

New Plymouth District Youth Strategy

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This strategy outlines how New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) can support young people to develop the skills and attitudes they need to take part in society now and in the future.

This strategy is inherently linked to the New Plymouth District Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). Like the plan, the strategy reflects the type of community the people of New Plymouth District would like to live in, and the things they would like to see for their community. At the heart of the LTCCP are Community Outcomes, the most important of which to this strategy are Together, Secure and Healthy, Skilled and Prosperous. The strategy maps the council's activities and guides officers to achieving these Community Outcomes for all of the district's young people.

With an ageing population and shrinking working-age population, educational or employment failure for any group of young people will cut deeply into our health and well-being as a society. This strategy has therefore been developed to state the council's commitment to young people and outlines the means in which the council can positively affect growth and maximise opportunities for all young people to reach their potential.

Building strong relationships with young people *today* will ensure the continued growth of the district, because such an approach will make New Plymouth District a special place where young people and their families are valued and encouraged to stay (or return to the district after study or travel) to live healthy lives, be employed and eventually raise their own children.

THE STRATEGY

The Community Development Team, in conjunction with the Youth Subcommittee, has developed a plan of action addressing the role of the council with and for young people aged between 12 and 24 years inclusive, who live in the district. The New Plymouth District Youth Strategy includes four components as follows:

- Strategic vision.
- Youth policy statement.
- Council Youth Action Plan 2006/2007.
- Community consultation summary and suggestions.

THE VISION

New Plymouth District is a community where every young person is valued and encouraged to learn, set goals and achieve their dreams! A community where every young person has the opportunity to be the very best that they can be!

This vision is supported by two goals:

1. To increase youth participation within the district.

Young people need to be given opportunities to have greater control over what happens to them. This can be achieved by seeking their advice, participation and meaningful engagement. In doing so, young people feel connected and empowered as they grow and develop into adults.

2. New Plymouth District Council policy and practice supports the positive development of young people within the community.

All young people have access to the range of services and facilities the council provides, because the council is committed to developing and delivering an outstanding service to young people.

YOUTH POLICY STATEMENT:

- New Plymouth District Council commits to involving youth as active partners in:
 1. The development, assessment and delivery of civic services which have an impact on youth; and
 2. Broad community consultation and initiatives.
- New Plymouth District Council is committed to the New Zealand Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs guarantee: That all young people under 25 years be in paid work, in training or education, or in useful activities in our communities.
- New Plymouth District Council promotes and supports youth-driven groups as a key resource to the district to ensure that the voices of youth are heard.
- New Plymouth District Council commits to being a 'youth friendly' organisation.
- New Plymouth District Council commits to promote and recognise the achievements of young people within the district.
- New Plymouth District Council recognises that positive youth development is shaped by the 'big picture' and that working alongside young people and community stakeholders is necessary to achieve an environment that builds healthy young people.
- New Plymouth District Council recognises the diversity of young people. All young people will be treated fairly regardless of their social, economic, cultural and ethnic characteristics that shape who they are.

CORE OBJECTIVES

In order to create the opportunity for young people to be partners in determining the future of New Plymouth district, the council will work to achieve the following objectives:

- **Ensure NPDC is a 'youth friendly' organisation.**

The young people and stakeholders who provided their views all stated that providing ‘youth friendly’ services was vital to connecting with young people. By ‘youth friendly’ it means:

1. Making it simple for young people to learn about and access services.
2. Being more aware when policies, programmes and services affect young people (positively or negatively).
3. Involve young people in decisions that affect them and making them feel valued.
4. Align programmes and services more closely with what young people want and need.

▪ **Ensure a strong youth voice in decision making.**

This means that ALL young people are encouraged to participate. Special effort is also made to incorporate the views of tangata whenua – recognising diversity and the need to connect to different groups and communities within the district.

▪ **Promote and recognise youth achievements within the district.**

A special effort is made to provide opportunities for young people to be valued for their contribution within the community. This objective not only builds the self esteem of those young people, but also provides local role models within the community. It also allows the wider community to be exposed to the positive activities young people are involved in.

▪ **Develop collaborative solutions with key partners to address high priority youth issues and improve well-being.**

It is important for the council to recognise where it is able to affect the lives of young people and continue to work in those service areas. It is equally important to not overstate that role given the varying factors that shape a young person’s life such as their home, parents, socio-economic factors and personality. However, there are opportunities to work collaboratively and strategically with key groups in order to develop appropriate solutions.

▪ **Strengthen the support base for youth in the district.**

Young people need quality relationships and support from their peers, family and other adults in the community in order to reach their potential. Young people told us in consultation that community mentors were important to them. It is important then to support those groups through training, community forum and networks.

Each of the above-mentioned objectives will be addressed in the **Annual Council Youth Action Plan** (appended), which maps out particular activities the council is either developing or delivering in that particular year to meet the strategic goals of the policy.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

In order to achieve the strategy goals it is necessary to work with key groups in the community. Meaningful engagement with young people is pivotal and their involvement will be continued to be sought. Other groups include:

- Youth Subcommittee.
- Community Leaders and Tangata Whenua.
- District schools.
- Education and health providers.

- Youth service providers (including the Youth Workers Network).
- Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs'
- Relevant Crown and Government agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION

When adopted, the Youth Strategy will be promoted internally and like any policy, placed on the council's website and intranet. The policy will also be promoted by the Youth subcommittee throughout the district schools and networks.

During 2006/2007, a New Plymouth District Council Youth Friendly Toolkit will also be completed. This toolkit will be made available to all staff online and in hard copy. The kit will also be enhanced by the Human Resources and Customer First teams who are developing a plan to include 'youth friendly' training within the customer service training courses delivered within the council.

The Annual Council Youth Action Plan will be evaluated by developing a report card that will be scored by the council's Youth Subcommittee, highlighting the council's achievements and areas for improvement in any one year. The Community Development Team will monitor progress and submit an annual report to both the Youth Subcommittee and Monitoring Committee for their consideration. A new Annual Council Youth Action Plan will be developed and adopted each year by the council.

At the end of a 12 month period the council should have achieved the following:

1. A formally recognised document that is being accessed by young people, council officers and members of the public.
2. Successful partnerships with key stakeholders
3. All groups across council will be using the 'youth friendly' toolkit and practising what they have learnt.
4. Council officers will be appropriately seeking young people's views and incorporating those views when developing programmes/projects that affect young people.
5. An annual report card will be developed and scored by the council's Youth Subcommittee.
6. A map of the services/events and programmes is reviewed annually – taking into account the Youth Subcommittee feedback from the report card.
7. An annual report outlining the Youth Strategy progress will be submitted to the Youth Subcommittee and Monitoring Committee for their consideration.
8. A new Annual Council Youth Action Plan will be developed and adopted by the council.

APPENDICES

Appendix One	New Plymouth District Council Annual Youth Action Plan 2006/2007
Appendix Two	Youth Strategy Consultation Summary and Notes