



Introduction

Why does Wellington need a Positive Ageing Policy?

New Zealand's baby boomer generation is entering the 65-plus age group. Over the next 20 years, their number will almost double, reaching over one million. This unprecedented rate of growth has major implications on the demand for services, the city's economic performance and community resilience. The city needs to be prepared to understand, get ready and respond to this.

Nearly half of New Zealand's wealth resides with the 55-plus age group and the average age of a business owner is estimated at 56 years old. Supporting and engaging with these people as they move into retirement is crucial for the city's economic future.

Providing social and support services to the growing number of elderly people, particularly as they live longer, is a known challenge. The solutions reside with central government, the Council, families and whanau, and the wider community.

Purpose of the policy

The Positive Ageing Policy provides direction for the Council to consider and plan for the impacts of an ageing population on its services. This will help ensure that the city

accommodates the needs of its citizens as they age. It will also help support the valuable contributions of older people as they continue to shape the city's future.

The term 'positive ageing' reflects the Council's desire for older people to remain engaged with the wider community and to contribute to Wellington's vitality. At the same time, the Council recognises the need to support older people in the community as their needs change over time.

Scope of the policy

The scope of this policy is broad. It considers what roles the Council can play in:

- positioning Wellington as a desirable place to live for older people
- promoting the city as a safe, attractive and inclusive place for older people to live
- ensuring that neighbourhoods are supportive, caring and resilient in times of need
- ensuring that people have adequate access to health, housing and social services
- ensuring that people remain engaged and valued members of the city as they age, and in retirement.

Most activity related to the impacts of an ageing population will benefit all of the community.

Background

The ageing population in New Zealand will result in significant social, economic and cultural impacts on the city. *Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital* provides a vision for the future that recognises these changes.

In partnership with central government and the community, the Council will play a critical role in meeting the future needs of older people. Research into the impacts of an ageing population indicates that older people tend to be:

- more active and engaged, placing greater demand on infrastructure and facilities and providing opportunities for community activities
- more likely to remain in employment beyond retirement age
- increasingly demanding of social and health services and expenditure over time
- more likely to leave the city as they enter retirement – however this trend may change as they become more economically active than previous generations. Wellington currently has a third less of a 65-plus age group as a percentage of population than the national average
- more ethnically, socially and economically diverse – which means they cannot be treated as an homogeneous group
- increasingly isolated due to cultural, affordability, health policy, level of family and whanau support and language factors
- more likely to be ‘ageing in place’ with a bias towards solo women who outlive their male partners

- increasingly caring for grandchildren or family, which has implications for home support services.

Such trends pose opportunities and challenges for the city as it plans for the future, and we need to adapt to these new demands. This policy also recognises the need for a partnership approach and is aligned with central government’s Positive Ageing Strategy priorities.

Opportunities include retaining Wellingtonians in the city as they age. This will help ensure that the city has access to the skills, knowledge and finance it will require for economic growth and vitality.

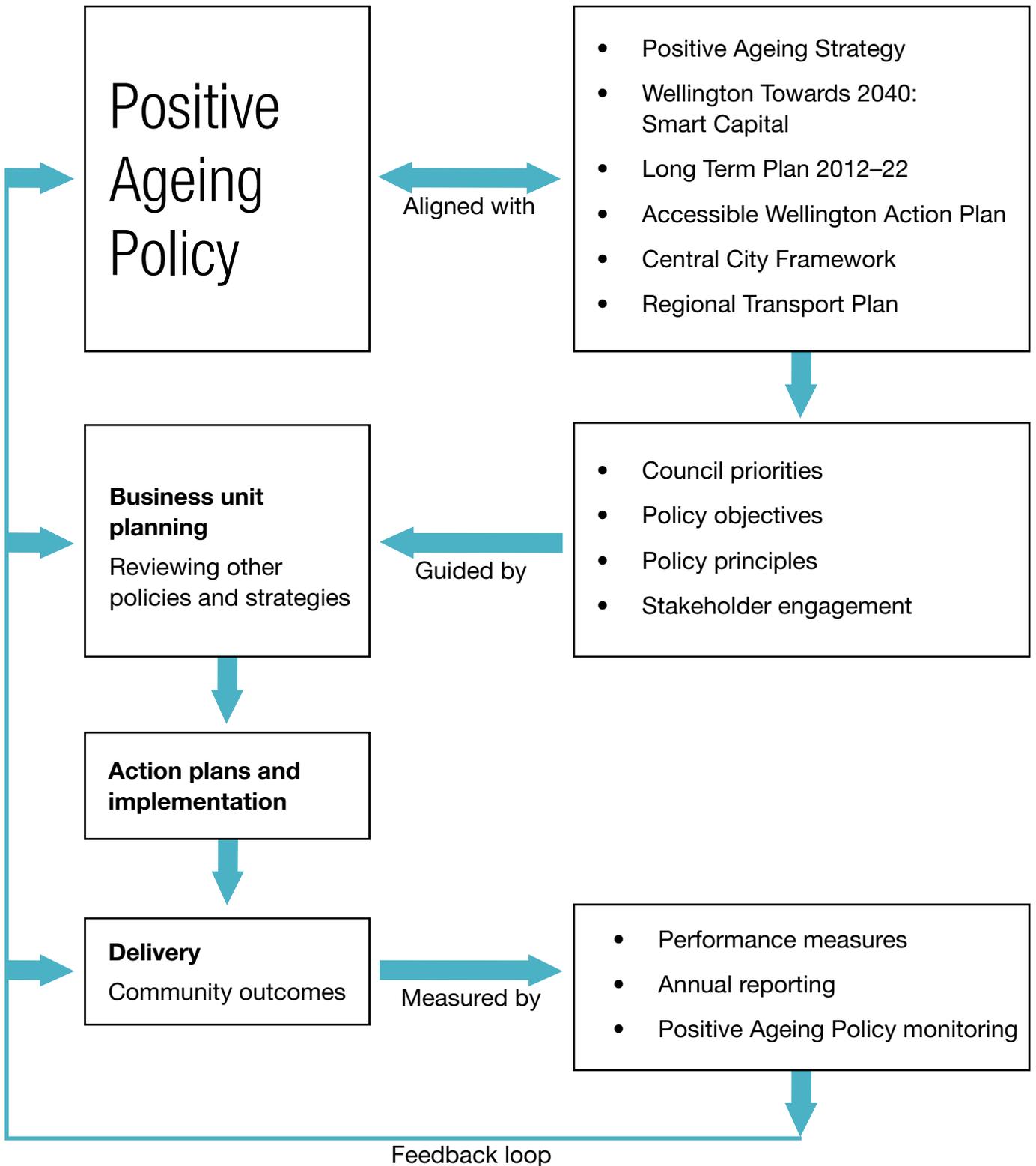
Challenges include changing attitudes towards retirement so that citizens prepare for a lifestyle change, yet remain active and engaged in the community and the workplace.

Policy approach

The policy approach promotes a comprehensive response to the impacts of ageing and priority needs as they arise. It consists of the following elements:

- Alignment with the intent of the national Positive Ageing Strategy and the Council’s strategic documents and plans.
- Principles to help guide the Council’s decision-making and planned activities.
- Objectives, Council roles and actions assigned to the strategic work areas in *Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital*.
- Measurement and monitoring of progress.

Diagram 1:
Alignment with key documents through to objectives and implementation





Alignment

Positive Ageing Strategy goals

Central government responded to the growing proportion of older people by developing the Positive Ageing Strategy (2001). This strategy affirms and supports the contributions of older people to society. It sets ten goals, each with a set of actions that aim to improve opportunities for older people to participate in the community. The Council's policy adopts these goals (except for those specifically concerned with rural issues) which are incorporated in the policy objectives and Council roles below.

Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital

In 2011, the Council adopted a vision for Wellington's future. This project considered the major drivers for change, and the ageing population was an important factor. Subsequent strategies, urban design frameworks and action plans will recognise and plan for the needs of an ageing population.

Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2012–22 outcomes

Councils are required to regularly develop and review their LTPs. These explain what the Council plans to achieve over a ten-year period, why it plans to do it, the associated costs and how it will be funded. Activity areas reflect the community outcomes desired by Wellingtonians, including those that impact on the ageing population.

Accessible Wellington Action Plan

This plan outlines a set of actions designed to improve Wellington's reputation as an inclusive and socially responsible city – one that is accessible, safe and easy to get around. It focuses on making the city and its facilities and services more accessible for those with physical limitations of any nature.

Other policies, strategies and plans will also be regularly reviewed. This provides the opportunity to refresh our thinking and consider what Council responses might be included to achieve the policy objectives.

Principles

The Council commits to some broad principles to help guide its decision-making processes and service provision, specifically:

- actively engaging older people in economic, social, and political decisions
- tangata whenua and our multi-cultural diversity will be recognised, valued and reflected in our city's culture
- acknowledging that ageing is a state of mind, not just a factor of age
- considering the impacts of an ageing population in its strategic decision-making, planning and consultation now and in the future
- working collegially, internally and with affected parties to help inform its decision-making and setting targets
- making decisions based on sound information and future needs
- sharing responsibility with central government and the community to promote the interests of older people
- focusing on older people's services, programmes and activities where it has greatest leverage and responsibility
- offering support to those who most need it
- providing opportunity to those who want it.

Outcome

A future position for the city is one:

- that embraces changing notions of 'retirement'
- where Wellington is a city of choice for older people who want to contribute to our social and economic vitality

- that is appealing to older people because they are stimulated by a variety of social interaction as their needs change over time.

Council roles

Because the policy provides a framework for future planning and provision of services, the four strategic areas of *Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital* are considered. These reflect the focus on positive ageing objectives.

Council roles are a mix of service provision, facilitation, advocacy to government agencies and communications. The four strategic areas are:

1. People-centred City – an open and welcoming city, with healthy and safe suburban communities

Role for the Council:

- consulting with older people's representative groups as part of its engagement framework
- providing an accountability framework, including a feedback loop, for older people's outcomes
- supporting the needs of an ageing population in its strategic, annual and long-term planning processes
- to keep informed on ageing population research and international best practice service delivery
- providing and promoting access to information required by older people in a form that recognises language and accessibility barriers
- promoting and supporting the retention of older persons living in the city

- supporting older people’s recreation, employment, community services, volunteering, life-long learning and use of technology
- promoting and supporting the diversity of the local population and the contributions made by older people
- supporting community resilience through neighbourhood programmes and support networks
- facilitating community collaboration and mobilisation of resources available for older people’s needs
- ensuring that safety programmes in the city consider the needs and rights of older people
- including older people as a target group in the provision of social housing, recreational programmes and information services
- promoting healthy living for an ageing population
- supporting a responsive social sector for the city, social cohesiveness and a strong volunteer sector
- providing opportunities for active and less-active recreation that are diverse, safe, affordable, accessible and attractive.

2. Connected City – effective and efficient infrastructure

Role for the Council:

- planning and providing adequate parking and public transport
- promoting a public transport system that is accessible and affordable
- planning for the city to be pedestrian and cycle-friendly
- providing access to a digital environment.

3. Eco-City – an urban environment reflects our needs and values

Role for the Council:

- providing accessibility options in open and public spaces
- promoting sustainable energy and reducing household costs
- planning a walkable city, sheltered corridors and attractive open spaces
- involving volunteers and older people’s organisations in environmental projects.

4. Dynamic Central City – the central city accommodates the changing demands of an ageing population

Role for the Council:

- ensuring the city and its amenities are accessible
- supporting the retention of ageing skilled workers and flexible work arrangements
- promoting city activities targeted at an older age group for entertainment, investment, employment, community development and social networking objectives.



Measurement and monitoring

A three-tier measurement and monitoring regime will be used. This involves a hierarchy from assessing city-wide trends through to annual reporting of activities by the Council. This way, the actions of central government agencies, community organisations and the Council are captured and reported. The three areas are:

Research and evaluation

City trends for older people can be analysed from census data to determine factors such as accommodation types, the retention of older people in the city and income and employment levels. There is also a growing body of ageing-related research that can be collated and applied to Wellington.

Assessing progress

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) age-friendly checklist provides a useful assessment tool to regularly test how the city measures in responding to the needs of ageing citizens. This checklist covers activities that the Council can influence. These include transportation, outdoor spaces, housing, social participation, communications and information, respect and social inclusion, social participation and civic participation and employment.

These factors will be modified in the WHO checklist to reflect Wellington-specific conditions and needs.

Council activities

From a Council perspective, existing measurement and monitoring processes can be used or adapted. The annual ratepayer survey information used to inform the Council's annual report can, in some cases, be analysed by age groupings. This would measure each of the seven work areas, telling how older people rated Council performance, their use of facilities and perception of things such as safety in the city.

Other specific measures related to Council activities that can be included in annual plans are:

- Council housing – waiting times and percentage of elderly tenants
- transport – number of mobility parks and the public provision of mobility equipment
- recreation – number of Leisure Card holders (65-plus).