

Our role and approach

Role

Under the Local Government Act, we have two key roles.

- 1. To promote the well-being of Wellington and its people.*
- 2. To facilitate democratic local decision-making.*

The Wellington City Council is made up of 15 elected representatives – the mayor and 14 councillors.

It's their job to make bylaws, set the city's overall strategic direction, and approve budgets, policies and plans aimed at achieving that direction. A key part of their role is to listen and take the pulse of the community before making decisions.

The mayor and councillors are supported in their work by the Tawa and Makara/Ohariu Community Boards.

The elected representatives are supported by the Council's chief executive and 1,450+ staff, who provide advice, implement Council decisions, and look after the city's day-to-day operations.

Strategic framework

We aim to manage the city in line with community aspirations.

After public consultation during 2005 and 2006, we set 13 long-term goals (or "outcomes") for Wellington – that the city will become more liveable, develop a stronger sense of place, and become more compact, eventful, inclusive, actively engaged, sustainable, safer, healthier, better connected, prosperous, competitive, entrepreneurial and innovative.

The projects we fund aim to fulfil these community expectations.

Our vision is for Wellington to be a vibrant, internationally competitive, and affordable city.

This vision builds on Wellington's strengths – as a genuinely world class small city, a great place to live, work and play – while also recognising the need to focus effort and resources in areas where the city has a genuine 'edge'. Things like its cultural capital status, compact nature, natural environment and creative industries.

We seek to do this by getting our priorities right, and being involved in an appropriate and cost effective way.

The responsibility for local authorities to look after 'well-being' was introduced by the Local Government Act 2002. 'Well-being' is a very broad concept. It means that Councils are responsible not only for core infrastructure such as water supply and transport networks (though core services remain very much the focus of our work) but also for helping the community achieve its aspirations for – among others – prosperity, social cohesion, inclusiveness, and safety.

It is left to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine whether well-being is served by Council action, and if so what type of action the Council should take.

The range of options open to us includes:

- advocacy – using local knowledge/expertise to encourage others to act or fund services that contribute to well-being
- facilitation – bringing others together or providing guidance so others can act

- regulation – requiring others to act in particular ways, either to comply with legislative requirement or bylaws
- funding – either directly or through partnerships that leverage external funding, or
- providing a service – directly owning assets and providing services such as pools, libraries, roads, and water pipes.

Well-being may be best served by the Council directly providing a service – such as water supply or waste management. Or it may be best served through the Council taking a facilitation role, aimed at achieving benefits for the community without imposing significant costs on ratepayers.

Whether we take action at all, and what type of action we take, depends on a range of factors including:

- legislative requirement
- contractual obligation
- community expectation
- costs and benefits, and risks, and
- impact on others (for example, if we provide a service will someone else withdraw).

In addition, for this draft long-term plan, we have been guided by a set of principles which reflect the environment we are currently operating in (see next page).

Accountability

This draft plan is part of an ongoing planning process.

The Local Government Act requires us to plan in three-year cycles. Every three years, we publish a long-term plan setting out our intentions for the decade ahead – what we'll do, how we'll do it, how much we'll spend, who will pay, the levels of service we'll provide, and how we'll measure the quality and effectiveness of our work. Our last long-term plan was adopted in 2006.

In-between these long-term plans, we take a fresh look each year at our work programme, consider whether any changes are needed, and publish an annual plan setting out changes to the long-term plan.

We make ourselves accountable by reporting on how we do for the year.

Every September, we publish an annual report. This sets out how we performed against the long-term plan or annual plan for the year. Did we do all we said we'd do? Did we meet our budgets? Did we perform as expected? Did we contribute to improvements in the overall well-being of Wellington and its residents?

The report is made available on our website and through libraries and service centres, and a summary is sent to all Wellington households.

Our work is delivered through seven, interconnected strategies.

These strategies cover governance, the environment, economic development, cultural well-being, social and recreation services, urban development, and transport.

These strategies are interconnected; together they contribute to social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being. For example, economic development, social cohesion and cultural well-being are possible only when 'core' Council infrastructure and services deliver a safe and sustainable physical environment.

