



MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIDHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



A Guide for Local Government

AN INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH POLICY



Acknowledgements

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Guide details

This guide is the second in a series of Guides for Local Government. The first guide was entitled *An Introduction to Youth Participation* (2009), and is available, like this guide, for free download at www.myd.govt.nz

This guide is published by the Ministry of Youth Development, who are responsible for its contents. The logos of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and Local Government New Zealand are attached as endorsement by those organisations that they have seen a need for this guide, been involved in its production and endorse the contents as a worthwhile contribution to knowledge in this area.



Introduction

This guide has been produced to support local government in the development of policy initiatives that impact on young people aged between 12 and 24 years of age.

Should the production of a youth policy be contemplated, this guide includes a “To-Do list” and review of key actions that may need to take place, including:

- research and data collection
- identification of what matters to young people and the community
- draft Youth Policy (if required)
- council endorsement
- implementation
- monitoring and review.

The guide provides a brief background discussion on youth policy and its value to local government. It will:

- help council staff (e.g. within planning, policy, strategy, youth and community services sections) to strengthen the policy process within councils and, in particular, understand the importance of and ways to engage in effective youth participation
- assist councillors to identify how they can best ensure youth voices are heard by elected members
- be a tool for young people, including youth council members, who wish to explore ways of being heard by their local council.

Local government is a crucial catalyst for both local and regional planning, as a facilitator, advocate and direct provider of community services. Local government is required to consult with its communities of interest when making decisions. The Local Government Act 2002 states that a local authority must, in the course of its decision-making process in relation to a matter, give consideration to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or to have an interest in the matter. This guide focuses on getting the views of young people into council corridors of power and creating policy that responds to their needs.

It is only when youth issues are identified, prioritised and addressed through initiatives within councils' strategic plans (with equitable allocation of resources) that policy moves to practice. Central to this process is the need for appropriate resources being allocated to ensure the effective engagement of young people, and the facilitation of young people's active contribution and participation through consultative and decision-making processes. An effective youth policy will improve outcomes not only for young people, but for the community and council as a whole.



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What is a youth policy?

A youth policy is a council's expression of its commitment to contributing to the development of young people in its city, district or regional community. It outlines what a council will do in the way of services, facilities, staffing and funding. It may also identify how young people will be represented or involved in the decision-making process.

It may not necessarily be released as a formal, separate or published document. A council's commitment to young people can include, as vehicles for effective youth participation, a strategy devoted entirely to youth, a youth section in a community development or social wellbeing strategy, and/or a youth council or youth advisory group.

Examples of what other councils are doing

- The Community Outcomes website www.communityoutcomes.govt.nz has a section entitled "Youth Initiatives within Community Outcomes and 2009/19 Long-Term Council-Community Plans".
- The Local Government New Zealand website www.lgnz.co.nz contains a detailed "Local Government Toolkit for Child and Youth Participation", which offers practical information for those involved in council planning and decision-making, including a variety of approaches for gathering youth voices, illustrated by examples from councils.
- The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs website www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz has regular e-newsletters which contain case studies of youth initiatives undertaken by councils.

Defining young people

In New Zealand, 12 to 24 years is the generally accepted age range for defining "youth" or "young people". This is the age range adopted by the Ministry of Youth Development and within the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa.



What is youth participation?

Effective youth participation is about creating opportunities for young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes. True participation relies on clear, open and honest communication and on listening to what young people have to say by:

- considering their views
- not re-wording their responses
- allowing everyone to have their say, in their own way.

For youth participation to be truly effective, young people must:

- be informed
- have an effect on outcomes
- organise themselves
- make decisions or be involved in making decisions
- be involved in follow-up.

Further reading on youth participation

- Ministry of Youth Development, An Introduction to Youth Participation (2009), A guide for local government. www.myd.govt.nz
- The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit www.manchester.gov.uk

Why develop a youth policy?

A youth policy:

- is a visible way for councils to recognise the important part young people play in the community and the unique contributions they make to community life
- can raise the importance of issues affecting young people, and bring them to the attention of elected representatives
- provides a reference point for assessing and responding to the needs of young people in all council decision-making and planning processes.

What are the benefits of having a youth policy?

- responds to locally identified youth needs
- raises awareness within the council organisation of the importance of including young people in decision making processes
- identifies partnership opportunities for working with young people and youth organisations
- better targets services and initiatives for young people
- improves co-ordination and collaboration between council departments internally and with government and non-government agencies externally on youth matters
- empowers young people to make decisions in their own community and develop a sense of worth and belonging
- helps develop positive perceptions of local government among young people
- helps develop positive perceptions of young people among local government
- enables evaluation and review of how well local government is serving the needs of young people.

Why align the policy to the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA)?

Aligning your policy to a fundamental youth development document such as the YDSA may help position your council to take advantage of other opportunities, such as:

- drawing on support from other central government and non-government agencies
- strengthening a funding application to a funding partner
- showcasing the contribution of your local initiative to a national strategy.

For more information on the Youth Development Strategy visit www.myd.govt.nz



Case Study

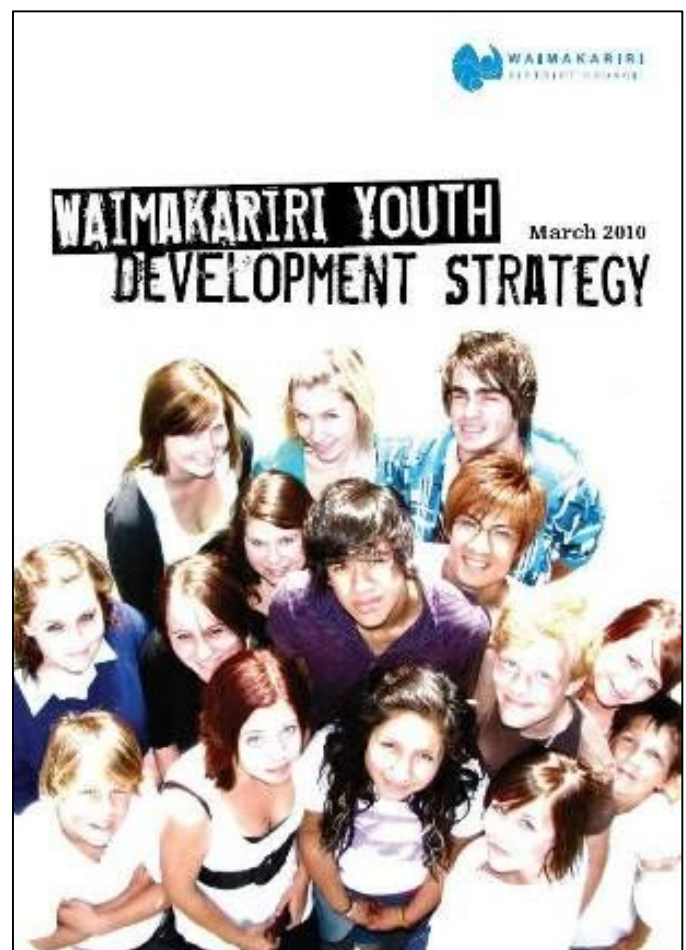
Waimakariri Youth Development Strategy (March 2010)

The Waimakariri Youth Development Strategy was published by the Waimakariri District Council and draws upon the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA).

This substantial report is a model and is recommended for all those – council officers, councillors, youth council members and other young people – who are considering the production of such a document for use in their cities or districts.

The strategy sets out clear issues, visions and recommendations for and by the young people within the Waimakariri District Council area. Copies of the report are available from www.waimakariri.govt.nz

Other councils (such as the New Plymouth District Council and the Rotorua District Council) have also developed youth development strategies and action plans. Some councils have developed significant youth components within broader strategies, such as within Hamilton City Council's *Social Wellbeing Strategy* or within the *Community Development Strategy* of Hutt City Council.



Youth councils and advisory groups

Many councils have created their own youth councils, which are funded, operated by and sit within the council structure. In other instances, community organisations may set up a similar group, representing young people in their community, or operate a trust-type governance arrangement where the youth council has a more independent role from a council.

In general, youth council members consult with other local young people, discuss local youth issues, and provide information and advice to their local council, service delivery agencies and youth networks. Through this engagement, their views can be taken into account in decision-making processes.

The most effective youth councils are likely to be those where the membership reflects the diversity in the local community, and where appropriate resources are allocated to ensure encouragement and support is provided to engage and maintain the interest of diverse participants.

Youth Councils

Although there are other methods, establishing and supporting a youth council can be one way by which a council can demonstrate their commitment to youth involvement in local decision-making.

There are many thriving youth councils in New Zealand. They operate under a variety of governance and funding structures, often with quite different relationships with councils. Note that youth councils, even when active, are not always mentioned in Long Term Council Community Plans.

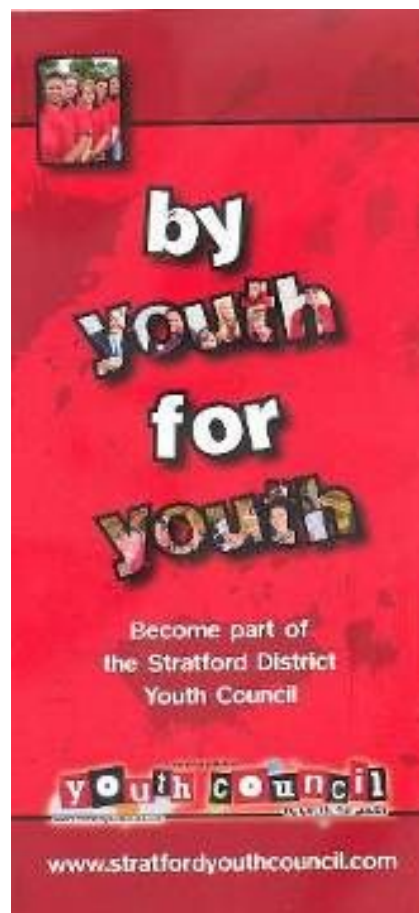
There is no single model, although the more regular and meaningful the connection between a youth council and the officers and councillors in policy and decision-making roles it interacts with the better.

Case study

Stratford District Youth Council

An example of a thriving provincial youth council is the Stratford District Youth Council
www.stratfordyouthcouncil.com

The Ministry of Youth Development has periodic funding rounds that councils can formally apply for, such as the Youth Development Partnership Fund (YDFPF) and other funding specifically allocated for youth council activities (where there is a sponsoring council as well as resources for youth councils). See www.myd.govt.nz



First steps

If there is not a pre-existing youth council to liaise with, consider forming a reference group or a taiohi roopu (also called advisory group, working party or steering group) made up of young people, as well as community representatives, including government and NGO agencies providing services to young people.

Following council endorsement to prepare a youth policy, you will need to:

- confirm the level of commitment of council resources
- establish a clear project management structure and project plan
- agree to terms of reference.

The terms of reference should include:

- what is the purpose of such a group?
- who would be in the group?
- how will they be selected?
- how long would the group exist for?

Consultation is critical to preparing a youth policy that reflects the needs and aspirations of young people and the community. It will need to target young people, youth council members, youth networks, the education sector (e.g. schools, tertiary education and alternative education programmes), council members and staff, youth service and social support providers, and economic, recreational and cultural development interests.

In developing the consultation process you should consider:

- how will young people be involved throughout the process?
- what communication channels will you use and how often will you communicate with young people?
- how will you present yourself to young people – in dress and language?
- when in the year or day will you meet with young people?
- is reimbursement to be considered?

To - Do List

The following “To-Do list” outlines the key actions that may be required to develop a youth policy. Note that this is not a prescriptive list. As with the governance arrangements of youth councils, or the variety of ways councillors and council staff and young people engage on community issues, there are a number of ways to approach this. Based on youth participation, youth development and community-council engagement literature, and experiences, the following listing represents a list of key actions to be considered. The following of these precepts, in whole or in part, will certainly enhance the effective participation of young people in council policy, planning and delivery processes.

The key actions are grouped under the following headings:

- research and data collection
- identification of what matters to young people and the community
- draft youth policy (if required)
- council endorsement
- implementation
- monitoring and review.



Research and data collection

This first item requires that you learn about the demographic youth profile of your community, familiarise yourself with youth needs and issues, and research background information on what has already been done in the area of youth consultation in your community. The purpose is to collect preliminary data to create informed discussion points.

Tasks may include:

- identifying the information you already have or can get easy access to
- writing down the questions you need answers to
- designing how you will collect the data that will answer your questions
- collecting, collating, analysing and interpreting the data
- presenting your findings and conclusions to your grouping of young people
- getting sign-off where you need to.

Potential information and data sources include:

- the Ministry of Youth Development has youth statistics arranged on a map of New Zealand, clickable by council boundaries www.myd.govt.nz
- www.mayorstafforjobs.co.nz and www.lgnz.co.nz
- your local Visitor Information Centre or Citizens Advice Bureau to identify groups
- your community and regional newspaper to track events and issues
- Statistics New Zealand, www.stats.govt.nz have a Local Government Resource Kit
- the Ministry of Education website, www.minedu.govt.nz where you can search for school statistics to find school data
- deprivation and social wellbeing indicators (such as New Zealand Index of Deprivation or the Ministry of Social Development's regional and social reports). Council staff will be familiar with these mapping tools. The index can be accessed from the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz
- Family and Community Services www.familyservices.govt.nz offers a number of online resources, including a comprehensive Family Services Directory which allows you to choose your region and service type by key words.



Case study

The Rights of the Child

New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) in 1993, which covers the civil and political rights of under 18 year olds. Articles two (non-discrimination), three (the best interests of the child), twelve (respect for the views of the child) and twenty-three (rights of children with disabilities) are all relevant to ensuring the voices of young people are heard within local government decision-making processes. See the UNCROC pages at www.msd.govt.nz

Readers of this guide may also wish to consult the research report “Undertaking Child Impact Assessments in Aotearoa New Zealand Local Authorities: Evidence, Practice, Ideas” by Nic Mason and Kristen Hanna (AUT University, 2009, commissioned by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and UNICEF). Copies of the report are available at www.unicef.org.nz

How can young people be involved?

Profiling your community is a great place to involve young people. Ideas to involve young people include:

- attending events targeting young people
- contracting young people to design and develop promotional material
- recruiting young people to do the listening and talking with other young people
- facilitating training for young people in community profiling or market research
- developing a sponsorship programme for youth led community initiatives or projects
- collaborating with schools and/or universities on research projects
- networking with youth workers.

What information should be collected and why?

What to collect?	Why is it useful?
<p>Socio-economic profile data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a socio-economic profile, including data such as age, household structure, income, educational status, health, etc. For example, 5-11, 12-17 and 18-25 years of age cohorts from Statistics NZ or the New Zealand Index of Deprivation • break down profile to statistical local areas if possible • compare to national average for trends • identify issues relevant to young people from regional reports and data. <p>Service mapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map services available for young people in the area. This could also be done during the consultation phase using a simple questionnaire targeting relevant agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profiles the socio-economic status and cultural diversity of young people • assists in identifying geographic locations of high numbers or concentrations of young people and areas of potential disadvantage • provides indicators of disadvantage and potential issues for young people, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ low vehicle ownership in an area of limited public transport impacts on access to employment, services and social and recreational options ○ high levels of young unemployed people in area ○ young people leaving the district for tertiary education and work opportunities • identifies services available to young people and possible service gaps.
<p>Local reports and studies relating to young people in the council area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past studies undertaken by the council • reports and relevant findings by other agencies, for example, relating to economic development, health or transport planning • enquiries with key agencies in your area about what is available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds on the picture of the local youth profile prepared from statistical data and analysis • identifies local issues and what concerns young people • identifies future directions of key service providers • an issues paper could be prepared as a resource for the consultation phase from the information collected.

Identification of what matters to young people and the community

Your ultimate goal is to create a set of outcomes for your youth policy. An outcome is a desired result or state of affairs – the things that a community considers important for its wellbeing. In this case, your interest will be specifically in youth wellbeing. It is likely that your council, through its community outcomes processes, will already have a set of outcomes that young people were somehow involved in developing.

This information will certainly help you on your way to developing youth outcomes for your policy.

You will be required to gather information from as many relevant groups in your community as possible, in particular, those who will be affected by a youth policy. This includes young people, agency and sector representatives, council members and staff, and the broader community. It is vital that you identify who you will talk to, and how you can structure conversations to ensure these groups can participate effectively in the process.

A consultation plan will clarify whom to involve and appropriate communication and consultation techniques and time frames. The following table provides some suggestions.

Who, how and why to consult with young people

Who to consult?	What do we want to find out or achieve?
<p>Young People, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth councils or other such groups • intermediate and secondary schools • tertiary and private training organisation student representatives • youth networks. <p>Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitations to small focus groups – late afternoon, avoid sporting schedules • youth council members to each bring along five peers • talk to young people where they hang out • one on one interviews in malls and centres • provide food and drinks • provide an accessible and welcoming venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased awareness of young people about what councils do and opportunities for participation – decision making, voting, standing as a candidate in council elections • what is important to young people • what gets in the way of participation • what issues concern young people • are they aware of the services available to them • how councils could do things better • engage young people in working out ways to address issues.

Your consultation planning needs to include approaches to ensure the inclusion of:

- young people from multi-cultural and/or non-English speaking backgrounds. Involve community leaders in the process, ensuring venues are culturally appropriate and welcoming, and use interpreters
- young parents. Support childcare arrangements and/or arrange to meet young parents where they gather for group activities
- young people with a disability. Ensure easy and disabled access to venues, and involve carers where appropriate.

Who else should be consulted and why?

Who else to consult?	What do we want to find out?
<p>Youth service representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth networks • youth specific service delivery agencies • youth centre staff and volunteers • education – schools, universities, alternative education programmes, etc. <p>Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questionnaire – posted, online, telephone • invitation to consultation forums • one on one interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local youth issues and needs • extent and location of the experience of disadvantage • priority needs
<p>Other stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • government and non-government (could include a simple service mapping survey)¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ health, housing, family and youth services, counselling, community support services ○ economic, employment and cultural interests ○ recreation and leisure interests • the broader community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ refugees, iwi, marae, hapu, whanau, families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service gaps and priority needs. Note, council may have a role in advocacy or representing the interests of local youth to relevant agencies and/or other spheres of Government • potential strategies and role for council • opportunities for partnerships and to enhance collaborative approaches

¹ Family and Community Services offer a number of online resources, including a comprehensive Family Services Directory, which allows you to choose your region and service type by key words. You will also find local community directories, whose lists are maintained by councils, local newspapers and companies providing specialised directory services. See <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/my-community/network-and-service/services/index.html>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ broader community issues and impacts affecting planning for youth development opportunities for partnerships <p>Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● questionnaire – posted, online, telephone ● invitation to consultation forums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ one on one interviews 	
<p>Council organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● elected members ● council staff – urban planning, infrastructure, community and economic development, recreation, information services and libraries <p>Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● briefing and workshop sessions ● one on one interviews ● comment on draft documents ● take elected members and staff along to the consultation process to maintain their commitment during implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● enhance understanding and awareness of youth issues across the organisation ● explore opportunities for strategic responses, for example, in areas of economic and cultural development, public spaces, and community security and safety

Draft Youth Policy

It's time to actually write the policy. The framework for the actual document will depend on your council's protocols for policy and planning documents. It may be prepared as a stand alone youth policy, or if it is integrated into your council's overall strategic plan, the youth policy will need to be tailored to suit. As mentioned above, not all councils will require the development of a formal published youth policy.

What makes for a good Youth Policy?

To be effective, a youth policy should:

- state how it links to council's community and strategic outcomes
- articulate council's contribution and position on youth-related outcomes
- include a robust process to ensure the effectiveness of the youth policy, i.e. continuous review and monitoring
- identify links to national and regional strategies
- contribute to youth wellbeing as set out in a recognised youth development framework, such as the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA).

The following checklist suggests topics to include in a potential youth policy:

Tick when completed	Introduction and background	What to include
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What is the impetus and rationale for developing a youth policy and plan? Include definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth or young people • youth development <p>What is the current situation? What steps will council take to engage young people and encourage youth participation in council business?</p>	<p>Refer to key points in the issues paper to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demographic profile of young people and emerging trends • youth needs identified through a consultation programme, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ higher or lower than average proportion of youth people in the area, as compared with national averages ○ culturally diverse youth population ○ young people leaving the area for study or work and not coming back ○ isolation, barriers to accessing services and/or facilities and target groups. <p>Describe what council will do to capture the interests of young people and foster participation.</p>

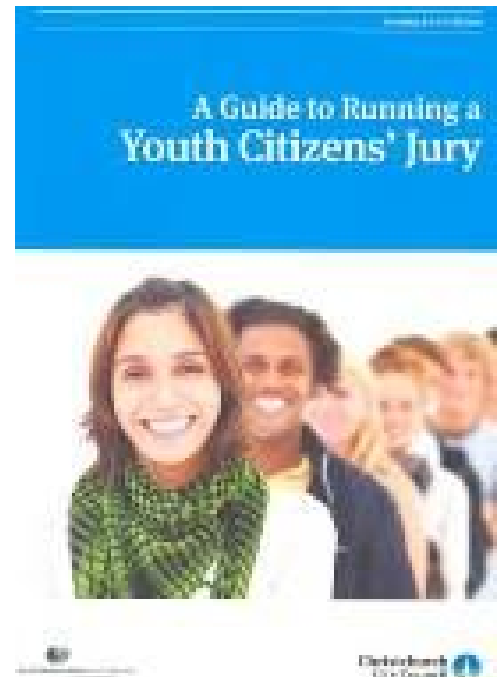
	Policy statement – vision or aim	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Check existing council policies to guide the format for this topic.</p> <p>Aim to demonstrate your council's commitment to young people as valued community members, engaging them in local governance, minimising barriers to participation in local affairs and community life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create an environment where young people will have opportunities to be involved, learn and develop and have a sense of well being • encourage participation of young people in local government, and in planning for youth social, cultural and service needs • provide a future direction for council and the community to identify and address the issues affecting young people's participation in community life and celebrating their achievements.
	Principles and values	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Council actions impact on the lives of young people, for example in the areas of infrastructure and facilities, advocacy, planning, direct service delivery and through partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council's planning processes will be informed by young people's views and aspirations to ensure fair and equitable access to a range of services and facilities • opportunities will be provided for young people to actively participate in the civic and social life of the community and to influence decisions that affect their lives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Consistent with social planning principles, these will include principles and values related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social justice and equity • access • recognising diversity • experiences of disadvantage • participation, empowerment • purposeful engagement • independence and choice • innovative responses, partnerships and collaboration • responsiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council are committed to young people having access to appropriate and legitimate spaces and access to affordable and safe activities • through regular review, council will strive to ensure services to young people remain relevant, whether through direct service delivery, in partnership, as a broker or an advocate • wherever possible, a choice of services should be available, acknowledging that all young people are not all the same, and that the exercise of choice is vital to the maintenance of their dignity and independence.

Case study

Youth Citizens' Juries

In 2009, Christchurch City Council, in association with the University of Canterbury and Local Government New Zealand, published *A Guide to Running a Youth Citizens' Jury*.

This is an alternative youth development approach and is particularly useful for discrete large-scale issues in which the voices of young people can be systematically heard, recorded, and responded to. In this case, Youth Citizen's Juries were applied to consultation on the 'Central Plains Water Scheme' and the 'Bus Priority Project'.



A Youth Citizens' Jury is where a group of young people (in this case, 12 to 20 in number, aged between 12 and 25) consider evidence on a specific topic, over a number of days, with the involvement of facilitators and the ability to call submitters and other witnesses. The final report is a response to the issue with specific recommendations. As such, it can avoid the scatter-gun approach that one can get with more wide-ranging consultations, such as on a council's Long-Term Council-Community Plan (LTCCP). Copies of the report are available from Local Government New Zealand www.lgnz.co.nz or Christchurch City Council www.ccc.govt.nz.

The Youth Plan

The youth plan (if that is part of the approach agreed by council) makes up a significant section of your overall youth policy. This is where youth policy is translated into action. The plan can ideally include:

- a clear purpose and scope
- a brief background
- a set of SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely)
- an action list
- a timeline
- an outline of roles and responsibilities
- a budget noting the financial and human resources allocated to policy implementation
- an evaluation programme.

The Youth Plan - Examples of goals and strategies

Tick when completed	The youth plan	Examples of goals and strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The youth plan will set out the steps the council will take to address the issues identified and strategies for fostering participation of young people in planning and decision making processes.</p> <p>The issues could be summarised in this section under topic headings such as Decision Making; Employment and Training; Information, Recreation and Leisure; Public Space or Housing.</p>	<p>Governance Goal or Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation of young people in decision making processes and local governance <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide further opportunities and promote the involvement and interest of young people in planning and decision making processes (see Step 5: Implementation) • encourage young people to vote and stand as a candidate in Local Government elections.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop goals and strategies consistent with council's strategic plan framework and protocols.</p>	<p>Planning Goal or Public Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide affordable access to appropriate youth spaces and public places, which are safe and promote fun, social and cultural opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop strategies into detailed action plans, to</p>	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure urban design processes take

	identify the steps to be taken to implement the strategies, the timeframes and the resources allocated.	<p>account of the specific needs of young people and the need for safe and welcoming spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create partnerships to facilitate the provision of appropriate youth spaces and social options in the council area.
	Review and evaluation	Linking to council's strategic plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Include statements about how the youth policy is linked to council's strategic planning process and who will be responsible for action planning, implementation and review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Youth Action Plan will be developed in conjunction with the council's strategic documents • an annual review of achievements will be undertaken and an action plan will be prepared in conjunction with the council's budget planning cycle • achievements will be reviewed annually by a designated group of stakeholders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the process which will be used to review achievements.	

Once the draft policy is written, your immediate next steps will involve some or all of the following:

- consultation with internal stakeholders and seek agreement on the draft policy
- convening focus groups with young people and relevant agency representatives to obtain feedback about and commitment to the draft policy
- once the draft has been fully edited and completed, refer the draft to the reference group for endorsement. Gaining their endorsement should be simple if you have been continuing to consult with them and seeking their comments throughout the process
- forward the final draft youth policy to the council for endorsement and if necessary, arrange a briefing workshop for council members and senior staff prior to its presentation to council for endorsement.

Council Endorsement

Once endorsed by the council, advise participants in the consultation group that the youth policy is completed. For example, the document could be made accessible via the council's website and a notice could be sent to all participants thanking them for their involvement and advising of how to access the document. Include an invitation to telephone the council office for a copy if internet access is not an option.

This new approach will require whole of council understanding and commitment to embrace the youth policy in all aspects of the council's operations, structures and processes during the implementation phase. It will be important for specific communications to be developed to raise awareness of the new policy for staff working for or with council, for people working with young people in your community and for the young people themselves. It maybe an opportunity to work with the council media team to hold a briefing for local journalists to educate them about the consultation process, and the document itself and its objectives.

Implementation

Some key issues to consider in achieving an integrated and sustainable approach to the implementation of the youth policy and plan follow:


- how will youth-related input be provided in all decision-making processes across council. For example, land use, recreational, cultural and economic development
- is there an opportunity for youth input in multidisciplinary teams on relevant issues
- are formal mechanisms such as parallel youth planning groups an option
- are there opportunities to develop partnerships to address youth issues, such as with non-government and government agencies, young people and corporate bodies
- are there opportunities for a Youth Leadership Programme or for young people to have access to grant allocation
- is council involved in local and regional youth networks? These provide opportunities for peer support and to share information about approaches that work
- information sessions/feedback about the youth policy and plan for council, staff, youth council and key stakeholders.

Report on progress

Your reporting process to your council shows what action has been taken as set out in the youth plan and how that links to the youth policy. A report serves a number of purposes, including:

- showcasing progress or success
- giving an account of what you have done (or not done)
- drawing attention to what has changed
- noting feedback or findings
- passing on what has been learned
- and/or making recommendations to your council for further consideration.

Your council may have a particular way of reporting. You should check what is required.



Tasks here should include:

- confirming what is required for a report in your council (including timeframes)
- getting the report template (if you have one)
- gathering and reviewing your documented information
- noting how actual results compare to expected results
- highlighting how the results contribute to council policy
- noting how achievements contribute to principles, aims and goals of the YDSA
- developing sound, action-focused recommendations
- drafting the report
- following the report process for your council
- getting sign-off where you need to
- reporting back to your support and youth networks.

There are some tasks where young people can be to be accountable for reporting on progress.

Here are a few ideas:

- facilitating training with the local media on showcasing progress or success
- contracting young people to design the report
- supporting young people in presenting the results to council and senior management
- assisting young people in making presentations at conferences and seminars
- taking the report to other community service groups to raise awareness
- mentoring a young person to do the presentations
- showcasing progress online through council's website or in youth-targeted publications
- promoting entry of the project to various local government awards. For example at Youth in Local Government Conferences.

For further reading see www.myd.govt.nz for youth council and funding panel related resources. Also see Tasmanian Office of Children and Youth Affairs:

- *Talking Participation Taking Action: A Local Government Guide to Youth Participation (2006)*
- *Developing Council Youth Plans: The First One or the Next One (2006)*
- *Let's Get On Board: A Handbook Encouraging Young People To Join Committees and Boards (2007).*

Monitoring and Review

Reviewing your policy and monitoring the changes in outcomes will tell you whether you need to make any changes to the youth policy. It will help you identify where and how you can do things better. Review and monitoring will help you keep the policy up-to-date and responsive to the young people in your local community.

Review and monitoring is intended to answer questions like:

- so what?
- was it worth it?
- what difference did it make?
- what did we learn?
- what changes do we need to consider?
- are we on the right track?



Case Study

Horowhenua District Council

The Horowhenua District Council recently (2009/10) reviewed its Youth Strategy, which included the facilitation of workshops for young people in the Horowhenua. Using an “Examine – Engage – Evaluate – Engine – Execute” schema, and with reference to the strengths-based principles of the YDSA, the review process asked key questions of Horowhenua young people.

Following the review by young people, the Horowhenua Youth Strategy and Implementation Plan 2010-2013 was adopted by the Horowhenua District Council in March 2010. Subsequently, the Council was successful in its application to the Youth Development Partnership Fund (YDPF – see www.myd.govt.nz) for implementation of the Horowhenua Youth Strategy through the development of young leaders.

What's involved?

Generally speaking, tasks for review and monitoring will include:

- collecting data that monitors changes in outcomes
- reviewing the policy against changes to youth outcomes
- developing sound, action-focused recommendations
- drafting the report
- getting sign-off where you need to
- reporting back to your support and youth networks.

For further information, visit: www.lgnz.co.nz (see Guidelines for Strategic Planners: Monitoring and Review).

How do you review a policy?

Here's where you check the policy against the changes in outcomes. Your council may have a particular way of reviewing policy, but you do need to ask yourself these questions:

- in what ways has this policy contributed to youth wellbeing?
- what makes this policy effective and responsive for the young people in our community? what doesn't? how do we know?
- what changes could be made for the policy to meet its objectives?

For a more youth-oriented approach, ask these same questions of young people or your reference group.

How else can you involve young people?

Other ways you can involve young people in the review and monitoring of a policy include:

- contracting young people to design and develop the evaluation
- recruiting young people to do the listening and talking with other young people
- facilitating training for young people and the wider community on the community outcomes process
- taking workshops to schools or groups where young people meet
- surveying young people accessing council-provided facilities or services
- facilitating a debate or panel discussion in a public venue, or on regional TV or local radio
- surveying young people from your council's youth webpage
- publishing and promoting the review through youth-targeted publications
- networking with youth workers who are young people.

It's time to launch the youth policy and plan and celebrate. Above all, regardless of the approach you – as a council officer, councillor, youth councillor or as a young person – have taken, following all or some of the actions listed in this guide will enhance youth participation in local government policy and decision-making.

This focus on hearing the voices of young people will help improve outcomes, not only for young people themselves, but also for the local communities you live in and serve; ensuring a stronger, youth-infused local participatory democracy.

*The Ministry of Youth Development welcomes comments or questions on this document.
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