

GOVERNANCE

OUR ROLE

It's our job to guide Wellington's development in line with the wishes and aspirations of its people.

The Council is made up of 14 elected councillors and a mayor.

Under the Local Government Act 2002, our statutory roles are:

- to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, the people of Wellington
- to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the people of Wellington, in the present and for the future.

'Promoting community wellbeing' means many things.

It means, for example, providing water supply and drainage, ensuring you can easily travel across the city, and promoting economic development so Wellingtonians have access to fulfilling jobs.

It also means providing venues for sports and recreation, providing homes for people whose housing needs aren't met by the private sector, overseeing building and development, and much more.

We play different roles depending on what's appropriate in the circumstances.

While we provide many services for the city, we also work with others to achieve common aspirations.

Sometimes our role is to advocate on behalf of the city, or provide the coordination or facilitation needed to get something done. In other cases, we provide funding so other organisations that are better placed to deliver a service can do so.

Under various laws, we're also responsible for controlling and regulating activities such as building, land use, noise, food preparation and liquor sales. These roles protect public health and safety, and promote sustainable use of resources.

Democratic decision-making means the elected Council represents the people of Wellington.

In a community of over 180,000 people, decisions can't be made by consensus. The Council is elected to represent Wellingtonians – to make decisions and act on your behalf.

Councillors set the city's overall direction, determine priorities, decide on policies, and make decisions about rates, spending and the types and levels of service the Council should provide.

They also monitor the performance of Council projects and programmes, make bylaws, and act as advocates for the city.

The Council is a representative democracy. It is elected to make decisions on behalf of the people of Wellington.



SETTING PRIORITIES

In making decisions, we often have to weigh up competing views and interests.

There's rarely community-wide agreement on any issue. In setting out to enable democratic decision-making and promote community wellbeing, the Council often has to balance the views and needs of one part of the community against another.

For example, when we consider applications for building and resource consents, we're balancing the applicant's wishes against the needs of the wider community.

We also have to weigh up how best to use limited resources. This means we'll only spend ratepayers' money if we think the benefits to the city will clearly outweigh the costs.

We also have to balance short-term and long-term interests.

Decisions made today can have implications further down the track. Often, the Council will have to decide whether to take action now in order to provide future benefits or prevent future harm.

For example, in recent years the Council has made decisions to support several important city ventures (the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is a good example). These decisions impose costs on ratepayers now, but will provide benefits long into the future.

To give another example, we frequently have to consider the short-term cost to ratepayers of repairing or replacing an asset alongside the potentially greater future costs if that asset fails. Often, this will result in a decision to spread the costs of replacing an asset over its expected life.

We know we can't keep everyone happy all the time...

Whatever we do, some people will like it better than others – that's the nature of our role.

We also recognise that we're carrying out our work in a changing social environment. Throughout the world, there is evidence of declining trust and engagement with public organisations.

There are several possible reasons for this declining trust, including heightened media scrutiny and higher expectations of public services. Lower engagement may be caused by people having busier lives, and by global media and entertainment dampening interest in local issues.

...but we can make sure our decision-making processes are worthy of public confidence.

Before we make any decision, we examine it from every angle. Uppermost in our minds is the wellbeing of Wellington's people, and their collective needs and aspirations. We also have to consider legal requirements and contractual obligations.

In addition, before we commit to spending ratepayers' money, we'll consider how the proposal fits in with our strategic direction and policies, and with our current work programme.

And we'll think about whether it's a prudent use of ratepayer funding. How much will it cost? How it can be funded? Will someone else do the work if we don't? Will the benefits be significantly less or the costs significantly greater if we wait? Are there any risks involved?

Altogether, we believe our decision-making processes are fair and robust.

Determining the public interest, reconciling competing demands, and deciding on areas of priority is the essence of governance.

Council controlled organisations

In order to achieve our objectives for Wellington, we have established several Council-controlled organisations – Wellington Zoo Trust, Positively Wellington Tourism, St James Theatre Charitable Trust, Wellington Museums Trust, Basis Reserve Trust, Wellington Cable Car Ltd, Positively Wellington Business, Capacity, and Wellington Waterfront Ltd.

These organisations were set up to independently manage council facilities, deliver significant services or oversee developments.

Their objectives are outlined in statements of corporate intent and their performance is monitored quarterly by the Council's Council Controlled Organisation Performance Subcommittee. Performance results for each organisation are outlined on page XXX to XXX. More detailed results for each organisation are contained in their own annual reports.

LISTENING TO COMMUNITY VIEWS

To help us make sound decisions, we seek input and advice from throughout the community.

We can only make sound decisions if we have a good understanding of the needs and wishes of the people affected by those decisions. We seek out input from anyone interested or affected – whether that's an individual, a group, a neighbourhood or the entire city.

Opportunities for input range from making a submission or attending a meeting to phoning our Call Centre to having an informal chat with a councillor or staff member. We also seek public input through resident surveys and focus groups.

The type of consultation depends on the decision being made.

All Wellingtonians can have input on our overall direction, our budgets and priorities for each year, decisions about bylaws, and any other significant decisions affecting the city and its people.

On decisions that affect specific locations or groups of people, all stakeholders can have a say. There are different stages at which different groups of stakeholders are involved, and this will depend on the level they are affected or interested by any potential decision.

For example, for our upgrades of suburban centres, we'll consult city-wide as part of our annual plan about the budgets and timing of each upgrade.

Then, we'll consult local communities about options and designs, and we'll talk with neighbours and local businesses about direct affects on them of both the work and the benefits of the upgrade.

Decisions on consultation are determined by: the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002; our consultation policy; the significance and nature of the decision to be made; the level of public interest in the matter; the potential impact on affected and interested parties; the urgency of the matter; and the extent to which the views of the community are already known to the Council.

Forums and advisory groups help specific sectors of the community to have their say and guide us in our work.

Our advisory groups consist of members of the community with specialist knowledge in a specific area of council responsibility.

Their role is to help their communities to: understand Council processes; participate in the Council's decision-making processes; and to help the Council understand the needs of their particular communities and how they may be resolved.



The advisory groups are: the Pacific Advisory Group; Disability Reference Group; Road Safety Reference Group; Environmental Reference Group; and the Youth Council.

We also hold a number of forums each year: a hui, Pacific Island forums, ethnic forums and a sports forum. These forums, which are always well attended, allow elected members and staff to hear directly from specific sectors of the community.

Community boards help us understand the needs of local areas.

Our two community boards – Tawa and Makara/Ohariu – consist of elected community representatives, and in the case of Tawa, two councillors who are appointed.

The boards reflect the unique history and requirements of their areas and help the Council to understand and meet the community's needs. The boards' advise the Council and have some limited decision-making functions.

Treaty partnerships ensure tangata whenua have a voice.

The Council's treaty partners provide advice on matters relating to Maori.

They are non-voting members of the Strategy and Policy Committee where they can contribute to the discussion on any item they have an interest in. See section 9.1 for more about these partnerships.

We act on the feedback we receive – we don't just file it away.

When we consult on an issue, we consider each submission carefully – the arguments in the submissions influence our views.

After submissions were received on our 2006–16 long-term plan, we made changes to our proposals. For example, we chose to proceed with building a 12 court indoor community sports centre rather than the proposed 8 court facility, and we decided not to reduce the length of the seasons at our summer pools as we had earlier proposed.

Everyone who submitted on the plan received an individual letter, outlining the decisions made in relation to the issues they'd raised.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

The Council's structure ensures that every proposal gets thorough scrutiny.

Before a proposal gets to the Council, it will first have been thoroughly checked out by Council management and staff.

In their roles as advisers to the Council, they prepare reports explaining the costs, options, and implications of any proposal. They also seek community input as appropriate, and take account of all other relevant factors.

The preferred option will then be considered and agreed by a committee or subcommittee, who will also weigh-up the need for consultation.

If they agree to consult, a proposal will be published and made available for submissions. These will in turn be reviewed and heard by a committee or panel of councillors.

Final decisions are either made by the full Council or the Strategy and Policy Committee by simple majority.

Some committees consider the broad issues facing the city, while others cover specialist areas.

The Council has three committees and five subcommittees.

All councillors are members of the Strategy and Policy Committee, which meets weekly and considers most key decisions relating to the Council's direction and activities.

The other committees are: the Regulatory Processes Committee and the Performance Review Committee (to oversee the Chief Executive's performance).

There are subcommittees on Waterfront Development, Grants, Council Controlled Organisation Performance, Development Contributions, and Audit and Risk Management.

These committees and subcommittees all report directly to the Council and/or to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

Their main purposes are to discuss and set policy, and to monitor management activity to ensure the affairs of the Council and related organisations are being conducted in accordance with legislation and the Council's strategic objectives.

We know we can't get consensus on every issue. Public input helps us to understand the issues facing the city, so we can make the best possible decisions.

Electing the Council

Council elections are held every three years. Wellington city residents and non-resident ratepayers aged 18 and over are entitled to vote. Elections are run in line with legislation by an independent, statutorily-appointed Electoral Officer.

The current Council was elected on 9 October 2004 under the single transferable vote system (STV). The Council is made of 15 elected members – the mayor and 14 councillors.

The mayor is elected by voters from across the city. The councillors are elected from five geographical areas called wards. Community representatives to the Tawa and Makara/Ohariu community boards were also elected at this time.

The next election is scheduled for 13 October 2007.

The number of electors and councillors for each ward for the 2004 election is noted in the table below.

WARD	NUMBER OF ELECTORS	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS
Northern	27,813	3
Onslow-Western	26,535	3
Lambton	30,696	3
Eastern	24,104	3
Southern	17,650	2

The Council's committee structure ensures that all decisions take account of the wider issues facing the city.

All services are linked, and all have to be considered together. Urban development decisions, for example, affect the transport network and the environment. Our decision-making structure – with the Strategy and Policy Committee playing a lead role – ensures that all councillors are aware of the full range of issues facing the city.

The beginning of each meeting is set aside for public participation – a chance for people to have their say on matters before the meeting.

Some subcommittees have professional experts to help guide their work.

From time to time, the Council appoints external members to its subcommittees. These external members are often professional experts or people who represent particular sectors of the community. They bring a unique perspective to the meetings and help elected members with their decision-making.

Appointed members of Council subcommittees received remuneration reflecting their responsibilities.

COUNCILLORS' CONDUCT

Councillors have to meet standards of behaviour in relation to each other and the wider community.

The Council's Code of Conduct provides guidance on the standards of behaviour that are expected from elected members. It applies to their dealings with each other, the Council's Chief Executive and staff, the media, and the wider public.

The code describes the roles and responsibilities of elected members generally and those of the mayor and deputy mayor.

It also sets out the steps to be taken when the code is breached. The Code provides for the mayor to consider any allegation. The mayor may also refer an alleged breach to the Council. There were no censures by the Council during 2005/06.

Elected members may not vote or take part in Council discussions on issues where they might be influenced by financial or other personal interests.

Legislation sets out members' responsibilities in relation to financial conflicts of interest and the sanctions for failing to comply, which can include financial penalties and removal from office.

Because the penalties are severe, the Council has established the following practices:

- We maintain a conflict of interest register to help members monitor potential conflicts of interest.
- We prompt members at the beginning of every meeting to declare any conflicts in relation to the items on the agenda.
- We provide members with a conflict of interest guidebook.
- We hold workshops to keep members up to speed with requirements.



These steps guard against members directly or inadvertently abusing the advantages of their public office for personal gain.

When a conflict is declared, this is noted in the minutes of the meeting.

Elected members also have to declare any gifts they receive.

Elected members may not solicit or accept gifts, entertainment, rewards or benefits that might compromise their integrity.

The exchange of gifts during official international or inter-council visits is an accepted practice. These gifts are generally regarded as being to the office rather than the individual elected member. Any gifts that are received are entered in the elected members' gift register.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Our decision-making is open and transparent.

We comply with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 to make sure our work is transparent and open for public and media scrutiny.

All meeting agendas and reports are publicly available before meetings in any of our twelve libraries, at our service centre, and online at www.Wellington.govt.nz.

While the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act allows us to exclude the public from meetings on special grounds (i.e. commercial sensitivity) we seek to make use of these provisions as infrequently as possible.

Minutes of meetings are publicly available within 6 days.

We also ensure any decisions are communicated effectively to the community – through media releases, web alerts, the Our Wellington page in the *Dominion Post*, our *Absolutely Positively Wellington* newspaper, and our website – with explanations of what decision was made and why.

We provide information so that residents can hold us to account for our actions.

We make ourselves accountable in many ways. This annual report is one. It explains what we did during 2005/06, how our work contributed to the city, what it cost, and whether our performance met the expectations we set ourselves.

Its contents have been thoroughly scrutinised by Audit New Zealand to ensure they fairly reflect our financial performance and position, and the services we've provided.

We also produce quarterly reports which are available to members of the public and media.

We are also held to account in other ways – for example, through complaints to our Issues Resolution Office (see below) and by simply making ourselves available to answer questions from residents.

And, every three years, elected members are held to account during local elections.

Councillors may not use their official position for personal gain.



Community board members

TAWA COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Ngaira Best (Chair)	Phone 232 9000
Penny Devine	Mobile 021 148 1911
Tony Parker	Phone 298 9754
Malcolm Sparrow	Phone 232 5030
Graeme Sutton	Phone 232 7432
Robert Tredger	Phone 232 5982

MAKARA/OHARIU COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Ruth Paul (Chair)	Phone 476 7457
Bruce Gavin	Phone 478 3231
John Hume	Phone 478 7599
Craig Shepherd	Phone 477 3826
Justin Roberts	Phone 476 3690
Ted Smith	Phone 476 9297

Appointed members of subcommittees

APPOINTED MEMBERS	DECISION-MAKING BODY
John Milne	Audit and Risk Management Subcommittee
David Pilkington	Audit and Risk Management Subcommittee
James Ogden (Chair)	CCO Performance Subcommittee
Wayne Mills	CCO Performance Subcommittee
David Gordon (Chair)	Waterfront Development Subcommittee
Graeme McIndoe	Waterfront Development Subcommittee
Mark Te One	Waterfront Development Subcommittee
Judie O'Connell	Waterfront Development Subcommittee
Gordon Holden	Waterfront Development Subcommittee
Ken Davis	Waterfront Development Subcommittee

MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS



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John Morrison
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Alick Shaw (Deputy Mayor)
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Hayley Wain
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Jack Ruben
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MEETING ATTENDANCE

There were 81 formal Council, committee and subcommittee meetings in the 2005/06 financial year. The table below highlights for each elected councillor the total number of meetings held for which they are a member, and their actual attendance (as a percentage of time) at those meetings. (It also includes attendance figures for the Strategy and Policy Committee Pre-Meeting Session – a briefing held before this meeting on the reports on the agenda). Elected members provide apologies for meetings they cannot attend in their entirety, or in part, and these are recorded in the minutes. From time to time apologies are given because an elected member is attending another event at the request of the council.

All councillors are members of the Strategy and Policy Committee and up to three other decision-making bodies. In 2005/06 Council also established the Funding and Activity Review Working Party (with Councillors Shaw, Foster, Wade-Brown and Armstrong), which met eight times. The number of times a committee or subcommittee meets during a year varies and for elected members this means a small variance in the total number of meetings they can attend as a member. Committee meetings are only one of the duties of elected members. They are also appointed to Council Controlled Organisations, Community Boards, advisory groups and other external bodies. A number of these bodies meet on a monthly basis. In the course of their work they may also attend workshops, briefings and meetings within the community, and sit on District Plan or resource consent hearings.

Setting councillors' pay

The Remuneration Authority determines the 'remuneration pool' for each Council – that is, the total amount that each council can spend on salaries for its mayor, councillors and community board members. The size of the pool depends on the city's population, and council's operational spending, and gross assets.

The Council then determines how that pool is divided up among councillors based on their roles and responsibilities. The Remuneration Authority sets the salary for the mayor.

The authority's current determination came into effect on 1 July 2005 and will remain in force until a new determination is issued. For details of elected members' remuneration, see the notes to the financial statements on page XX.

ELECTED MEMBER	NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD OF WHICH THE ELECTED MEMBER IS A MEMBER	ACTUAL ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS (%)	NUMBER OF STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING SESSIONS	NUMBER ATTENDED
Ahipene-Mercer	56	80%	24	21
Armstrong	58	94%	24	20
Cook	59	83%	24	19
Foster	61	82%	24	20
Gill	58	87%	24	22
Goulden	56	62%	24	5
McKinnon	57	88%	24	20
Morrison	56	89%	24	23
Pepperell	56	76%	24	18
Ritchie ¹	55	24%	24	6
Ruben	56	94%	24	21
Shaw	61	80%	24	17
Wade-Brown	58	92%	24	23
Wain	55	91%	24	22

Note

Mayor Prendergast is an ex-officio member of all committees and sub-committees (that is, ten bodies, plus the Wellington Regional Strategy Forum). Although the conduct of her other Mayoral duties does restrict her ability to attend meetings of all these bodies, she attended 54 of the 81 meetings of which she is an

¹ Councillor Ritchie was granted leave of absence from the Council for the period 22 February – 22 June 2006.