

DRAFT

POSITIVE AGEING POLICY

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

February 2012

Introduction

This *Positive Ageing Policy* is to provide a framework for the Council to consider and plan for the impacts of an ageing population across all of its activities. This will help ensure that the city accommodates the needs of its citizens as they age, and that the valuable contributions of older persons are recognised.

There are several factors that provide the rationale for Council having an ageing policy. It is to help consider and plan for the boomer generation entering retirement age, ensuring that the city embraces diversity within the older persons' population, and to provide additional support where this is required. Also to ensure services, amenities and opportunities reflect the interests and needs of this age group

Positive Ageing is a reflection of the Council's desire for older people to remain engaged with the wider community and contribute to its vitality. At the same time, the Council recognises the need to support older persons in the community as their needs change over time.

The scope of this policy is broad in that it considers what roles the Council can play in:

- Preparing its people as they progress through life stages
- Positioning Wellington as a desirable choice for older persons
- Promoting the city as a safe, attractive, inclusive and vital place for older people to live
- Ensuring that neighbourhoods are supportive and caring; and resilient in times of need
- Ensuring that people have the necessary access to health, housing and social services as required
- Ensuring that people remain engaged and valued members of the city as they age, and in retirement

Background

The ageing population in New Zealand will result in significant social, economic and cultural changes for the city. The city's *Towards Wellington 2040: Smart Capital* provides a vision for the future that recognises the impacts for the city from the ageing phenomena.

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In partnership with the Government and the community, Council will play a critical role in meeting the future needs of older people. Research into the impacts of an ageing population indicates that older persons will tend to be:

- More active and engaged thus placing greater demands on infrastructure and facilities; and providing opportunities for support of community activities
- More likely to remain in employment beyond retirement age
- Place an increased demand on social and health services and expenditure over time.
- More likely to leave the city around retirement age however this trend may change as they become more economically active than previous generations
- More ethnically, socially and economically diverse which means they cannot be treated as an homogeneous group
- Increasingly isolated due to cultural, affordability, health policy, family support and language factors
- More likely to be “ageing in place” and caring for grandchildren which has implications for home support services, and solo women in particular as they outlive their male partners.

Such trends pose opportunities and challenges for the city as it plans for the future. We will need to adapt to new lifestyle demands. The Council’s policy also recognises the need for a partnership approach and is therefore aligned with government priorities in the *Positive Ageing Strategy*.

Opportunities include retaining Wellingtonians in the city as they age. This will help ensure that the city has access to the skills, knowledge and finance it will require for economic growth and vitality.

Challenges include changing attitudes towards retirement so that citizens prepare for a lifestyle change, however remain active and engaged in the community and the workplace.

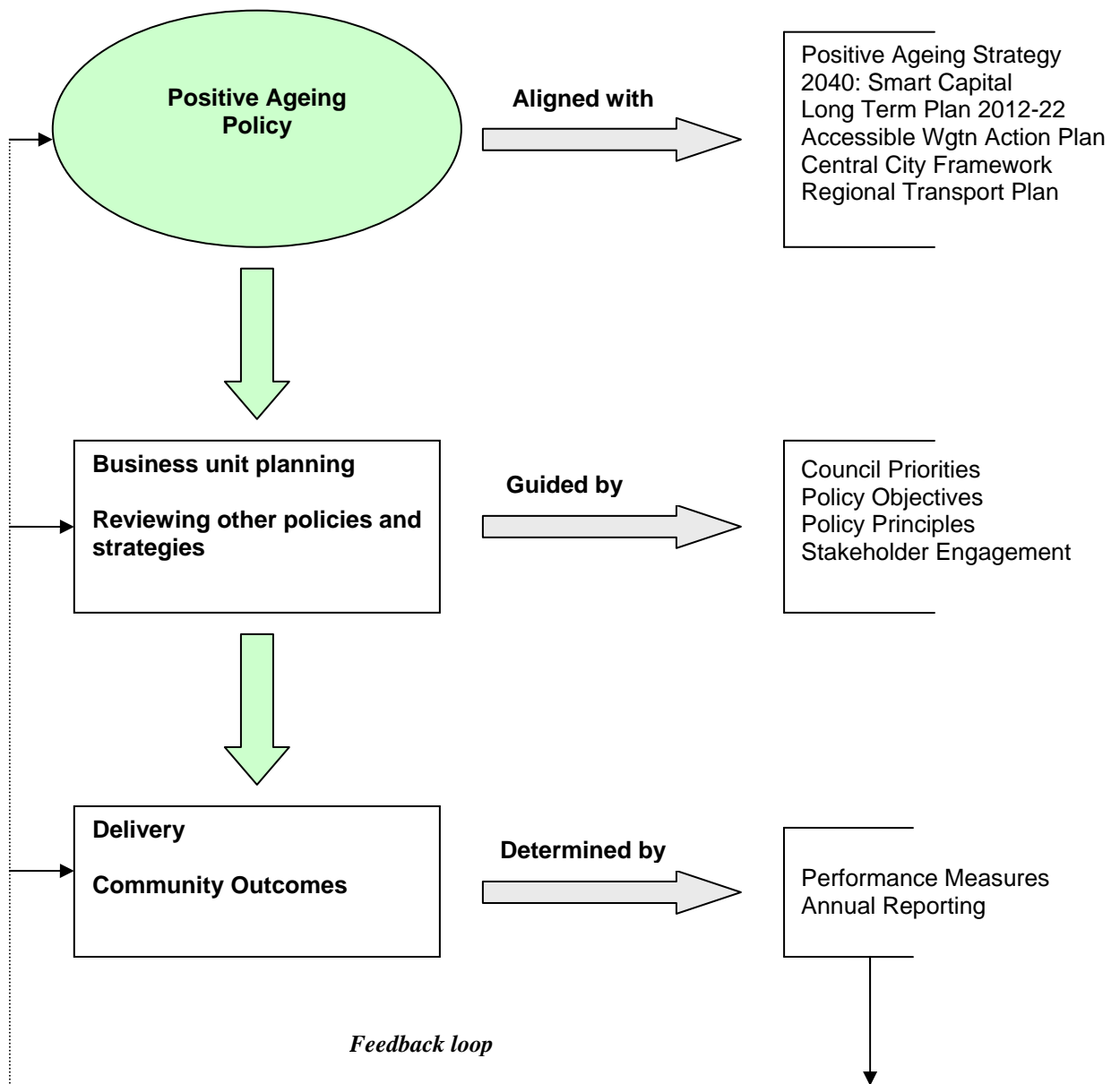
Policy Approach

The policy approach promotes an enduring response to the impacts of ageing and priority needs as they arise. It consists of the following elements:

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1. Alignment with the intent of the national *Positive Ageing Strategy* and Council's strategic documents and plans
2. Principles to help guide Council's decision-making and planned activities
3. Objectives with Council roles and responsibilities assigned to the seven strategic work areas in the Long Term Plan
4. Measurement and monitoring of progress

Diagram 1: Alignment with key documents through to objectives and action areas



Alignment

The Positive Ageing Strategy Goals

Government has responded to the growing proportion of older people by developing a *Positive Ageing Strategy (2001)*. This affirms and supports the contributions of older people in society. It sets down ten goals, each with a set of actions that aim to improve opportunities for older people to participate in the community. This Council policy adopts these goals (except for that specifically concerned with rural issues) which are incorporated in the policy objectives and Council roles below.

Towards Wellington 2040: Smart Capital

In 2011, the Council adopted a vision for Wellington in the future. This project considered the major drivers for change of which the ageing population was an important factor. Subsequent strategies, urban design frameworks and actions plans will recognise, and plan for, the needs of an ageing population.

Long Term Plan (LTP) 2009 -19 Outcomes

Councils are required to develop and review LTPs. These explain what the Council plans to achieve over a ten year period, why it plans to do it, the associated costs and how it will be funded. Activity areas reflect the community outcomes desired by Wellingtonians, including those that impact on the ageing population.

Accessible Wellington Action Plan

This plan outlines a set of actions designed to improve Wellington's reputation as an inclusive and socially responsible city - one that is accessible, safe and easy to get around. It has a focus on making the city and its amenities more accessible for those with physical limitations of any nature.

Other policies, strategies and plans will be regularly reviewed. This provides the opportunity to refresh our thinking and consider what Council responses might be included to achieve the policy objectives.

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Principles

The intent of the national *Positive Ageing Strategy* is supported. The Council further commits to some broad principles to help guide its decision-making processes and service provision, specifically:

- Actively engaging older persons in more economic, social, and political ways
- tangata whenua and our multi cultural diversity will be recognised and valued, and reflected in our city's culture
- considering the impacts of an ageing population in its strategic decision-making, planning and consultation activities :- now and for the future
- working collegially, internally and with affected parties, to help inform decision-making and setting targets
- having a shared responsibility with government and the community in promoting the interests of older people
- focussing on older persons' services, programmes and activities where it has greatest leverage and responsibility
- offering support to those who most need it
- providing opportunity to those who want it

Objectives and Council Roles

A future position for the city is one where it is more appealing for older persons to remain, people are stimulated by the variety of social interactions provided, and neighbourhoods embrace diversity.

Because the policy provides a framework for future planning and provision of services to help meet a more desirable state, the four strategic areas of *Towards Wellington 2040:Smart Capital* are adapted to reflect the focus on positive ageing objectives.

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The roles that Council can play are attributed to one of the seven work areas in the Long Term Plan. Such roles are a mix of service provision, facilitation, advocacy to government agencies and communications. The four strategic areas are:

1. People Centred City – an open and welcoming city, with healthy and safe suburban communities

Role for Council:

- Consulting with older persons' representatives and groups as part of its engagement framework (*Governance*)
- Providing an accountability framework, including a feedback loop, for older persons' outcomes (*Governance*)
- Promoting the needs of an ageing population in its strategic, annual and long-term planning processes (*Governance*)
- Remaining updated on ageing population research and international best practice service delivery (*Governance*)
- Providing and promoting access to information required by older persons, and in a form that recognises language and disability barriers (*Governance*)
- Promoting the retention of older persons living in the city (*Economic Development*)
- Promoting participation of older persons in recreation, employment, community services, volunteering, life long learning and technology usage (*Social and Economic*)
- Promoting and recognising the diversity of the local population and the contributions made by older persons (*Cultural Wellbeing*)
- Promoting community resilience through neighbourhood programmes and support networks
- Facilitating community collaboration and mobilisation of resources available for older persons needs (*Social and Recreational*)
- Including older persons as a target group in the provision of social housing, recreational programmes and information services (*Social and Recreational*)
- Promoting healthy living for an ageing population (*Social and Recreational*)
- Promoting a responsive social sector for the city, social cohesiveness and a strong volunteer sector (*Social and Recreation*)
- Providing opportunities for active and passive recreation that are diverse, safe, affordable, accessible and attractive (*Social and Recreational*)

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2. Connected City - there is effective and efficient infrastructure

Role for Council:

- Planning and providing for the parking and public transport needs of older persons (*Transport*)
- Promoting a public transport system that is accessible and affordable for all (*Transport*)
- Planning for the city to be pedestrian and cycle friendly (*Urban Design*)
- Promoting ready access to a digital environment (*Economic, Social and Recreational*)

3. Eco-City – the urban environment reflects our needs and values

Role for Council:

- Providing accessibility options in open and public spaces (*Urban Development*)
- Promoting the availability and application of sustainable energy and building performance options that reduce household costs (*Environment*)
- Involving volunteers and older person's organisations in environmental projects of benefit to the city (*Environment*)

4. Dynamic Central City – the central city accommodates the changing demands of an ageing population

Role for Council:

- Planning for the city and its amenities to be accessible for all (*Urban Design*)
- Promoting the retention of ageing skilled workers and flexible work arrangements (*Economic*)

Council responses and priority actions will also need to be informed by needs analysis, monitoring of trends and some criteria at a service delivery level. Such criteria would include maximum social and economic impact; resource efficiency; greatly improving accessibility to services; and the outcomes being measurable.

Measurement and Monitoring

A three tier measurement and monitoring regime is promoted. Firstly, a subjective self-assessment exercise using the World Health Organisation's (WHO) *Age Friendly* checklist. Secondly, the Council's *Annual Report* can include information collected from the

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annual ratepayer survey by older persons' cohort, and specific Council measures on services provided.

The third component is research and evaluation at census periods to determine trends and give a picture performance against the policy objectives.

At a city-wide level, the WHO Age Friendly Checklist (http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf) provides a useful self-assessment tool for Council, business units and advocacy groups to regularly test how the city measures up in responding to the needs of ageing citizens. This checklist covers activities in which the Council has influence to a greater or lesser degree. These include transportation, outdoor spaces, housing, social participation, communications and information, respect and social inclusion, social participation, and civic participation and employment.

Whilst largely subjective in nature, assessing the list of desirable attributes for an age friendly city provides a useful exercise to monitor trends and identify areas for future focus. Such an exercise could be undertaken jointly by Council and an external reference group.

Other city trends for older persons can be analysed following census years to determine factors such as accommodation types, the retention of older people in the city, income levels and employment levels.

From a Council delivery perspective, existing measurement and monitoring processes can be used or adapted. The annual ratepayer survey information used to inform Council's annual report can, in some cases, be analysed by age groupings. This would give a measure in each of the seven work areas of how older persons rated Council performance, their use of facilities and perception of things such as safety in the city.

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Other specific measures related to Council activities that can be included in Annual Plans are:

- Council Housing – waiting times and percentage of elderly tenants
- Transport – number of disability parks and the public provision of mobility equipment
- Recreation – number leisure card holders (+65)