

## Community Facilities Policy

### 1. Introduction

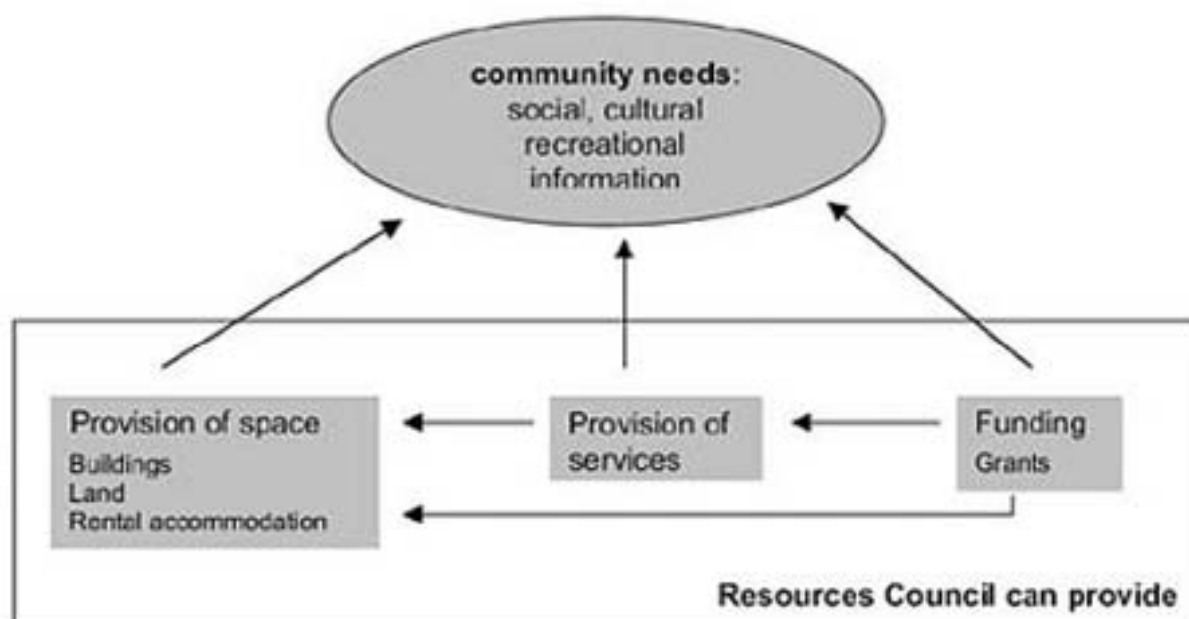
This Policy has been developed to assist the Council in making decisions about community facilities. These facilities are not just about buildings and space but are focal points for community activities. In this way they play a critical part in strengthening Wellington's communities.

The Policy sets out:

- why the Council supports community facilities;
- the Council's roles in providing community facilities; and
- how the Council can make decisions about the need for and location of community facilities.

#### 1.1 What Are Community Facilities?

Communities across Wellington have a range of needs (such as social, cultural, recreational and information needs). Traditionally one way of meeting these needs has been by providing space across the city for services and as focal points for community activities.



The Council contributes to providing space through supporting community facilities. Community facilities are spaces where people can meet, play and learn, where groups can form, where information and knowledge can be shared. They are venues for arts, cultural, educational, recreational and leisure activities; can provide accommodation for voluntary groups; and are important gathering points in civil defence emergencies. They are focal points for communities and help strengthen communities by bringing people together.

The sorts of facilities the Council supports are:

- all-purpose (eg local community centres);
- activity specific (eg libraries); or
- group specific (eg youth centres).

The Council also leases spaces across the city to organisations for community and recreation activities (such as scout/guide halls and sports clubs). These are covered by the Leases Policy.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are many other community facilities. These are provided by organisations such as schools, churches, marae and clubs and they may receive ad hoc Council funding (such as grants for projects). The location and use of these facilities, and the potential for partnerships with their providers, will need to be taken into account when planning community facilities.

This Policy can also be used, in conjunction with the Leases Policy, to assess requests from organisations to build facilities on Council land.

### **1.1.1 Different Ways of Accessing Space**

Community needs for space will change over the course of time and future facilities may not necessarily be stand-alone for specific purposes. The Council wants to look at new ways of meeting these needs. This could be through:

- new types of facilities such as multipurpose and co-located facilities
- new ways of providing services traditionally delivered through facilities for example outreach programmes, or using new technologies to link services and facilities.
- new ways of resourcing such as partnerships with other providers
- new choices for community groups for example funding their access to space as an alternative to direct provision.

## **1.2 Why Does the Council Support Community Facilities?**

The Council believes that community facilities are important in helping to build strong communities. They provide resources and meeting places that are available to the general community. They are one of the ways that the Council meets its strategic outcomes of participation, access to resources, quality of life and recreation opportunities. The relationship of this policy to the Council's Strategic Direction and other policies and plans is detailed in Appendix 1.

Community facilities need people to work – to manage them and to use them. The Council recognises the important contribution that community and volunteer groups make to the city. Without the dedication, work and support of volunteers most of the services in facilities would not be available.

## **1.3 What Are Our Communities?**

There is a range of communities that need and use facilities. These communities can be geographic, age related, cultural, historical or particular interest groups. This Policy will help the Council to meet the needs of the range of communities in Wellington and to balance competing needs in a fair and consistent way.

## **1.4 Importance of Our Treaty of Waitangi Obligations**

The Council recognises our special relationship with tangata whenua (this includes mana whenua and the wider Maori community) under the Treaty of Waitangi and our Memoranda of Understanding with Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira Inc. This means that the Council wants to make sure that community facilities meet the needs of Maori and promote Maori culture. This means that Council will involve local Maori in any proposed changes to facilities.

## **1.5 Types of Community Facilities**

The Community Facilities Policy covers the following Council owned or supported community facilities:

### **Community centres**

These centres serve local communities and are often located near local or suburban shopping centres. Community centres run a range of programmes, activities and events in response to community needs. All centres have a part-time coordinator and some have youth workers. The coordinator is accountable to a volunteer management committee. Council also supports community centres that are for specific groups. The Council supports community centres by providing funding, training opportunities, information, advice, buildings or land (in some cases).

### **Community Halls**

There are a number of halls across the city which are used for meetings, social events and activities. The Council owns a number of community halls that are available generally for hire but are not staffed. The Council also leases a number of other halls and buildings to community and recreation groups for their use (as covered by the Leases Policy). There are a number of other halls and meeting places in the city, which are community or privately owned but are available for public use.

### **Libraries**

The Wellington City Libraries network includes branch, central and mobile libraries, internet services, as well as an extensive collection and lending service. Libraries also run specialist/outreach programmes such as the Housebound services, Books on Wheels for schools and Books for Babies. Some library branches also serve as Service Centres for the Council. Branch libraries are generally located near local or suburban shopping centres. The Council owns and operates the library network.

### **Recreation Centres**

These centres run a variety of programmes mainly focused on recreation and leisure activities. Council owns and runs three recreation centres in Wellington and works in partnership with Newlands College to provide a fourth. As well as running formalised programmes, recreation centres are also available to groups and individuals for hire.

### **Citizens Advice Bureaux**

The Citizens Advice Bureau network offers, to members of the Wellington community, a range of information and advice for example on consumer, legal, welfare and housing issues. They are located in the Council owned community facilities and staffed by volunteers.

### **New Types of Facilities**

In the future the Council may look at supporting multipurpose and co-located facilities and may enter into partnerships with other providers. The current range of community facilities supported by Wellington City Council is at Appendix 2. Council also provides a directory of other meeting places. This is available from the Council's online Community Directory, under venues.

## **2. Objective and Principles for Decision Making**

The primary objective of the Policy is that:

Everyone in Wellington should have the opportunity to use community facilities. These facilities will:

- cater for a wide range of needs and interests;
- be safe and easy to use; and
- be affordable to users and the community.

The key principles are:

### **2.1 Reasonable Access**

Community facilities need to be located and designed in a way that maximises access. This means that:

- facilities are easy to get to, get in and around particularly for people with disabilities
- people feel welcome to use community facilities
- activities within facilities match people's needs and that they are supported to use them
- facilities are Maori/Iwi responsive
- people can increasingly use services normally provided at a facility but not necessarily being there (through things such as outreach programmes or electronic access).

### **2.2 Community Benefit and Involvement**

Community facilities are there to benefit communities. Council wants to make sure that:

- community facilities continue to meet the needs of communities, particularly for those areas or groups of greatest need
- communities are involved in the planning and running of facilities
- voluntary and community groups' involvement in community facilities is supported.

### **2.3 Balance in Providing Facilities**

Community facilities provide strong focal points for communities and can support local centres/hubs. Council wants to make sure that:

- community facilities support and complement urban centres
- community facilities are fairly spread across the city
- there is a balance between dedicated use of facilities and facilities that the whole community can use
- there is a balance between facilities that primarily serve local needs and citywide facilities.

### **2.4 Consistent Quality Into the Future**

For facilities that Council owns, Council wants to make sure that they are well maintained; that communities rate them highly; and they are cost effective. For facilities that Council does not own, Council will work with providers to deliver quality services.

Communities and their needs may change over time. This calls for flexibility in the way community facilities are provided, and that they are adaptable to changing needs in communities.

### **3. Resourcing Community Facilities**

The provision of community facilities requires considerable resources both for their establishment and for their operation. Because Council has limited resources it needs to make sure that it is using these in the best possible way to meet community needs.

This means that any proposals to change facilities need to take into account if and how they can be funded. It also means that Council needs to continually review its current provision to ensure that both community needs are met and that the resources are being used in the best possible way.

### **4. What the Council Does**

Council will continue to have a range of roles relating to community facilities.

#### **4.1 Provision**

Council directly provides community facilities in a number of ways. However there are significant differences relating to provision and support between the types of facilities.

Council owns and directly manages recreation centres, libraries and community halls. In relation to community centres, Council believes that they are more appropriately managed by voluntary management committees as this better supports community development principles stated in the Social Strategy. Council owns and/or supports community centres across the city. It supports a number of community centres that it does not own.

Council also provides subsidised space (either owned or leased by Council) for a number of community organisations particularly in the central city. The Betty Campbell Centre is an example of this arrangement.

Council will continue to provide community facilities but will increasingly look to new models of configuring, funding and management, including partnerships with community groups, to make the best use of Council and community resources.

Council is also exploring its role in relation to the demand of office space for community organisations particularly in the inner and central city.

#### **4.2 Support and Facilitation**

Council supports and funds voluntary management committees to manage facilities, in particular community centres (see above). Council also provides opportunities for training and access to information and advice for community groups and their management committees.

#### **4.3 Partnerships**

Council provides or supports community facilities through partnerships with schools, community groups or other organisations. Examples of this include the provision of community centres as noted above. Another specific example is the Newlands Recreation Centres, provided as a result of partnering with Newlands College.

It is likely that more opportunities for partnerships will be explored in the future, as Council and other organisations look for opportunities to best locate facilities and programmes and best use limited resources. Potential partners include schools, churches and clubs.

## **4.4 Advocating**

Council will continue to advocate with and on behalf of communities for public facilities. Council needs to support this advocacy with good information from sources such as the national census and from communities themselves.

## **5. Guidelines for Planning for Community Facilities**

To make sure that the principles are met when making decisions about current and future community facilities, Council will need to make assessments based on the following guidelines:

- changes in demand for community facilities
- ability to get to facilities
- potential for more flexible types of facilities/services
- appropriate levels of service

The guidelines will be applied at two levels:

1. Identification of broad areas where changes to facilities are needed
2. Detailed work on the type and location of facilities for specific areas - this will need to include options for the ongoing resourcing and management of facilities.

When considering investment in community facilities it is important that Council develops a picture of need within the community for facilities. Need will be driven by the make-up of the community, changing trends in the community, its resources, and the extent of existing or accessible facilities. An assessment that results in a decision to provide enhanced support (through whatever mechanism is most relevant) or to maintain current service levels will always have an element of subjectivity to it. However the guidelines presented in this section will be used to provide as much direction as is possible. In particular the guidelines will provide an indicative priority for where Council should be targeting its effort and energy.

### **5.1 Changes in Demand/Need for Facilities**

As the city grows and matures the provision of community facilities will need to match changing demands and needs. Factors which need to be taken into account are:

- population/demographic changes (including age, cultural background, income, socioeconomic status);
- settlement patterns;
- community identified needs; and
- proximity and usage rates of existing facilities.

### **5.2 Ability to Get to Facilities**

Facilities need to be located so that physical access is optimal. The topography of the city and the way it has and will develop will influence where facilities should be best located.

Factors which need to be taken into account are:

- proximity to public transport routes;
- location of physical barriers such as major roads, railways, natural features, proximity to faultlines, floodplains and tsunami risk areas

- proximity to urban centres and relationship to other services such as shops, schools and other community facilities
- isolation of communities (including geographic and economic).

### **5.3 Potential for More Flexible Types of Facilities/Services**

Increasingly, to be able to meet needs and work with limited resources, Council will need to make sure that there is flexibility in the way that facilities are provided. When planning changes or new facilities Council will need to look at the potential for:

- multiuse facilities;
- co-location of Council services;
- co-location or partnerships with other providers;
- outreach programmes or other linkages between facilities; and
- other ways of providing services such as through electronic access.

### **5.4 Appropriate Levels of Service**

It is important that the provision of community facilities is appropriate to the community they service. A hierarchy of community facility needs across Wellington has been identified:

- City wide - these are highly accessible facilities offering either a highly specialised service or generalist services of high level which are accessible for everyone in the Wellington area. An example is the Central Library
- Town centre - commonly a larger facility or number of facilities offering a wide range of services.
- Local and neighbourhood centre - commonly a smaller facility offering local space and also networked (including electronically) to town centre facilities
- Non-centre based - commonly a small facility servicing rural or isolated areas.

The combination of this hierarchy, the principles discussed in section 2 and the previous other guidelines, describes the optimal service level for community facilities. Achieving this service level is dependent on the availability of Council and community resources. Therefore priorities for planning and development of facilities are required.

## **6 Current Situation**

### **6.1 Provision Levels**

Council currently supports:

- Twenty one suburban community centres or houses
- A range of specialised community centres and community offices mainly in the inner/central city and Newtown. Examples include Mokai Kainga Maori Centre, City Centre for the Elderly, Wellington Arts Centre and the Betty Campbell Centre
- Four community halls
- Six Citizens Advice Bureaux
- One central library with 11 branches and 1 mobile library
- Four recreation centres (one in partnership with Newlands College)

These facilities are listed in Appendix 2.

### **6.2 Distribution**

Appendix 3 details the current distribution of Council supported facilities. This shows that, whilst there is a spread of facilities across the city, this is uneven with some areas having a number and range of facilities and others limited to one or none. It should be noted that across the city a range of other providers such as schools, churches and community organisations.

## **7. Implementation**

There are a number of choices that Council can make through this policy that will direct the provision of community facilities. This includes:

- Future provision of community facilities
- Decisions on service levels for current facilities
- Evaluation of new proposals

The following implementation plan reflects the application of the principles and guidelines.

Priorities are based on a range of issues including:

- alignment with the Suburban Centres Upgrade Programme (see Appendix 3)
- integration with current projects such as the Northern Growth Management
- identified gaps in provision or knowledge about communities
- availability and timing of information (such as census data)
- community identified needs and issues.

Consultation with local and/or affected communities will be a vital component of all of the implementation actions. Consultation plans will be developed for each specific project.

The implementation plan will need to be reviewed each year to ensure that the Annual Plan and LTFS accurately reflect future developments in community facilities.

## 7.1 Future Provision of Community Facilities

**Focus:** Undertake a programme of research and review to ensure that community facilities continue to meet the needs of Wellingtonians

### Actions:

1. Research new models for provision of community facilities or servicing local communities will be in conjunction with specific work for Newlands, Tawa and Karori.
2. Research facility needs for specific groups including Maori, Pacific Island people, ethnic groups, new New Zealanders and older people.
3. In 2002/03 this includes identifying current and future needs for Owhiro Bay/Happy Valley and the potential to link existing facilities.

**Focus:** Develop and improve community facilities in line with urban development initiatives in Wellington and the Centres Upgrade Programme

### Actions

#### 1. Northern Area - in 2001/02 and 2002/03

- In conjunction with the Northern Growth Management Plan, the range, location, type and phasing community facilities (or linkage to existing facilities) needed to meet current and future needs will be investigated
- Newlands: the best option to improve existing facilities to service current and future population will be determined. This has the potential to pilot new ways of providing services through facilities
- Tawa - the ability of the proposed Stage 2 of the Tawa library extension to adequately meet facility needs will be tested
- Other areas will be included when there is more information about the Plan proposals. This includes Churton Park and Glenside/Takapu Road.

#### 2. Centres Programme

- Options for existing community facilities will be considered alongside the programme. In 2001/02 this will focus on Karori. In 2002/03 Strathmore
- From 2003/04 onwards this will align with the Centres programme (as outlined in Appendix 3) unless other issues or opportunities arise which signal the need to address facility provision in a particular area (as per guidelines in Section 5)
- The need for community facilities that services suburban work centres will be investigated in 2002/03.

## 7.2 Decisions on Service Levels for Current Facilities

**Focus:** Develop and improve the current provision of facilities including in those areas not covered by the Centres Upgrade programme

### Actions:

1. In 2001/02 this includes investigating the best options for locating facilities in Wadestown.
2. Explore Council's role in relation to the demand for community office space, particularly in the inner and central city.

**Focus:** Develop and keep current community facilities asset management plans

### Actions:

1. Undertake regular reviews of levels of service for facilities and consequent updates of Asset Management Plans with budgets for facility development, renewals and maintenance reflected in the LTFS.
2. Undertake regular condition assessments of Council owned assets.

**Focus:** Ensure that the ongoing operation of community facilities continue to meet Council outcomes

For community managed facilities, ongoing monitoring of services delivered through current non-contestable grants and related funding agreements to make sure:

- These facilities continue to meet community needs
- Funding is appropriately allocated between centres/facilities.