

**MINUTES OF CARTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL
(CDC) WORKSHOP
HELD AT THE WAIRARAPA EVENTS CENTRE, 50 HOLLOWAY ST, CARTERTON
ON WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 AM**

PRESENT: Mayor Steve Cretney, Deputy Mayor Grace Ayling, Cr Brian Deller, Cr Lou Newman, Cr Steve Laurence, Cr Jane Burns, Cr Simon Casey, Cr Rachel Round

IN ATTENDANCE: Staff

Geoff Hamilton (Chief Executive), Solitaire Robertson (Group Manager Regulatory and Planning), Marc Ferguson (Chief Financial Officer), Lawrence Stephenson (Group Manager Infrastructure), Geri Brooking (Group Manager People and Corporate), Glenda Seville (Group Manager Community and Facilities), Sara Renall (Senior Communications and Engagement Advisor), Anna Tulloch (Communications and Engagement Advisor), Serah Pettigrew (Democratic Services Officer)

1 REPORTS

4.1 WORKSHOP - DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY & SIGNIFICANCE & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE

For the elected members to provide feedback on the Development Contributions Policy and the Significance and Engagement Policy.

Development and Financial Contributions Policy Framework

The council currently operates under a financial contributions policy administered through the Combined District Plan rather than development contributions under the Local Government Act. This approach aligns with traditional Wairarapa council practices, though many other councils use development contributions which offer greater flexibility for amendments.

- Financial contributions are collected for water, wastewater, stormwater, reserves, and roading on a more generic basis at council's discretion.
- Development contributions are typically used for broader infrastructure projects and require identification of specific capital projects in advance.
- The government is proposing to phase out financial contributions under RMA reforms and replace both systems with development levies.
- Councils cannot legally charge both financial and development contributions on the same development.

The new district plan has moved towards a development contribution model by calculating infrastructure costs across the entire network divided by the number of rateable properties to establish a buy-in price. An annual adjustment factor allows council flexibility to encourage or discourage growth by modifying contribution levels between 0-100% of the calculated cost.

Water Entity Reforms and Policy Implications

The establishment of the water entity creates significant uncertainty around future contribution policies and infrastructure delivery. The entity will own water assets but policy direction remains with council through district plans and long-term plans.

- Water entity may push for 100% buy-in prices to ensure full cost recovery for infrastructure.
- Collection mechanisms remain unclear - whether council collects on behalf of the water entity or water entity collects directly.
- Development contribution policies may need to specify how contributions are shared between council and water entity.
- The timing of these changes depends on broader local government reforms and council structures.

Staff acknowledged the complexity of coordinating growth strategies between council's strategic direction and Water entity's infrastructure delivery priorities. The relationship will require careful management to ensure development contributions align with both entities' needs.

Significance and Engagement Policy Review

The council's Significance and Engagement Policy underwent legal review during the last long-term plan process and was found compliant but with opportunities for improvement. The policy clearly defines strategic assets and establishes thresholds for community engagement based on significance levels.

- Strategic assets include roading networks, water treatment plants, parks and reserves, council buildings, and Kaipatangata Forest.
- The policy distinguishes between significance (degree of importance) and significant (high degree of significance).
- Three engagement levels: promote (low significance), inform and consult (medium significance), and meaningful community input (high significance).

Assessment criteria for significance include effects on the district, impact on individuals or communities, relationship with Māori, community interest levels, financial impacts, consistency with existing strategies, and whether decisions are reversible. The policy will require minor updates to reflect legislative changes around the community wellbeings and the transfer of water assets to the water entity.

Community Engagement Challenges and Approaches

Discussion addressed the complexities of community engagement, particularly the challenge of balancing vocal opposition with broader community sentiment.

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Long-Term Plan Preparation and Engagement Strategy

Planning for the next long-term plan will integrate multiple engagement streams including community strategy development and potential amalgamation discussions. Early engagement is scheduled for July 2026, followed by formal consultation in March-April 2027.

- Early engagement will focus on long-term aspirations for Carterton rather than specific proposals.
- Integration with community strategy development to avoid consultation fatigue.
- Formal consultation document will be audited and follow statutory requirements.

- Engagement approach will be tailored to elected members' comfort levels and community preferences.

The Communications Team will present engagement options and strategies, recognising that authentic approaches work best when aligned with individual councillors' styles and community knowledge.

Financial Modelling and Rate Impact Projections

Uncertainty around water entities water costs and debt transfer mechanisms complicates long-term financial planning. Staff indicated that meaningful rate impact projections won't be available until closer to formal consultation periods.

- Current budget modelling could subtract water services to provide indicative rate impacts.
- Stranded overhead costs from water service transfer need careful analysis.
- Third quarter 2026 timeline suggested for initial scenario modelling.
- March-April 2027 consultation will include specific project prioritisation options.

The challenge of providing early indicative figures was acknowledged, with staff suggesting a cautious approach to avoid misleading the community with preliminary estimates that may change significantly.