



## Long Term Council Community Plans

### Description

The requirement for New Zealand's 85 local authorities to develop Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP) is the product of the relatively new Local Government Act 2002. Territorial Authorities (that is, district and city councils and unitary authorities) are required to produce and regularly update comprehensive community-based long term plans. These set out a planning process for 10 years ahead to achieve community-outcomes and well-being. The process for identifying the economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes desired by communities and for setting priorities is typically a consultative one, although there is no prescribed way for territorial authorities to consult with their communities.

The plans, which have to be formally updated every three years, set out the community outcomes, how they have been identified and how the local authority will contribute to their achievement. LTCCPs do not replace Annual Plans, which provide detailed information on Councils' activities, expenditure and the determination of rates for the coming year.

These plans reflect a new purpose for local government to "promote the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of communities now and for the future" (Section 3, Local Government Act 2002).

### How and when the tool is used

Local authorities are required to develop LTCCPs, with the initial plans expected to be operational by July 2006. Councils have used several processes to identify community outcomes. As described by Reid *et al* (2006), a number of areas took a regional approach, which allowed them to deal with issues that crossed territorial boundaries and involve a wider range of stakeholders. And councils varied in the approach they took to identifying outcomes - some took a 'blank sheet' approach while others developed a preliminary set of outcomes as a starting point. LTCCP processes and outcomes should, in theory, be complementary to those developed under the [Resource Management Act framework](#) ❖.

Councils are required to say how they will monitor the outcomes in the LTCCP, and to monitor and report on whether or not community outcomes are being achieved at least once every three years. So, the first plans will be adopted in 2006, and then reviewed once every 3 years from then on.

### Application

The requirement for local authorities to produce LTCCPs is intended to focus them on promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of their communities. The plans are intended to enable and encourage councils to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other public and private organisations to achieve community goals and meet community needs. Councils are required to consult widely and listen to community views.

Councils have varied in the approach taken to identifying community aspirations, sometimes because the communities themselves have taken a pro-active approach and organized their own participative approaches (sometimes asking for council support). The robustness and inclusiveness of the consultative approach taken will determine the extent to which community aspirations are appropriately articulated in the plans. Tools that could assist councils in the identification and prioritization of community outcomes include [focus groups and workshops](#) ❖, [visioning](#) ❖, [charrettes](#) ❖ and [stakeholder analysis](#) ❖.

Because many of the outcomes that communities have identified in LTCCP processes are the primary responsibility of other agencies (for instance, health, employment or education-related outcomes) councils are limited in the contribution they can make to their achievement. Councils' roles may be limited to promoting collaboration amongst relevant agencies or lobbying on behalf of communities. Such roles will depend largely on the strength of their relationships with key agencies.

### Our evaluation

The success of a LTCCP depends on both the extent to which it reflects community aspirations (dependent on the efficacy of the community participation processes) and the extent to which it can be implemented. Its implementation, however, may require high levels of collaboration with other councils, central government agencies and organisations in the private and public sector so that strategies and activities can be aligned. The difficulties that central government agencies experience in trying to take a whole-of-government



## **PLANS AND PLANNING**

### **Long Term Council Community Plans**

approach to the provision of social services suggests that such collaboration will be difficult. However, the LTCCP process, as with other consultative processes, will have built up community expectations about what can be achieved and community confidence in and commitment to the 3-yearly review process will reflect previous achievements.