

Determining *Significance* and Making *Significant* Decisions


Waimakariri District Council Experience and Comment

Community Plan Conference, 20 September 2007
Simon Markham, Manager Policy & Customer Service



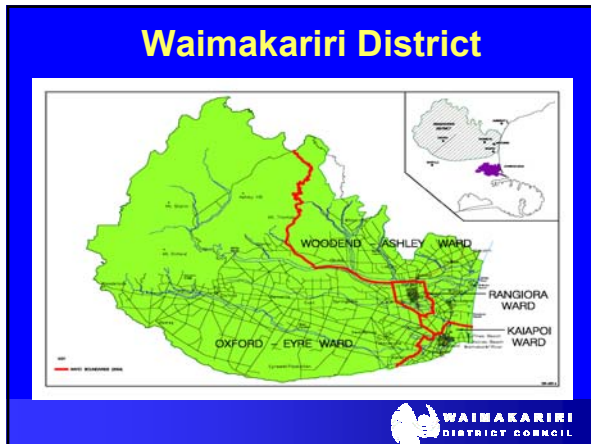
Agenda

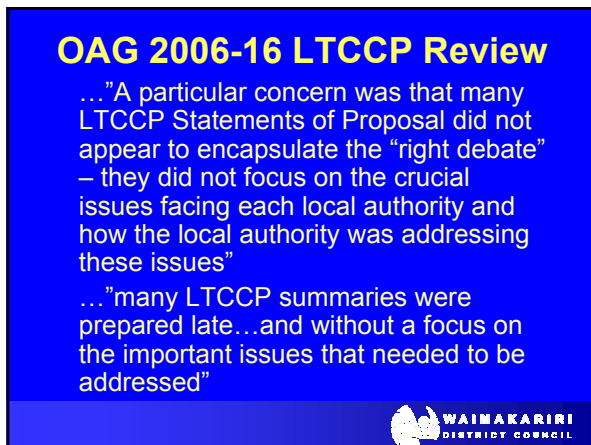
- Waimakariri District Council context
- Relevant Review commentaries
- Reflections on LGA provisions
- Review of WDC policy and practice
- Reflections on Significance policies
- 3 WDC examples to illustrate issues - major policy proposal, major complex development and major project
- Conclusions

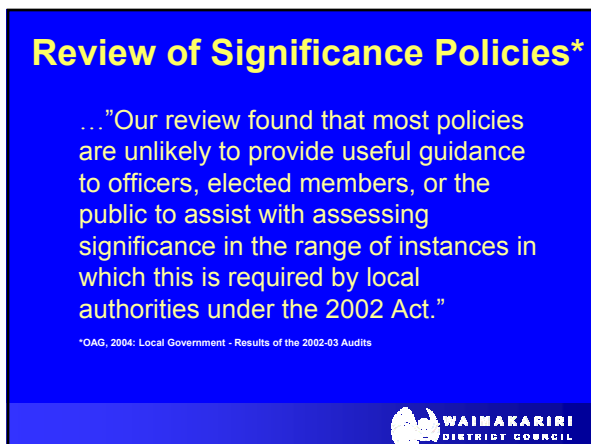


Our Place









L. G. Rates Inquiry Panel

...“The current statutory provisions on consultation and planning are onerous complex and confusing. They are often implemented in a compliance based way with attention to form rather than substance.”

...“It appears that some councils do not understand strategic planning concepts, which involve setting out key options or choices...”



LGA Significance Provisions

- **Wide Scope** - “issue, proposal, decision or other matter” wrt wellbeings; affected/ interested parties; LA costs/capacity
- **Wide Use** - 11 uses of “significant”; 5 of “significantly”; 4 of “significance”
- **Wide Discretion** – in policy and judgments wrt significance, adequacy of information, options considered, extent of analysis and consultation



Comments on LGA

- S.90 Policy focuses on determining significance not then how to respond
- Relationship between significance, decision-making, consultation and LTCCP Amendment provisions complex
- Overall seems more about securing mandate esp. for new expenditure or asset divestment - rather than ensuring strategic focus on wellbeing promotion



WDC Significance Policy (1)

- **Approach** - Case by case determination considering wellbeing impacts, effects on affected/interested parties, costs, Council capacity (S.5)
- **Disclaimer** - Doesn't apply to (past) AP/LTCCP decisions...unless "there is a significant change"
- **Threshold** - Alterations of >10% to total budgeted expenditure are "significant"



WDC Significance Policy (2)

- **Criteria** - If impact of decision on >10% of pop'n or implic. on Council resources and the level of service are 'substantial' then "high degree of significance"
- **Procedures** – Council reports to reflect consideration/assessment of significance & consultation req'ments
- **Strategic Assets** - assets/groups of assets defined



WDC Policy & Practice (1)

- An "in the bunch" policy - achieves compliance, in places tautological and issues in meaning and effect
- In practice "stay safe" - significant decisions = LTCCP/AP = SCP
- Implied/required specificity re: significant decisions in LTCCP/AP & reports??
- Practice focus on consultation more than decision-making for significant decisions





Major Policy Proposal

Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS)




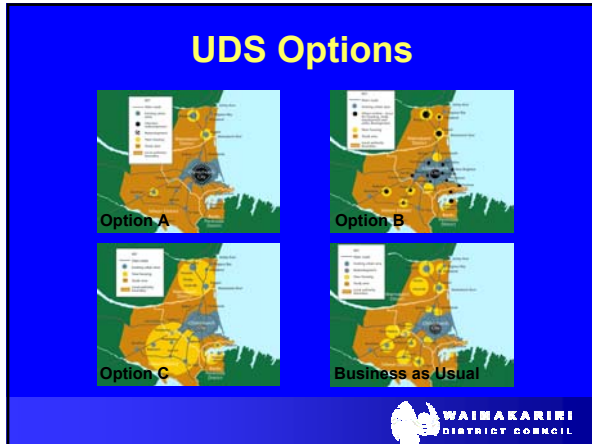
UDS Area



Resolving the UDS (1)

- UDS = 35 year growth management strategy for Greater Chch, 2007-41
- Collaborative across 4 Councils; part District; wide scope; staged project; multiple options; extensive consultation; 15 year 'void'; 2nd attempt; 3 years work
- LGA process based SoP/SCP to finalise and adopt - RMA processes to follow
- The most significant decision this term?





UDS Projections, 2007-41

| | 2006 | 2016 | 2026 | 2041 | 2007-41 | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | % Change | % of UDS Increase |
| POPULATION | | | | | | |
| Christchurch City | 358,300 | 384,400 | 413,700 | 450,000 | +26% | 68% |
| Selwyn District | 20,000 | 29,000 | 37,300 | 45,000 | +125% | 18% |
| Waimakariri District | 35,200 | 45,900 | 50,200 | 53,500 | +52% | 14% |
| UDS AREA TOTAL | 413,500 | 459,300 | 501,300 | 548,500 | +33% | 100% |
| HOUSEHOLDS | | | | | | |
| Christchurch City | 142,800 | 157,810 | 175,900 | 195,970 | +37% | 71% |
| Selwyn District | 7,700 | 11,700 | 15,800 | 19,490 | +153% | 16% |
| Waimakariri District | 13,600 | 18,450 | 21,200 | 23,450 | +72% | 13% |
| UDS AREA TOTAL | 164,100 | 187,960 | 212,900 | 238,910 | +46% | 100% |

Source: Statistics NZ/UDS

WAIMAKARIRI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Projected Growth 2007-41


| Location | 2006 | | 2041 | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Households | Population | Households | Population |
| Pegasus | 0 | 0 | 1,800 | 4,210 |
| Woodend | 915 | 2,616 | 2,165 | 5,070 |
| Rangiora | 4,710 | 12,136 | 7,260 | 16,990 |
| Kaiapoi | 3,966 | 10,449 | 6,268 | 14,660 |
| Rest of Area | 3,159 | 8,669 | 5,059 | 11,840 |
| Total Eastern District | 12,750 | 33,870 | 22,550 | 52,770* |

* Based on the projected 2041 District average household size of 2.34 persons per dwelling

WAIMAKARIRI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Resolving the UDS (2)

- Met significance criteria but largely not considered wrt formal Signif. policy
- SoP/SCP effectiveness diluted by being outside of LTCCP process and a collaborative endeavour - ownership?
- Report to Council highlighted adopted policy status but high risk profile and unknown expenditure implications
- No QA - e.g. Info. audit/peer review
- Unanimous Councils adopt resolution





Major Assets Acquisition, Levels of Service Change and Funding Decisions

Pegasus New Town Development



Pegasus Town 2007-11



Pegasus New Town (1)

- Controversial origins pre LGA 2002
- RMA 'maverick' outcome determined by Env. Court including asset ownership with extensive Council cost implications e.g. 14 ha man-made lake and CMAs
- \$500+ million assets to transfer?
- Major LOS issues... "supersized" reserves, naturalised SWM system, large town centre - Signif. Opex impact



Pegasus New Town (2)

- Major funding policy implications esp. distribution of benefits issues
- New towns not common - but RMA driven major projects increasing
- WIP = what has already been decided, what is now decisionable and what role and style of consultation to use
- Expect to do a complex LTCCP Amendment but fraught with issues

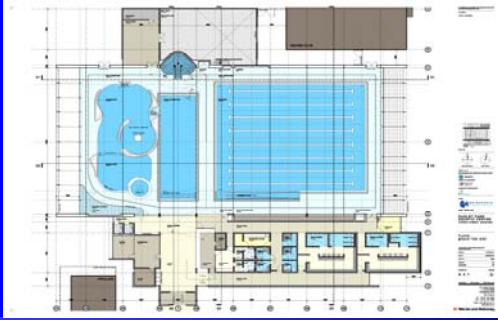


Significant Project

New District Pool/Recreational Facility, Rangiora



Aquatic Centre Concept



Centre Aerial View



Aquatic Centre (1)

- Issues: when is it a "final" significant decision & a change 'significant' and so an LTCCP Amendment??
- Pre-LGA'02 'pools strategy' consultation
- Pool configuration/provision canvassed in 04-14 and 06-16 LTCCPs, 07/08 AP
- 06 -16 LTCCP = 5 formal consultation options incl. 50 metre pool; 25 metre pool confirmed option at \$7.2 million



Aquatic Centre (2)

- 07/08 AP = \$7.2 Million became \$8.5 million & addition of Health & Fitness Centre @ +\$2.1 million (Trust funded)
- Not seen as significant change/decision wrt policy and not incl. in Draft Plan as LTCCP Amendment
- As "controversial" encouraged by Auditors to profile in the AP
- 1254 person petition for a 50 metre pool!



Conclusions

- Significance polic(ies) and consideration not explicitly underpinning strategic focus and generating the right debate
- LGA significance provisions complex and confusing + "legislative spillover"
- Reliance on LTCCP/SCP as proxy for considering significance
- Uncertain/undisclosed effect of significance considerations on decision making practice/quality



A Significant Loss!

Pavarotti knocks on the Pearly Gates.
St Peter opens them and says
"Oh Luciano, it's you, come on in...
here, squeeze through".
Pavarotti says "I have a letter from the
Pope for you"
St Peter opens it up and reads it
"Here's that tenor I owe you".