boards – would support the council to take a more localist approach to decision making.

Why use this tool

Making decisions as close as practical to the communities affected by those decisions is at the core of localism. Bringing decisions to the local level allows for services to be tailored for the needs of each community or place, and to be co-designed with local citizens and organisations (see Tool 16: Co-commissioning, in Chapter Four).

Because they are based within their communities, community boards have the potential to strengthen the relationship between residents and councils. They are also better placed than their local authorities to engage meaningfully with communities when identifying options in response to local issues. Providing institutions, such as community boards, with more local governance responsibilities, and enabling people to have a real say about what goes on in their neighbourhoods, is crucial for strengthening the fabric of our communities while also contributing to higher levels of trust and reciprocity. In so doing, it can also enhance the reputation and representative authority of the governing council.

This tool has many similarities with Tool 12: Empowering communities (community committees and neighbourhood associations), and councils and communities may want to consider which is the most appropriate approach for their unique context. Community boards tend to be a strong option where there is a specific community of interest that, without a community board, would be under-represented on the governing body, such as a rural community board established to ensure a rural voice is not lost. In comparison, a community committee or neighbourhood association has the advantage of being more flexible, such as number of members, the ability to easily adjust boundaries and in how they work – but unlike community boards, its roles are not guaranteed in legislation.

How to use this tool

Councils may wish to begin by assessing their existing community boards: their locations, their roles and responsibilities, and their delegations. They could then undertake an analysis of whether there are any gaps or opportunities in the roles and responsibilities of their existing community boards and whether there are other locations in their district, city or region that may benefit from the establishment of a new community board.

The processes for establishing community boards are set out in the LGA and in LGNZ's Guide to Community Boards.

Once established, it is up to the council to decide whether the community board should focus on just its statutory roles or be delegated other responsibilities.

There are two primary ways to empower community boards:

- **Delegations.** Councils can delegate specific responsibilities to community boards. This would normally be done shortly after each election when a new council is approving delegations, but can be revisited at any time.
- **Agreements or charters.** Councils, through a formal or informal agreement, can empower a community board to make recommendations on a range of local or neighbourhood matters, with the expectation that council will usually approve those recommendations. This is the Hastings District Council model. Generally, an agreement will set out the council's expectations for a community board and processes to govern its relationship with the council.

Agreements are often preferred to delegations because of their flexibility.

Hastings Rural Community Board

The Hastings Rural Community Board is regarded as an important governance body within the Hastings District Council. Its objective is to represent the residents of Hastings' rural communities. It is made up of seven members, four of whom are elected by the rural subdivisions of Maraekākaho, Kaweka, Poukawa and Tūtira, and three who are councillors appointed by the Council.

As the voice of the rural community, the Board is responsible for rural matters for which the Council is responsible, such as rural roads, berms and culverts, bridge repairs and maintenance, and rural halls.

The Board is also involved in setting the vision for the rural community as part of the Council's Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan, as well as hearing submissions on rural subjects. Rather than having formal delegations, the Board, with the mandate given to it by rural voters, has an understanding with the council that its recommendations will generally be adopted.

SEE MORE HERE

Paekākāriki Community Board (Kāpiti Coast District Council)

In a recent report from the Helen Clarke Foundation, the Paekākāriki Community Board was praised for the role it plays as a vehicle for community voice and locally-led development. The board provides liaison between the community and council and acts as an advocate for the needs of Paekākāriki residents at Kāpiti Coast District Council meetings.

The Paekākāriki Community Board is an expression of grassroots and participatory democracy, supporting communities to decide the problems they need solutions for. To increase community participation and transparency, board meetings are held at accessible times in the evenings.

As the need arises, the community board brings together and facilitates collaboration between the different arms of the council so that local initiatives align with the district's overall policies and objectives.

The Board also administers the Community Grants and recommends appropriate allocation of the Campe Estate Community Fund to Council.

See the Scottish community planning guidelines:

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

For information on board delegations as well as how to establish a community board see the LGNZ Guide to Community Boards at: HERE

For more detail on the range of activities community boards undertake see this 2018 report by Business Lab: HERE

This Spinoff article provides an overview of community and local boards in New Zealand: HERE

This Remuneration Authority's advice on community board remuneration can be found here: HERE

A Good Practice Guide for Enabling and Supporting Place Based and Related Community Governance: HERE

For details on the legislative requirements for establishing a community board, check out the Local Government Commission's website at: HERE

TOOL 11:
Business improvement districts

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

THE RESOURCES NECESSARY ARE PRIMARILY ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE, TO ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST BUSINESSES TO ESTABLISH A FORMAL STRUCTURE IN ORDER TO PARTNER WITH THE COUNCIL.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE, DECISION-MAKING, AND FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION.

About this tool

Business improvement districts (BIDs) – sometimes also known as business improvement areas or business revitalisation zones – are defined areas within a city or district where local businesses and commercial property owners agree to work together, with support from the council, to:

- improve their business environment
- promote innovation and economic prosperity
- attract new businesses and customers.

BIDs are usually established as an organisation through a ballot or public process. They involve adding a targeted rate, levied on and collected from non-residential properties within the defined boundary to fund projects to achieve the goals of the BID – supplementing services already provided through general rates. Projects might include activities such as landscaping, visual enhancements, capital improvements, and marketing.

The first BID was started in Canada in 1970. Since then, they have expanded around the world, providing a public-private partnership that returns benefits to businesses in the form of marketing, advocacy and enhanced business districts. These days there are over 1,000 BIDs in the US alone.

Why use this tool

BIDs provide an ideal mechanism for businesses in a defined area to cooperate and collectively fund improvements that they will all benefit from. BIDs – or the idea behind them – have the potential to be used in other situations as well, such as where a group of tourism-related businesses wish to share the cost of a promotional campaign.

The benefits of BIDs include providing:

- business owners a voice on issues affecting their trading area
- a collective, sustainable and ongoing funding pool to achieve joint goals of business owners
- a forum to shape a vision and priorities for the business district and plan improvement activities
- local businesses the ability to decide and direct changes and improvements to their business area
- a well-resourced organisation focused on creating a thriving town centre or business district
- funding for enhanced marketing and promotion
- networking opportunities with neighbouring businesses
- an opportunity to experiment with innovative practices at a faster pace than may be achievable through local or central government
- a forum for interacting and solving issues with the council, government agencies and other public bodies, including opportunities to support and progress urban development.

BIDs often also see increased foot traffic and spending. Research has also found that successful BIDs can have a large, positive impact on the value of commercial property.

How to use this tool

A number of councils around Aotearoa New Zealand have established BID policies that provide a wealth of information about how to establish and run BIDs. If your council has not yet developed a BID policy and supporting guidance and templates, this would be a good initial step to take to encourage the use of BIDs in your region.

Establishing a BID is normally undertaken by local businesses, with the support of, and guidance from, the council.

STEP

01 | Gather and build support from the local business community for a business improvement district.

02 | Undertake initial consultation with the business community to determine the level of support for forming a business improvement district.

03 | Decide on the boundaries for the proposed business improvement district, develop a business plan outlining the proposed activities to be funded by the targeted rate, and agree the level of targeted rate.

04 | Develop a voting register of eligible businesses, undertake full consultation on the targeted rate and the planned activities, and organise a vote by businesses.

05 | Establish a legal entity (such as an incorporated society) to administer the business improvement district and agree a constitution.

06 | Hold an initial AGM, adopt the constitution, appoint board members and officers and approve the business plan.

07 | Make an application to the council for the targeted rate to be included in the council's next Annual Plan. Targeted rates are set under the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and are collected by the local authority.

08 | Funds collected under the business improvement district targeted rate are paid to the legal entity, and funds can then be spent in accordance with the business plan. BIDs will often employ a manager to manage the day-to-day operations, projects and initiatives.

This tool could be further enhanced by extending the membership of the 'district'. To grow the approach of BIDs, so that they take even more of a localist approach, BIDs could be developed to include community members in addition to business owners to create a public, private and citizen partnership. Some have described such an approach as a 'Neighbourhood Improvement District', with the possibility of collecting a contribution from the residential community equal to that of the BID targeted rate. The organisation could then serve the goals of both the business community and the residential community, with a greater level of funds. This is an approach that may work particularly well in suburban areas or smaller, rural townships, and could be an alternative to a community board.

SEE MORE HERE

Case studies

Auckland Council's BID programme, Hōtaka ā-Rohe Whakapiki Pakihi

Auckland currently has 51 BIDs, representing over 25,000 business and property owners with a combined capital value estimated at $72.7 billion. BIDs are formed and lead by local businesses and property owners who have agreed to work together, with support from Council, to improve their business environment, promote innovation, advocate on behalf of their business community, attract new businesses and customers. Auckland Council's BID Policy, Kaupapa Here ā-Rohe Whakapiki Pakihi, sets the framework and requirements for the independent BID-operating business associations to receive the annual BID targeted rate funding.

The Council actively encourages local businesses to come together through a BID programme, to explore communities of common interest and opportunities for shared service efficiencies and economies of scale. Local Boards hold decision-making responsibilities for BID programmes in relation to setting BID targeted rates and hold the primary relationship for BID programmes in their area.

Initiatives and projects that the Auckland BIDs have undertaken include running area and sector-based marketing programmes, increased crime prevention measures through placemaking, CCTV cameras, designing and hosting events (for example, the 'Heart of the City' BID created Restaurant Month), advocacy and town centre revitalisation projects (Karangahape Road BID), and solving local problems with local solutions (Manurewa BID Link Bus). The approach encourages local businesses to work collaboratively to respond to local business needs and opportunities, as well as maintaining a strong relationship with Auckland Council and Local Boards. BIDs across Tāmaki Makaurau also collaborate with each other in advocacy opportunities and for projects (for example, destination marketing initiatives). The BID whanau is a recognised stakeholder group for council plans and policies consultations.

Auckland Council BID staff have provided support and advice to a number of New Zealand and Australian local council's including New Sydney Waterfront, Adelaide City, Transport New South Wales, Christchurch, Wellington, Tauranga, Invercargill, and Kāpiti Coast.

SEE MORE HERE

Wellington City Council's BID programme

Wellington City Council also runs a BID programme with around 613 businesses involved in six BIDs (Miramar, Karori, Johnsonville, Tawa, Khandallah, and Destination KRL (Kilbirnie, Rongotai & Lyall Bay)), with a combined capital value estimated at $1.6 billion in 2024. Wellington City Council's BID programme started in 2013 and continues to grow.

SEE MORE HERE

Wellington City Council's BID programme benefits local economies by increasing foot traffic and consumer spending, leading to revenue growth and job creation. It enhances infrastructure through investments in green spaces, public art, and improved lighting, making areas more attractive. BIDs also foster collaboration among businesses, property owners, and councils, boosting community pride and cohesion. Overall, BIDs contribute to vibrant, sustainable communities benefiting both businesses and local councils.

Each Wellington BID area tailors its initiatives to local needs and opportunities:

- **The Destination KRL (Kilbirnie, Rongotai & Lyall Bay) BID** focuses on cultural enrichment through community murals and art walks, alongside networking events that support local businesses.

  SEE MORE HERE

- **The Tawa BID** emphasises beautification with hanging baskets and murals, along with proactive marketing and networking events to enhance business visibility.

  SEE MORE HERE

- **The Miramar BID** prioritises safety, economic prosperity, and community integration through advocacy and events that highlight Miramar as a secure and attractive destination.

  SEE MORE HERE

These diverse approaches illustrate how Wellington's BID programmes adapt to local contexts, promoting economic vitality, community cohesion, and sustainable development across Wellington's suburbs.

Harlem's 125th Street BID, New York

The 125th Street BID in Harlem, New York, has a vision "to become a multi-dimensional destination with a range of uses including commercial, retail, business, social, residential, educational, civic, hospitality, and religious, with a strong emphasis on culture and culture-related commerce." Its projects include:

- An Ambassador/Public Safety program, where public safety officers with BID uniforms patrol the street on foot five days a week. They provide public safety; assist the sick, injured or lost; and inspect for hazards, garbage, broken lights etc.
- The 125th Street BID Clean Team, which provides supplemental cleaning services, and the #HarlemNeatStreets clean awareness campaign.
- Marketing and promotion campaigns, including managing an events calendar and multiple social media platforms to highlight local businesses.
- The annual Harlem Holiday Lights celebration.
- A link with the Brixton (UK) BID, including a Brixton X Harlem Festival to celebrate the common threads between the two locations.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

Auckland Council's business improvement district programme and their guidance for establishing and running them: HERE HERE

Wellington City Council's business improvement district programme and a range of resources and templates: HERE

A 2007 article by New York University on the benefits of business improvement districts, based on evidence from New York City: HERE

An overview of business improvement districts by Business Lab: HERE

TOOL 12:
Empowering communities (community committees and neighbourhood associations)

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
EASY

LOW. THE TIME AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOOL IS SIMILAR TO TOOL 10, EMPOWERING COMMUNITY BOARDS, WITH PRIMARILY ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES REQUIRED. HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL TIME AND RESOURCES WILL BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS HAVE THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY TO UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
POLITICAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Empowering communities to articulate their needs and preferences to local government representatives is the baseline of localism – as articulated in Chapter One. Councils can build on this by creating opportunities for residents and communities to be directly involved in decision-making.

Empowering communities may look like establishing community groups that are variously known, depending on the setting, as community or ward committees, neighbourhood associations or councils, residents' associations, or multiform networks. Regardless of the name used, they are a form of neighbourhood governance and are designed to give citizens a say in decisions that affect their neighbourhood, and often input into city, district, and region-wide policies as well.

There are many different ways in which councils can empower and enable communities to contribute to council decision making. Some of the common ways are to:

- outline a process for defining communities, including allowing communities to define themselves
- provide clear pathways for community voices to be heard, such as a right to be present at relevant council committee meetings on regular occasions
- clearly state the level of support council will provide to enable a community to participate in decision making
- negotiate an agreement or charter that sets out:
  - the rights of the group to contribute to council decision making
  - any roles and functions that the community organisation will undertake on behalf of the council
  - agreed processes for resolving conflict.

Councils can also provide these groups with administrative support and leadership training and opportunities.

Why use this tool

Empowering communities through enabling community committees or neighbourhood associations to contribute to council decision making is directly related to the purpose of local government, as specified in section 10 of the LGA. Specifically, its purpose to "**enable** democratic local decision-making and action **by**, and on behalf of, communities."

There are some situations that make the use of this tool particularly appropriate, including where:

- a council is polycentric (multiple small towns/communities but no major centre)
- a district or region has large urban areas where a councillor represents a very large number of residents.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this tool has many similarities with Tool 10: Empowering Community Boards, and councils and communities may want to consider which is the most appropriate approach for their unique context. Community committees or neighbourhood associations have the advantage over community boards of being more flexible, such as number of members, the ability to easily adjust boundaries and in how they work – but unlike community boards, their roles are not guaranteed in legislation.

How to use this tool

STEP

01 | Undertake a stocktake of the community committees and neighbourhood associations that currently exist in the district, city or region, and an analysis of their support needs.

02 | Consider how to strengthen support to community committees and neighbourhood associations so they are able to articulate their needs and aspirations. This support could include providing:

- socially inclusive community hubs and spaces to enable communities to meet and connect and deliberate on local matters
- a dedicated council staff member to provide advice and guidance to the community group and assist with its maintenance and integrity
- administrative support, such as with design of newsletters to assist with inter-group communication
- opportunities for capacity building, such as training for committee chairs and other positions that might be necessary for a group to function.

03 | Consider what opportunities there could be for various community committees and neighbourhood associations to contribute to local decision making or whether there are particular responsibilities that could be devolved to them. This may involve determining and agreeing:

- the committee or association's terms of reference, including its purpose, scope, powers/delegations, accountabilities to local communities, processes and meeting frequency
- initial and ongoing support and resourcing needed from council to support the committee or association in its new roles.

Case studies

Manawatū District Council community committees

The Manawatū District Council's community committee structure has been in place since 1990, supported by a community committees policy that allows identified communities of interest to establish an advisory body to assist the council to meet its responsibilities to that community. They are an informal link between the Council and the community whereby an exchange of information, opinions, proposals, recommendations, and decisions can take place. The Council has 16 community committees, each with a dedicated liaison councillor.

In 2013, Manawatū District Council established its Community Planning Programme, which supports communities to develop a shared vision for their community, make a plan to achieve the vision and identify priorities, and implement the plan. The Council's work programmes and Asset Management Plans then aim to align with these community plans. The Council provides annual funding to help communities to undertake small-scale, grassroots projects. Each committee receives $3,000 a year for projects and seed funding, and they can also apply to a $60,000 contestable fund.

To date, 13 community plans have been completed. Community plans have improved the community's engagement not only with the Council but within their own communities, with more residents working together to achieve the community's vision. Community plan projects – made possible through volunteers, donations, and Council funding – have included community events, walkways and cycleways, 24-hour accessible toilet and shower blocks, playgrounds, skateparks, tennis court resurfacing, beautification, bus shelters, community BBQ/picnic areas, cenotaph upgrades, village square upgrades, and reserve developments.

SEE MORE HERE

The Portland model of neighbourhood associations

Portland is home to 95 formally recognised, independent neighbourhood associations, covering the entire city. These neighbourhoods are divided into seven coalition areas with a district office in each providing technical and community assistance to their member neighbourhood associations.

The district coalitions receive funding from the City of Portland with the city's Office of Neighbourhood Involvement providing support services. Traditionally, about $1.2 million is budgeted to support the seven district coalition offices. The system also includes 40 neighbourhood business district associations and, since 2006, it has expanded to engage city-wide community organisations that work with people of colour, immigrants and refugees. The City has funded leadership training and community organising by these groups and encourages partnerships between these groups and the traditional neighbourhood associations.

The neighbourhood associations play a critical role in providing information to decision-makers about the needs and priorities of the city's many neighbourhoods. They play a mediating role and attempt to connect community groups to the governing body and its processes for policy formation, budgeting, and service delivery. The associations have led to increased participation in local democracy and better advice for councils.

For more information see New Zealand's Local Government Thinktank webinar on the Portland model:

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

A further way to develop this tool – or an alternative to it – is to take the approach of 'Area Forums'. Area Forums take the approach of having a rolling schedule of formal, localised meetings that bring together residents with councillors and council staff to tackle local problems and pose ideas and solutions. They are an approach that is about a commitment to creating a localised democratic connection between residents and the council through regular meetings. Area Forums, which can operate at a neighbourhood level or across bigger areas, can vary in their specific approach, with some having decision-making powers, some formally co-opting residents, and some having funds to distribute (for example, through an approach such as Tool 14: Neighbourhood budget devolution).

SEE MORE HERE

Check out the following links for further information:

For more information on neighbourhood council and other initiatives in North America go to The Promise and Challenge of Neighbourhood Democracy at:

HERE

This guide, commissioned by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and produced by Matu, was created to support communities to respond to challenges such as climate change, rapid technological change, employment changes:

HERE

A Guide for Starting a Successful Neighbourhood Association produced by Athens-Clarke County:

HERE

This guide from the Policy Circle discusses the role of neighbourhood associations in the community and offers guidance for those interested in getting involved with an association:

HERE

TOOL 13:
Partnership arrangements between councils and iwi, hapū and Māori

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH IWI/ MĀORI, ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON THE APPROPRIATE PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE, AND INVESTMENT IN ONGOING RELATIONSHIPS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
POLITICAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Many councils have existing partnership arrangements with hapū and iwi, as well as with Māori organisations and mataawaka in their rohe.

Partnership arrangements can help create stronger and more authentic working relationships between councils and iwi, hapū and Māori. These arrangements may vary from informal voluntary arrangements to formal statutory functions and co-governance models. Some of these arrangements are linked to legislative and compliance mechanisms, such as those based on the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991 or the Local Government Act 2002, while others may relate to Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements. Partnership arrangements can also be built on shared histories, common goals and personal relationships developed and handed down over time.

This tool has a focus on partnership arrangements between councils and tangata whenua and the way in which they can be used to guide the way councils, hapū and iwi engage with each other.

Partnership arrangements such as written agreements can help make visible values, priorities, roles and responsibilities of all parties. This in turn can help build trust and relationships built on reciprocity and can help facilitate accountability. The form and content of partnership agreements may vary but common examples include memoranda of understanding and co-governance models.

Why use this tool

Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides the foundation for the relationships between local councils and hapū, iwi and Māori, as reflected in section 4 of the Local Government Act.

As stated in the *Final Report of the Future for Local Government*, to create stronger, more authentic relationships, councils need to work in partnership with iwi, hapū and Māori within their respective rohe and takiwā, and ensure te ao Māori, mātauranga Māori and tikanga are an everyday part of local government.

> There is a growing understanding and recognition that local government has responsibilities to Māori to give effect to Te Tiriti, and to work in partnership with hapū/iwi within their respective rohe and takiwā. Māori citizens are also entitled to make culturally distinctive contributions to council decisions and have their voices represented in governance or activities in the kāwanatanga sphere. Still, Te Tiriti will be foundational to how local government partners with and works in relation to hapū/iwi in matters of local governance.
>
> **(p65)**

> The way local government operates and makes decisions going forward can either undermine or enhance hapū and iwi ability to exercise rangatiratanga. Committing to a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship is an important step.
>
> **(p73)**

There are a range of practices, agreements, and other arrangements in place across the local government system that help facilitate the relationship between councils and Māori. In addition to fulfilling constitutional and legislative requirements, partnership arrangements such as agreements can also:

- be a vehicle for developing, articulating and providing a touch stone for shared values
- establish and confirm ways of working together, including governance and operational arrangements
- confirm roles and responsibilities of all parties
- complement and strengthen existing and evolving arrangements
- be used to guide collective delivery of outcomes for communities
- be used to confirm and provide accountability mechanisms for funding and decision-making processes.

> Waikato District Council supports a more Te Tiriti-centric approach to local government based on the understanding that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a partnership between Tangata Whenua (the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) and Tangata Tiriti (all non-indigenous New Zealanders).
>
> **– Waikato District Council**

How to use this tool

There is no one way to develop partnership arrangements between councils and mana whenua. Every iwi, hapū and mataawaka will be at different stages in their relationship journeys with councils in their rohe. This means different approaches will be required by councils that consider the past, present and future contexts of the people and places in which they operate.

For example, a localist approach takes place on land that is "intrinsically linked to the legal and cultural rights of tangata whenua" as Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa (Make the Move, 2023), that may in the context of colonisation, have been confiscated through violent means.

The role of councils, who provide many services as agents of the Crown located in the kawanatanga sphere and are accountable to their communities, will be to shift towards ethically and responsibly creating the conditions for practices that embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are guided by mātauranga Māori. This starts with orienting to ethical relationships (Hoskins, 2012).

In order to formalise partnership arrangements (such as MoUs or co-governance models), there are a number of steps required of councils to prepare for and engage with Māori in ways that are honest, true and respectful. Before beginning these steps, it is important that councils have undertaken a journey to build staff capability in navigating Te Ao Māori so they can engage with Māori in an authentic and meaningful way.

The following steps are inspired by the 'The 5 Wai's (not why's) of Māori Engagement' by Atawhai Tibble (2015).

STEP

01 | **Who are you and why do you want a partnership arrangement with Māori?**

A Te Tiriti approach starts with knowing who you are in relation to tangata whenua and whenua. For councils, this may require agreeing, articulating and communicating the constitutional positioning of your council in the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This may already be available and understood by members of your council. If not, it may require exploration and the collective development and articulation of positioning that includes historical context e.g., when was the council formed, why and how?

Step one also requires understanding and being able to articulate your council's collective values, mandate and accountability structures in order to honourably enter into partnership arrangements with hapū and iwi. For councils, knowing the history of the land you are on and the people who were first here, will be vital to partnering with iwi and hapū.

It is then important to know – and be able to articulate – why you are seeking to partner with Māori. For example, the purpose of the partnership arrangement from your council's perspective may be to:

- consult about an issue or co-design an initiative
- enter into an arrangement that is more ceremonial in nature
- ensure compliance with legislation or post Treaty settlement commitments
- have a meaningful relationship with iwi
- do business with an iwi or trust
- engage with iwi or Māori on a policy proposal.

02 | **Who are you seeking to engage with?**

It is important to identify who the partnership arrangement should be with and why. Is it hapū or iwi? Who are the appropriate leaders to engage with and are the right Māori navigators on your side being asked to advise? Perhaps it is mataawaka in your rohe that makes sense to approach. This relates to the purpose of the arrangement (see step one). It will be important to research who you should meet with, what the structure and entity of the group is, who their leaders are and what their plans may be as well as the historical context.

STEP

03 | **What is the benefit of this partnership arrangement for Māori?**

While it may be clear what the purpose and benefit of the partnership arrangement is for your council, it will be important to consider what the benefits will be for Māori, what impacts them, and what they need. How will this arrangement advance the goals of the hapū and iwi council is seeking to partner with?

Some key questions to guide this process include:

- What do hapū and iwi want?
- What is their story?
- What are their priorities and aspirations?
- What is their mission and plan?
- What are their values?
- What projects relevant to your council have they been involved in lately?
- What do you know about their partners?

04 | **Who will speak for your council?**

Partnership arrangements are fundamentally about relationships and trust. It will be important to ensure that Māori expertise is employed to help drive any partnership arrangement negotiations for example. If your team do not have the right skills to engage with Māori, it will be vital to ensure you have employed a cultural navigator or 'connector' who is part of your team.

STEP

05 |

How do you connect with respect and authenticity?

The expectation when entering into any partnership is that you will connect with cultural respect and authenticity. For establishing new, formalised and inter-generational partnership arrangements, this may require developing relationships and trust over many years.
For less-formal shorter-term partnership arrangements, it may develop more quickly. Atawhai Tibble says:

> At a broad level, make sure you know your Marae 101's: mihi, waiata, hongi. Be prepared to show that you have done your homework and take a Māori relationship seriously. Pronounce Māori words properly. Be prepared to stand up and say a mihimihi. Know how to hongi. Learn a waiata. This stuff matters to Māori. They will be pleased at your efforts. Be prepared. It's the Post Treaty Settlement World!
>
> If you are consulting on a piece of work, think about cultural protocols for starting and ending meetings, the use of facilities like marae, and the use of Māori concepts like manaakitanga and reciprocity. Remember simple cultural things like being a good host, or an even better visitor. Think about this. Plan for this. Budget for it… Have a cup of tea and refreshments. If you have gone out to take ideas and feedback from Māori, how are you giving something back to them for their time and effort and input? I am not talking money here. I am talking a report back or feedback on how their input was used.

Case studies

The Taupō District Council and Ngāti Tūrangitukua Mana Whakahono ā Rohe

Taupō District Council and Ngāti Tūrangitukua, the post-settlement entity established by Ngāti Tūwharetoa hapū, established an historic agreement in 2022 to jointly govern Tūrangi.

Mana Whakahono ā Rohe is a tool provided for under the RMA, designed to enable tangata whenua and local authorities to discuss and record how they will work together on resource management matters including joint decision making. This was the starting point that enabled Council and Ngāti Tūrangitukua to negotiate a much bolder partnership agreement. This Mana Whakahono covers matters much wider than the RMA, including the establishment of the Tūrangi Co-Governance Committee made up of equal membership from Council and Ngāti Tūrangitukua. It was recognised nationally at the Taituarā Excellence Awards in 2022 for its broad reaching scope.

When the agreement was announced, Tina Porou, Ngāti Tūrangitukua spokesperson, said "It reflects the importance of mana whenua, and the whānau who have lived in this rohe for 1000 years, but it also acknowledges and respects our community who have joined us."

The Tūrangi Co-Governance Committee is made up of four members elected by Ngāti Tūrangitukua and four members appointed by Council, one of whom is the Mayor. The committee is responsible for making decisions and overseeing the implementation of a wide range of RMA, LGA, Reserves Act and other matters within the Ngāti Tūrangitukua rohe. The Committee meets monthly, and meetings include time set aside for a public forum.

The Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreement continues to guide a positive working partnership between the Taupō District Council and Ngāti Tūrangitukua, and enables the integration of mana whenua aspirations and Mātauranga Māori into community planning, co-design of community projects, facilities, and sustainable community outcomes. The agreement reflects the fact that, as well as being kaitiaki, the hapū is a significant landowner in Tūrangi – and much of the Tūrangi township's community amenities and water infrastructure is located on reserves owned by Ngāti Tūrangitukua.

To read the Mana Whakahono agreement in full, see:

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

The Rangitāiki River Forum (involving Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Whakatāne District Council)

The Rangitāiki River Forum was established in 2012 via legislation following the treaty settlements of Ngāti Whare and Ngāti Manawa. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the environmental, cultural, and spiritual health and wellbeing of the Rangitāiki River and its tributaries.

The Forum is a co-governance partnership made up of representatives from Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa (Bay of Plenty), Hineuru, Ngai Tūhoe, Tūwharetoa (Taupō), as well as councillors from Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana, Whakatāne District Council and Taupō District Council.

In 2015, the Forum approved a final version of *Te Ara Whānui o Rangitāiki - Pathways of the Rangitāiki*. The document has been amended to include the affiliations of Hineuru that joined the Forum following their treaty settlement, and is due to be reviewed in 2025. It is implemented though the Councils' Regional Policy Statements and through various other plans and reports, such as district plans and Department of Conservation conservation plans.

Over time, this forum has continued to mature and evolve. It is an example of how collaboration between different groups and organisations can achieve meaningful mahi that mutually benefits everyone. As the administering body, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council feels privileged to work closely with the members of this forum.

SEE MORE HERE

Te Maru o Kaituna River Authority (involving Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council)

Te Maru o Kaituna River Authority is a co-governance partnership, set up by the Tapuika Claims Settlement Act 2014, mandated to restore, protect and enhance the environmental, cultural and spiritual health and wellbeing of the Kaituna River. The Kaituna River and its tributaries are considered taonga (treasures) by both iwi and the community, and are valued resources for the Bay of Plenty region.

The Authority is made up of iwi representatives from Tapuika Iwi Authority Trust, Te Kapu Ō Waitaha, Te Pumautanga o Te Arawa Trust, Te Tāhuhu o Tawakeheimoa Trust and Te Komiti Nui o Ngāti Whakaue, and council representatives from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council.

The Tapuika Claims Settlement Act 2014 directed the production of the Kaituna River Document as a tool to empower local iwi and councils to guide better care of their awa and its tributaries. The Kaituna River Document, *Kaituna, he taonga tuku iho - a treasure handed down*, took effect from 1 August 2018. An Action Plan, *Te Tini a Tuna*, was then developed and consulted on, outlining what will be done over the next ten years to deliver on the vision, objectives and outcomes of the Kaituna River Document. The Action Plan includes three priority actions, two supporting actions and 18 projects.

The five actions are to:

- Take collective responsibility for improving the health and well-being of the Kaituna River and its tributaries
- Create a network of healthy and diverse Kaituna habitats and ecosystems
- Connect our communities and visitors to our river and to our projects
- Collect good information about the health of the Kaituna River and its tributaries
- Establish a Kaituna River restoration and enhancement fund.

Over time, this forum has continued to mature and evolve. It is an example of how collaboration between different groups and organisations can achieve meaningful mahi that mutually benefits everyone. As the administering body, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council feels privileged to work closely with the members of this forum.

SEE MORE HERE SEE MORE HERE

Te Tauihu Partnership Agreement (Marlborough District Council, Nelson City Council, and Tasman District Council) (Tool 13)

Iwi and councils in the top of the South Island have affirmed their strong relationships through an historic partnership agreement, Kia Kotahi Te Tauihu, Together Te Tauihu Partnership Agreement, signed in December 2023 by the chairs of the eight tangata whenua iwi of Te Tauihu o te Waka-a-Māui (the top of the South Island) and the mayors of Tasman, Nelson and Marlborough. The Agreement represents an opportunity for iwi and council partners to work collaboratively on matters of mutual interest in a way that addresses some of the broader strategic regional challenges. It recognises the important and unique roles that both iwi and councils play in social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing of Te Tauihu. It seeks to weave these aspirations more closely together to strengthen Te Tauihu as a region and deliver shared aspirations more effectively. The Agreement sets out various partnership principles as well as review mechanisms.

Following the signing, an action plan is being developed to set out partnership priorities and actions over the next three years.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

Resources prepared by LGNZ to assist councils to help build stronger relationships between councils and Iwi, Hapu and Māori groups: HERE

Guidance from LGNZ for councils and Māori when considering their arrangements to engage and work with each other: HERE

Guidance from the Ministry for the Environment on Mana Whakahono ā Rohe: HERE

Guidance from the Office of the Auditor-General on "Principles for effectively co-governing natural resources": HERE

Chapter 3 (Local government embracing Te Tiriti and te ao Māori) of He piki tūranga, he piki kōtuku | The Future for Local Government report: HERE

TOOL 14: Neighbourhood budget devolution

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
ADVANCED

IMPLEMENTING NEIGHBOURHOOD BUDGET DEVOLUTION REQUIRES A POLICY DECISION TO DECENTRALISE AREAS OF THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET. STAFF TIME WILL BE INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANISATIONS TO ASSESS THEIR INTEREST AND DEVELOP, IF NECESSARY, THEIR CAPABILITY. ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES MAY BE REQUIRED.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Neighbourhood budget devolution involves empowering residents and local businesses to make decisions about how public resources are spent in their own neighbourhoods. In essence, neighbourhood or place-based budgeting involves:

- ring fencing a proportion of a council's budget to contribute to new work in a neighbourhood, or enhancing existing programmes and services
- delegating responsibility to an existing neighbourhood representative structure, such as a community board or residents association, in partnership with local councillors, for deciding how the budget will be spent.

The purpose is to enhance local control over aspects of the council's spending on matters like parks, play facilities, street furniture, or on funding local groups that provide local services.

While neighbourhood budget devolution is similar to Tool 8 in Chapter Two (participatory budgeting), it is different in some critical respects. Participatory budgeting involves residents directly in how local budgets are allocated, whereas neighbourhood budget devolution is concerned primarily with projects designed to improve the neighbourhood and may not necessarily be allocated through participatory techniques (instead devolved to a representative group of decision makers). However, like participatory budgeting, one of the reasons for considering this tool is to achieve broader social and democratic objectives.

Neighbourhoods are valuable places to devolve budgetary decisions to, because, due to their size:

- they are areas that people strongly identify with and often have greater meaning in people's lives
- they offer improved accessibility for getting involved, and close and direct accountability for decision making
- it is easier to identify and respond to diverse needs.

This tool is generally best used in conjunction with, or as a complement to, Tool 10: Empowering Community Boards or Tool 12: Empowering communities (community committees and neighbourhood associations) – so that a neighbourhood budget can be devolved to an established, representative group in the community to run an appropriate process.

Why use this tool

Devolved budgets can be a tool to build empowerment by focusing on the impacts on the individuals and communities involved, rather than the physical or social changes produced by the spending. Research has indicated that taking part in decisions on local expenditure builds trust and a spirit of collaboration between neighbours and between residents, officers, and councillors. Neighbourhood budget devolution also ensures that public funds are allocated to areas that local people identify as being the most important.

Neighbourhood budget devolution can also be used to build the capability of councillors and strengthen their relationship to their communities. Giving councillors a clear role by sharing decision making with community representatives can strengthen their understanding of the issues their wards or communities face and build negotiation skills. The tool can also be used to achieve a council's broader social wellbeing goals, such as increasing community cohesion, building social capital, and cementing the role of elected members as community leaders.

How to use this tool

Once a council has agreed to support neighbourhood budget devolution for a particular neighbourhood, there are some key steps to prepare for using this tool. Council will also need to decide the annual budget to be devolved. If there are multiple neighbourhoods being devolved budgetary decisions, consideration will need to be given to whether the same budget is allocated, or whether it is allocated on a population or other basis.

STEP

01 | Begin by engaging with groups and residents in the community, and determine interested parties. Spend time developing relationships and building trust. Councils may decide to work with an existing neighbourhood organisation, such as a community board, residents' association, or marae committee, to be the anchor body that will make or facilitate the decision on how the budget will be allocated, or guide the establishment of a local network representing key agencies.

02 | Define the boundaries of the neighbourhood (or allow residents to define their own community boundaries).

03 | Make key decisions, with the neighbourhood, on: the structure of the neighbourhood body, how representatives will be chosen or elected, and the level of involvement from council. This may involve creating a terms of reference.

04 | Determine what will be in and out of scope for the budget, whether it will be annual or involve multi-year expenditure, how budget ideas will be sought (for example, based on agreed community priorities, through applications, or via calling for proposals), how budget decisions will be made (for example, agreed by neighbourhood representatives or voted on by residents), and whether the council will approve final decisions or have veto power. These decisions may all depend on the size of the devolved budget.

05 | Support the neighbourhood to determine its community priorities and objectives, map services and identify gaps.

06 | Outline any council processes that must be followed, such as reporting and accountability requirements, while maintaining as much flexibility as possible.

07 | Agree with the neighbourhood what ongoing support they need from the council, such as administrative support, guidance, training or resources.

Case studies

Salford City Council, United Kingdom

Salford City Council has a policy of involving local people in decisions about the city. One example is the devolved budgets which are allocated to local communities. Between 2024 and 2025, £160,000 was allocated across eight neighbourhoods, where decisions are made on how the budget should be spent.

Each neighbourhood elects a sub-group from among its members. They assess applications and make recommendations/decisions about how the funding should be spent. Budget sub-groups can be made up of local residents and local councillors. They discuss ways in which the funding could best be used to improve outcomes for the local population and may approve, refuse or request further information in relation to funding applications. Their focus was on community health outcomes.

SEE MORE HERE

Haringey Borough Council, United Kingdom

For a number of years, the London Borough of Haringey has allocated £50,000 annually to each of its seven neighbourhoods, to be spent on schemes put forward by residents and decided upon at meetings of the Neighbourhood's Area Assembly. Local people are invited to submit proposals and neighbourhood officers work with the residents on costing and refining each project. All the projects are then displayed at the Area Assembly meeting, and residents vote on their preferences by awarding schemes 'stars'.

The spending is formally signed off by the officer holding the budget but as far as residents are concerned, it is their decision. For more information see the Civic Strength Index for London, page 35:

SEE MORE HERE

Bradford City Council, United Kingdom

Bradford has been experimenting with devolving funds to localities since 2005 when the Local Strategic Partnership set aside £315,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for environmental improvements which are determined by local residents. Communities from across the city were invited to submit proposals for their area, and short-listed proposals were presented at the Decision Day at the town hall. Three-minute presentations were given on each of the proposals, which were then voted on electronically by local residents. The event was well attended, and officials note that over time the number of black and minority ethnic residents participating in the event has increased markedly.

Residents have continued to play a role in the monitoring and scrutiny of projects to ensure they meet their original objectives. The Bradford approach can also be seen as a form of participatory budgeting.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

The Young Foundation report, Devolving funds to local communities, provides a historical look at the practice of devolving funds to local places: HERE

The working paper, Rationales for Place-based Approaches in Scotland, provides information on the policy reasons behind taking a neighbourhood empowerment approach: HERE

For more on how empowering communities leads to stronger democratic outcomes see the Young Foundation: HERE

A report by the United Kingdom's Department for Communities and Local Government on a Neighbourhood Community Budget Pilot Programme: HERE

CHAPTER FOUR >

HUHUTANGA / IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH LOCALISM

Poipoia te kākano kia puawai

Nurture the seed and it will grow

Taking a localist approach to growing and developing the local economy and community

Local and regional economies have vast potential to generate benefits and wellbeing for communities. This chapter details how local government can take a localist approach to supporting the growth and development of local economies and communities. It sets out approaches that local authorities and their partners can take to achieve social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for their communities and ensure that economic growth benefits as many people as possible.

This chapter falls under the umbrella of *community wealth building*,[8] a concept that is about ensuring wealth generated locally is invested back into the local economy for the benefit of the community – in ways that promote greater equality, economic resilience, and community wellbeing. Many researchers[9] and proponents of community wealth building talk about it having five underlying principles:

- spending on local goods and services and growing local supply chains
- investing locally
- prioritising fair employment and labour markets
- using land and property in socially and environmentally productive ways
- diversifying local and regional ownership models (such as growing small enterprises, community organisations, and local co-operatives).

There are many ways that councils can adopt community wealth building approaches, ranging from supporting co-operatives (whether these are producer co-operatives, shared services, financial cooperatives, working or housing cooperatives), to implementing community land trusts, to adopting social and local procurement practices, to partnering with other local anchor institutions. The tools and approaches in this chapter – along with many others included earlier in this guide – offer some mechanisms for building 'community wealth'.

For further information on community wealth building, and a comprehensive discussion of how it is, and could be, used in Aotearoa, see the White Paper recently developed as a collaboration between The Wellbeing Economy Alliance Aotearoa (WEAll) and The Urban Advisory.

[8] See https://democracycollaborative.org/programs/cwb and https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/.

[9] See https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/the-principles-of-community-wealth-building/, https://www.rethinkingpoverty.org.uk/new-economic-models/the-five-clear-principles-of-community-wealth-building/, and https://www.oecd.org/stories/local-development/practices/dynamic/cfe-places-case-studies/afdeefcd/pdf/community-wealth-building-for-a-well-being-economy.pdf.

Benefits of taking a localist approach to growing and developing the local economy and community

The overarching benefits of taking a localist approach to growing and developing the local economy and community, through the tools outlined in this chapter, include:

- more stable employment opportunities and fair employment practices
- greater numbers of successful local businesses
- greater investment in local and regional areas, making our communities more desirable places to live and play in
- better use of land for community benefit
- with more wealth being retained locally, less wealth 'leaks' away to a globalised economy through larger, multinational firms.

Tools for taking a localist approach to growing and developing the local economy and community

Chapter Four outlines three tools and approaches for taking a localist approach to growing and developing the local economy and community:

Tool 15/ Local and social procurement

Tool 16/ Co-commissioning

Tool 17/ Anchor institutions and collaborative anchor institutions.

These tools range from relatively targeted practices aimed at improving procurement practices and commissioning processes to benefit local and regional communities and businesses, to the more comprehensive tool of collaborative anchor institutions, aimed at making wide-ranging change by harnessing the efforts of multiple institutions to amplify their impact.

TOOL 15: Local and social procurement

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

LOCAL AND SOCIAL PROCUREMENT SHOULD NOT INVOLVE ADDITIONAL TIME TO STANDARD PROCUREMENT PROCESSES, ONCE CURRENT PROCUREMENT POLICIES HAVE BEEN REVISED. SOME TIME AND EXPENDITURE MAY BE NECESSARY TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL SUPPLIERS AND ORGANISATIONS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE DEVOLUTION

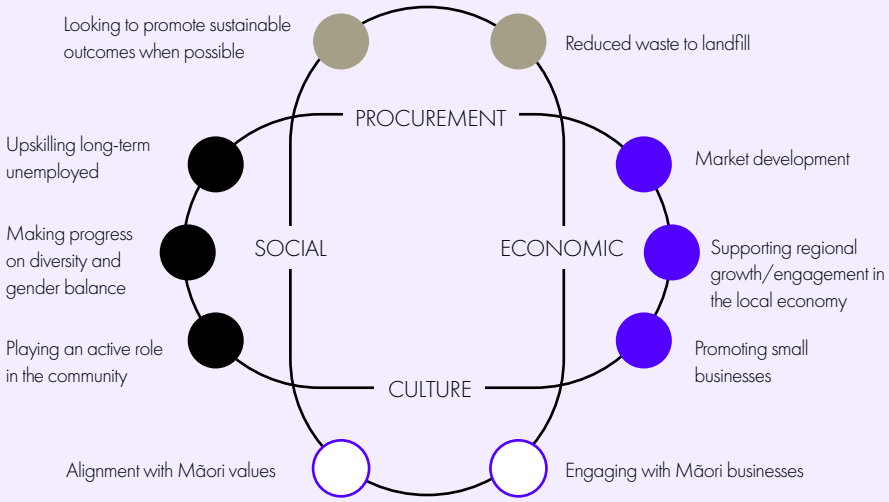
About this tool

Procurement offers a huge untapped opportunity for social, economic, cultural and environmental impact. Social procurement is a way for councils to achieve wellbeing outcomes as part of their normal business operations (procuring good and services).

Social procurement means using procurement as a tool to generate benefits and value beyond the core products or delivery of the services required – by implementing and practicing procurement policies that consider broader social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes (the 'quadruple bottom line') alongside price, quality and risk. The concept of social procurement is based on the idea that councils (or those procuring goods and services) have a responsibility to use their purchasing power in a way that benefits society and the environment.

Examples of Broader Outcomes - NZ Govt. Procurement Rules (4th Ed) 2019 (recoloured).

Broader social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes might look like wider supplier diversity, employment opportunities for marginalised people, more connected communities, fair working conditions, waste reduction, and environmental sustainability. When broader outcomes are included in procurement policies, council, businesses and communities develop and hold a more holistic understanding of what constitutes value. The following diagram for the Hawkes Bay Regional Council's progressive procurement toolkit outlines examples of broader outcomes and how they intersect.



Local procurement, therefore, means using procurement to create new and sustainable opportunities for local businesses and suppliers (that are often small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and maximise local and regional community benefits. Local procurement often requires support from councils to build the capacity of local suppliers, through guidance, training and education, to ensure they have the skills to participate and take advantage of these opportunities, and be competitive and profitable.

Local and social procurement can be either direct or indirect. Direct approaches are when councils purchase from entities that exist, to advance broader social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes, such as not-for-profits, social enterprises, Iwi/hapū, and Māori organisations. Indirect approaches include adding social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes clauses into contracts with private sector providers and evaluating supply chains against ethical considerations.

Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs is an example of promoting localism and driving positive change through local government procurement policies

Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) is committed to empowering young people and fostering economic wellbeing within communities by building and leveraging relationships within communities to address complex social problems. MTFJ advocates for procurement practices that prioritise social value and contribute to inclusive economic growth. By engaging with local authorities and businesses, it aims to create jobs with businesses contracted to councils to provide stable, long-term employment, training and career pathways for people who are currently struggling to find work. This work is also seen through the MSD-funded Ngā Puna Pūkenga programme at Auckland Council's water division and Wellington City Council's work on Moa Point, where major infrastructure investment is being leveraged for greater social outcomes.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

Why use this tool

Local and social procurement has the potential to drive real, meaningful change in the value gained from the delivery of goods and services. It can also improve value for money by aligning multiple, and often complex, strategic objectives.

Some of the benefits that can be achieved through the local and social procurement are:

- providing employment opportunities for marginalised people (such as the long-term unemployed, public housing tenants, those with a disability, refugees or migrants, and those experiencing homelessness)
- creating economic stimulus in the community or region
- promoting ethical employment and work practices
- building a diverse supplier base that reflects the diversity of the community
- strengthening partnerships with a range of community organisations and businesses
- demonstrating leadership across the wider community and local government sector.

How to use this tool

Incorporating social value in procurement does not change the basics of the procurement lifecycle. However, some key principles for using this tool are:

- consider local and social procurement at the earliest stage in a project and integrate it throughout
- be transparent and open about incorporating broad local and social outcomes in the procurement process
- ensure all potential suppliers are clear about local and social value requirements and assessment weightings from the beginning of the procurement process.

Revising and implementing local and social procurement policies and processes

STEP

01 | Embed local and social procurement into all relevant council policies and processes, so that it becomes an integral component of procurement. This involves creating policies that consider broader social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes.

02 | Integrate social procurement into your council's systems, from strategic business planning to operations and reporting. This could include creating links between the community services/social policy units and procurement, finance, and engineering/infrastructure units in order to build cross-unit support for local and social procurement. Consider whether procurement policies and implementation should include programmes and support to grow local supplier capability.

03 | Develop a database of those in your local area or region who would be beneficial to work with to obtain social outcomes through procurement processes. This might be Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ), large local employers, local MSD offices, Iwi, youth services, and education and training institutions.

04 | Brief providers on the development of council's social procurement programme at the earliest possible stage, through mechanisms such as organisational publications, social media and business and community forums.

05 | Monitor the procurement process to ensure the procurement policies are being implemented effectively, through monitoring the procurement process to ensure that it is being carried out in accordance with the policies. This can help to ensure that the social and environmental impacts of the products and services being procured are being considered.

Additional steps when undertaking a local and social procurement process

STEP

01 | Quantify the tangible outcomes and estimate the intangible outcomes of the project.

02 | Develop an understanding of the social and environmental impacts of the products or services being procured. This involves researching the suppliers and vendors that are being considered and assessing the social and environmental impacts of their operations.

03 | Undertake a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the recommended social outcomes are justifiable if they incur additional expense.

Case studies

Greater Manchester Social Value Procurement Framework

Manchester City Council has undertaken many social procurement initiatives including setting up an ethical procurement sub-group and engaging suppliers in areas of high deprivation. The most notable is the Greater Manchester Social Value Procurement Framework – the first such framework developed in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, putting Manchester at the forefront of practice around social value. One result is that the proportion of spend with Manchester-based organisations has increased from 51.5 percent in 2008/09 to 59.9 percent in 2020/21.

The framework embeds social value in all aspects of the procurement cycle, and importantly measures the contribution suppliers make to a range of social value indicators. In the procurement process, ten percent of the 20 percent weighting for social value is reserved for environmental indicators.

The project to redevelop the Manchester Town Hall was procured under the Greater Manchester Social Value Procurement Framework, and social value was included and embedded as an objective for the project from the beginning of the procurement process. The project was in full compliance with Living Wage and Ethical Procurement Policies. By 2024 the project had provided:

- 67 percent spend in Manchester
- 35 new jobs
- 80 school engagement sessions
- engagement of over 1,500 higher education students
- 61 work placements
- 23 apprentice placements.

SEE MORE HERE

Wellington City Council procurement approach to delivering positive impact

In 2021, Wellington City Council voted to adopt a new procurement strategy. The Procurement Strategy works to ensure Wellington City Council "uses its purchasing power to support values-based management decisions with an emphasis on economic, social, cultural, environmental and public well-being outcomes." It aims to promote innovation and support local businesses in recognition that every year, Wellington City Council spends over $500 million on external suppliers to help run its operations and deliver its projects.

Since 2021, Wellington City Council has implemented the strategy through developing a 'Broader Outcomes Strategy' to guide how commercial activities are designed and delivered, refreshing its suite of procurement templates to incorporate wellbeing outcomes, and updating its procurement policy, to ensure the strategy is embedded in all commercial decision making.

Ensuring broader outcomes are weaved into how Wellington City Council undertakes commercial activities has been fundamental to the success of the new procurement approach. Successes have included:

- local Māori businesses winning contracts with Council
- projects across the city providing targeted employment opportunities and placements for rangatahi, women in construction, and NEET individuals (an MSD service for young people not in employment, education or training)
- the inclusion of waste minimisation targets and outcomes in contracts, with a focus on diverting waste from landfill through deconstruction, repurposing, reusing and recycling
- embedding the use of te reo Māori, mana whenua-led design, and iwi history in project delivery.

SEE MORE HERE

Hawke's Bay Regional Council progressive procurement

In 2020, the Hawke's Bay Regional Council introduced a progressive procurement strategy – in recognition that its spending decisions can have a profoundly positive effect on community wellbeing and the local economy. The Regional Council's progressive procurement approach means including 'broader outcomes' in its decisions to purchase or contract goods or services – outcomes that go beyond the traditional considerations of price and quality. The Regional Council's four focus areas for achieving positive sustainable outcomes are social wellbeing (providing equal opportunity so prosperity is shared across the community), cultural wellbeing (having a genuine partnership with mana whenua), economic wellbeing (building a diverse and prosperous economy), and environmental wellbeing (preventing and reserving environmental degradation).

The Hawke's Bay Regional Council has developed both a 'progressive procurement toolkit' and a 'progressive procurement supplier guide', with the five councils across the region. The toolkit and guide send a signal of the region's collective intent and aim to support those taking part in procurement processes – and are the beginning of an iterative and ongoing process to engage communities of interest. The Council has also worked with Amotai to promote working with Council to local Māori and Pasifika businesses, and Te Puni Kokiri to open the door for capacity and capability building opportunities.

As part of an ongoing commitment to innovative and responsible governance, the Council is now working on a Mātauranga framework to weave traditional Māori knowledge and perspectives throughout our entire organisation. This initiative supports the Council's strategic goals, honours the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and enhances engagement with mana whenua. The Council's goal being to create a procurement environment that respects and benefits from the rich cultural heritage of mana whenua, promoting environmental stewardship and community wellbeing.

Following Cyclone Gabrielle, the Council, under emergency procurement, chose to support local, by local, for local, building and rebuilding foundations for recovery.

The Council is focused on building good foundations for the future – and continuing to seek feedback from partners to refine its procurement approach and ensure procurement practices deliver tangible outcomes.

SEE MORE HERE

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

The New Zealand Government's procurement rules:	HERE
Additional advice from MBIE on supporting Māori, Pasifika, and regional businesses through procurement:	HERE
Additional advice from MBIE on removing barriers for New Zealand businesses through procurement:	HERE
Local Government Victoria has developed a useful *Guide to Social Procurement* and toolkit to assist councils to deliver effective social outcomes through their procurement processes:	HERE HERE
The World Bank has developed a guide to getting started in local procurement:	HERE

TOOL 16: Co-commissioning

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
MEDIUM

CO-COMMISSIONING MAY INVOLVE SOME EXTRA TIME AND RESOURCES TO INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS, BUT WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE KEY STEPS OF THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
ADMINISTRATIVE AND DECISION-MAKING DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Commissioning (in the context of social services) is a set of tasks to turn policy objectives into effective social services. It is a wider concept than that of procurement (the purchase of goods or services), which potentially forms part of the commissioning process.

Central to commissioning is thinking about what needs to be delivered, to whom, to achieve what outcomes – which can start by asking what the best way is to achieve a specific outcome for a person or group. Commissioning may involve understanding the assets a community already has that might be built upon, and understanding what is missing in a community.

Co-commissioning, therefore, is where the public sector (or local government) and citizens (consumers, whānau and communities) work together – using each other's knowledge and expertise – throughout the commissioning process to ensure that multiple perspectives are reflected in the design, delivery and evaluation of services. In particular, those who use or need the services in question can be involved. For example, citizens can be involved in:

- explaining and determining local needs, aspirations and assets
- deciding what is needed to make sure people have better lives
- prioritising which services should be provided for which people, using public resources and the resources of communities
- developing a commissioning plan
- designing a service
- deciding which providers are chosen to provide services (procurement)
- managing provider relationships
- monitoring and evaluating service provision and recommending improvements.

At a basic level, co-commissioning may look like having community representatives sitting on commissioning bodies (for example, young people on a commissioning body for a young people's service, or patients/patient advocates on a commissioning body for a health service).

Why use this tool

When service users and communities are involved in the commissioning process, it can often mean:

- greater user satisfaction with services that are based on people's needs and increased wellbeing
- more innovative ideas for redesigning public services
- greater resources – particularly from communities contributing existing community assets or mobilising new resources
- greater savings, as a result of de-commissioning or redesigning services that citizens see as either failing or needing to be improved
- a reduced risk of unnecessary duplication.

How to use this tool

There are generally five steps to an effective commissioning process: assessing needs; designing the solution; identifying and selecting the most appropriate way to deliver, structure and fund the service; implementation; and evaluation and monitoring. For co-commissioning, community partners in the commissioning process should be involved at each of these steps.

The following steps are focussed on how to undertake co-commissioning (rather than the steps of the commissioning process, outlined above).

STEP

01 | Identify the people and communities who will use and benefit from the service being considered for commissioning. Councils can then approach those communities to be involved in a co-commissioning process.

02 | Consider what support those people and communities may need to be involved in a co-commissioning process.

03 | Agree what level of involvement those people and communities will have at each step of the commissioning process and what that will look like.

04 | Seek feedback along the way to see if the co-commissioning process is inclusive and beneficial to the people and communities involved.

Case studies

Waltham Forest Council, United Kingdom

Prior to 2014, day care services for older people in Waltham Forest had largely been commissioned by the council on behalf of all service users. A limited range of services were offered, and were generally building-based and did not facilitate increased independence or choice. The area faced increasing demand, a requirement for significant budgetary savings, and political desire for more personalised older people's day care.

The council undertook a three-month consultation with service users, carers, providers and staff to design a new model for day services. This included a range of 'change events' and reviews with 100 service users to understand what was working and not working with the existing care model. From these inputs, the council established the themes and principles that underpinned a new model for older people's care provision. The new model involved each person assessed as in critical or substantial need being assigned a personalised budget (in the form of a direct payment) – this result being that purchasing power was transferred to service users, who could then participate in activities that suited their personal needs.

To support the local service providers (who had been used to receiving block funding from the council) to transition to this new model, the council provided transformation funding to help providers change their business models and service offers. They also encouraged providers to plan for greater collaboration with each other, such as through sharing premises or back-office functions.

From 2014, the commissioning relationship became a direct one between service user and providers, with quality assurance provided by the council. The change in commissioning model also generated significant savings in its first year.

SEE MORE HERE

Sutton Council, United Kingdom

In 2011, Sutton Council embedded a council-wide approach to commissioning for outcomes and to measuring social impact. It created three commissioning directorates, a commissioning framework based on an eight-step model, and a comprehensive training programme provided to 120 council officers and 30 voluntary sector colleagues – and permission to think differently about commissioning. Part of the commissioning model is engaging with residents and service users at the early stages of any commissioning process. The Council also established The Young Commissioners, a diverse group of young people who actively participate in the commissioning of services for young people. They have been involved in running user and stakeholder focus groups, procuring providers and helping to draft service specifications.

The changes to their commissioning approach allowed Sutton Council to offer increasingly bespoke services children and young people most in need that build on the assets already in the community, facilitate a local trust taking over two theatres that may otherwise have been closed, and to support local organisations to compete with larger bodies on a more even footing.

SEE MORE HERE

Western Bay of Plenty PHO – Improving access to diabetes care for Māori and Pacific people

Two general practices in the Western Bay of Plenty - The Doctors Bayfair and The Doctors Papamoa – undertook a project in 2021 to understand the experiences of Māori and Pacific people living with diabetes who are enrolled at their practices. The aim of the project was to co-design solutions that better met these patients' needs and improved their access to services such as annual diabetes reviews and new medications (noting that access was lower than other population groups).

A co-design team included staff members from the clinical, management and reception teams of the clinics together with Māori and Pacific consumer members and two community members, enabling a wide range of perspectives to be shared and incorporated. The co-design team held face-to-face interviews and two focus group hui to identify patients' positive and less-positive experiences and hear suggestions for improvement, and then identify key themes and findings.

From the findings, the co-design team recommended a number of changes the practices could make to improve their diabetes service for Māori and Pacific people, including maximising the use of Māori reception team members to make initial contact with patients, encouraging the attendance of whānau or a support person at appointments, and reviewing options to improve continuity when accessing healthcare. The first of these changes has seen a positive increase in attendance for diabetes annual reviews, especially for Māori.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

To expand on this tool, the next step to consider, where appropriate, is fully devolving commissioning for certain services to relevant community groups or panels.

Check out the following links for further information:

Governance International offers a wealth of information on co-commissioning and co-design processes: HERE

Think Local, Act Personal in the United Kingdom offer resources and information on co-production in commissioning: HERE

New Zealand's Social Investment Agency's approach to collaborative commissioning: HERE

The Final Report and Government's response to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into effective social services includes discussion and recommendations on procurement and commissioning: HERE

TOOL 17:
Anchor institutions and collaborative anchor institutions

Key:

EASY - ADVANCED
ADVANCED

ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATION OF ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS IN A LOCALITY IS A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT, THAT WILL LIKELY COME WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF RESOURCING AND POTENTIAL INVESTMENTS.

TYPE DEVOLUTION
DECISION-MAKING, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION

About this tool

Anchor institutions

Anchor institutions are large organisations that have an important presence in a particular area or region, and have close ties to that area or region – either through their mission, history, physical location, local relationships, or economic influence. They are vital to their communities because they are often:

- the largest local employers and/or purchasers of local goods and service
- owners and/or managers of important local infrastructure and assets, including land and buildings
- local investors or procurers
- significant contributors to local development, revitalisation and economic growth
- supporters of local social, sporting, cultural, and environmental activities.

Common examples of anchor institutions are local governments, hospitals, wānanga and higher education institutions. Other smaller examples include marae, museums, libraries, schools and foundations.

Anchor institutions are a form of community wealth building. To be an anchor institution, councils, companies or entities must demonstrate a long-term commitment to the area or region, by using their economic influence to revitalise and strengthen their local communities and by having a mission or purpose that commits to generating place-based impacts and outcomes.

Collaborative anchor institutions (also known as 'alliance models)

In an increasing number of locations around the world, anchor institutions have joined together to form anchor collaboratives (or alliance models), to develop, implement, and support shared goals and initiatives that strengthen local and regional economies and communities. They do this by aligning and leveraging business practices, including local hiring and purchasing, place-based investing, and other community wealth building practices, all which help to create jobs, increase incomes, and grow local businesses.

Councils have a key role to play in connecting, activating and enabling other anchor institutions in the area to work together – by strategically leveraging their combined purchasing power, assets and employment – towards collective outcomes.

Why use this tool

It is beneficial for local governments to take on the leadership role of being an anchor institution – and encourage other local entities to do the same – because it demonstrates a commitment to strategically use its place-based, long-term economic power, resources and relationships with other local institutions to benefit the wellbeing of its community. Becoming an anchor institution is a critical element underpinning a localist approach, and involves using many of the tools and approaches outlined in this guide.

It is even more beneficial if multiple local institutions partner together as anchor institutions, with a unified mission. Anchor collaboratives strengthen and grow local and regional economies and improve the lives and opportunities of local communities. By working together, anchor institutions can amplify their impact on their local area or region, by harnessing the efforts of multiple anchor institutions to achieve a mission or goal.

By working in collaborative anchor institutions/alliance models, anchor institutions have the capacity to create positive outcomes in a number of areas, including:

- active collaboration with the community (for example, co-designing and co-monitoring anchor institution missions with local community members)
- growing and strengthening procurement and supply chains (for example, establishing 'buy local' targets and commitments)
- having greater place-based impact investment by pooling investment with other anchor institutions and/or philanthropic, corporate, and government investors (for example, joint investments in local projects designed to create significant local impact)
- increasing local recruitment and creating stable workforce development (for example, working with education and training institutions to develop the capability of local under-employed cohorts and fill local skills shortages)
- improving local infrastructure
- growing local affordable housing.

How to use this tool

This tool requires local governments – as a key anchor institution – to act as the convener or 'backbone organisation' to establish 'anchor collaboratives' or 'alliance models' with other anchor institutions in their area or region, or to participate as a key contributor in an anchor collaborative. A multi-anchor initiative requires continuous coordination among entities that may have little in common beyond their physical proximity.

STEP

01 | Map local or regional anchor institutions and identify what practices they already have that reflect community wealth building.

02 | Approach the identified anchor institutions to gauge their interest in collaborating on a joint mission to improve local outcomes.

03 | Facilitate a process to bring all institutions together, focusing on building relationships with the leadership of each anchor institution, sharing information, and identifying initial projects that provide a proof of concept that there is value in collaborating.

04 | Determine and agree membership and the backbone organisation, financial contributions, the chair or convener, operational structures, decision-making processes and governance arrangements.

05 | Agree a joint mission and goals for the anchor collaborative/alliance model – taking time to build trust and shared intent, share and develop useful data to inform goals and objectives, and develop relationships with key external partners.

06 | Develop an action plan and begin work on specific initiatives that will advance the anchor collaborative's missions and goals. Some of the ways that anchor institutions and anchor collaboratives can leverage their economic assets for the benefit of the local or regional area include:

- directing a greater percentage of their purchasing power towards local businesses (using local and social procurement strategies, as outlined in Tool 17)
- training and hiring more of their workforce locally
- implementing fair pay and employment conditions
- supporting the development and growth of new businesses
- place-based impact investing
- using land to address local housing needs in environmentally responsible ways.

Case studies

Greater University Circle initiative in Cleveland, Ohio

Since 2005, a group of anchor institutions in the university district of Cleveland, Ohio, have been working together to address effects of the city's economic downturn, with the aim of rebuilding disinvested neighbourhoods and improving the economic opportunities of the people who live there.

The initiative was established by The Cleveland Foundation, and its economic inclusion strategy focuses on attracting more people to *live locally* and leveraging the purchasing power of the anchor institutions to *buy locally* and *hire locally*. It has had a number of successes, including:

- establishing the Evergreen Cooperative Initiative, which supports the creation of worker-owned, green, for-profit businesses providing goods and services to the area's anchor institutions
- a local procurement programme to funnel more of the district's $3 billion of purchasing power to local businesses
- establishing a new workforce training centre for adults, with after-school programmes for children; completion of new commercial and residential developments and transportation plans
- funding for several neighbourhood-driven community development projects.

Critical to its success has been the collaborative and transparent approach taken by the leadership group of the anchor institutions and a focus on building and supporting comprehensive community engagement and networking.

SEE MORE HERE

Auckland Council and The Southern Initiative

The Southern Initiative (TSI) is a place-based innovation hub, established by Auckland Council, focused on local and system-level transformation to improve current and generational wellbeing. Together, Auckland Council and TSI have been adopting anchor-like practices in the way they address priorities for south and west Auckland, including:

- strengthening opportunities for procurement from Māori and Pasifika owned and operated businesses, or businesses that are committed to employing south and west Aucklanders
- undertaking urban redevelopment initiatives that generate good local outcomes (eg, Te Haa o Manukau co-working and maker space)
- providing healthy food and beverages at Council-operated childcare and community facilities
- making services such as libraries more welcoming and accessible to families experiencing cumulative and toxic levels of stress.

These practices leverage Council's assets, procurement activities, resources, and services to grow local wellbeing. To grow these practices further, Auckland Council and TSI continue to explore collaborations and connections with central government, industry, universities, social enterprises, philanthropists, and service delivery organisations.

SEE MORE HERE

Office of Community Wealth Building, City of Rochester, New York

The Office of Community Wealth Building in the City of Rochester, New York, is an example of a local government acting as a convener and backbone organisation for an anchor institution collaborative.

The Mayor of the City of Rochester, New York, sought new models for equitable economic development to address the city's growing poverty and inequality, caused by rapid deindustrialization. Fifty percent of Rochester's children were living below the poverty line.

In 2018, the Mayor created the Rochester Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB). Its mission is to "facilitate cross-sector collaboration between government, non-profits, the private sector, anchor institutions, and the community, with the goal of advancing Community Wealth Building policies, programs, systems, and initiatives in the Rochester community."

The OCWB serves the needs of residents and small businesses through:

- assisting residents with attaining pay equity and building personal wealth
- building and maintaining an entrepreneurial and small business eco-system
- supporting small businesses across all stages of the development life-cycle.

SEE MORE HERE

Collaborative anchor institutions in Preston, Lancashire, United Kingdom

Preston City Council launched an economic development model that incorporated public energy, public pension funds, financial institutions, and anchor institutions. Anchor institutions and local government worked together to leverage their procurement power to support and grow locally owned businesses and cooperatives.

To begin, Preston City Council engaged with anchor institutions based in Preston to build momentum – meeting with leaders and chief executives. Key to these conversations was getting agreement from these anchor institutions to share data about their procurement spend. Next, a baseline understanding of the supply chains of the six anchor institutions that shared their data was established, and the findings collated into an overarching picture.

The aim of the collaboration (carried out through a series of workshops) was to maximise spending. Together, the anchor institutions determined that there was scope to enhance the local spend levels in both the Preston and Lancashire economies and to support local businesses to deliver more goods and services to the anchor institutions.

The six anchor institutions agreed a vision ("a long-term collaborative commitment to community wealth building in Lancashire for influenceable spend") and six objectives that related to: simplifying procurement processes, reducing levels of spend outside of the region, encouraging local businesses to bid for opportunities, developing the capacity of local businesses to bid, raising awareness of procurement opportunities, and identifying opportunities for cooperative models of delivery.

Since that point, the six anchor institutions started working on meeting those objectives (through activities such as revising their individual and collective commissioning and procurement strategies) and maximising their spend in the Preston and Lancashire economies.

SEE MORE HERE

FURTHER RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Check out the following links for further information:

Information from New Zealand's Local Government Think Tank on anchor institutions: HERE HERE

An introduction to anchor collaboratives by Democracy Collaborative: HERE

For a resource library on community wealth building and anchor institutions by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies including a history of community wealth building: HERE HERE

An academic analysis on anchor institutions and their role in metropolitan change, by the Penn Institute for Urban Research: HERE

Information on anchor institutions by the LGIU (Local Government Information Unit): HERE

Information from the American Anchor Collaborative Network (ACN) – a national collaboration of 70+ leading healthcare systems building more inclusive and sustainable local economies: HERE

An article on anchor institutions and collaboratives by researchers at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia: HERE

An article from the New Zealand Institute of Directors on co-operatives in New Zealand: HERE