

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Legal requirements

The new Local Government Act (LGA) was enacted in 2002. Its purpose is to “provide for democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities.” The legislation was designed to give greater scope to communities to make their own choices about what local authorities do and the way they do these things.



Central to the LGA (section 91), is the legal requirement for all local authorities to “carry out a process to identify community outcomes for the intermediate and long-term future of the district”<sup>1</sup>.

This process must be carried out by all local authorities, and must be done at least once every six years.

## 1.2 The four ‘well-beings’

One of the key contrasts between the new Act and the 1974 Act, is that local government is given a broad mandate to promote community well-being, rather than just focussing on tasks and activities. The Act signals a strong commitment to the principles of sustainable development. Local authorities now have a leading role to play in promoting the well-being of their communities. ‘Well-being’ is not defined by the act, but the four aspects of well-being that have been identified are social, economic, environmental and cultural.

The Act identifies that local authorities need to take into account the future needs of local communities (under these broad well-beings), when making decisions. It also identifies that local authorities need to integrate their planning and service delivery to support and enhance these well-beings, and that they need to form partnerships with key players in the community to develop plans of action to promote community well-being.

## 1.3 Community Outcomes

“Outcomes” are defined as the *things that the community think are important for its well-being*. They can be viewed as a desired result or state of affairs. Outcomes are a community judgement, and belong to the community. They are not restricted to Council functions, but incorporate all the functions and capabilities of a community.

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<sup>1</sup> LGA section 91

## **1.4 How the Community Outcomes will be used**

The Council does not have to adopt the community outcomes, or necessarily even agree with them. The outcomes are a collation of the communities feedback on their priorities.

Council's role is to facilitate the process that enables the community to identify the outcomes. The outcomes are intended to guide the planning processes of Council and other organisations, but are not binding on them. How Council will contribute to the achievement of each outcome will be determined by Council and published through the Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

There are many organisations that are capable of influencing the achievement of the community outcomes that have been identified, and each of these groups will need to consider themselves what their role will be, and how the outcomes will influence their planning and prioritising. In many cases, there will be opportunities for councils and other organisations to work together with the community to achieve these outcomes.