

# A Journey through Kaipara



*Telling the story of the Kaipara  
Community Outcomes Process  
Steering Group*

## **Foreword and Acknowledgements**

### **Introduction**

- Kaipara: the place
- Community Outcomes: the context

### **1. Community outcomes – the background for Kaipara**

### **2. The parties involved in the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

### **3. The role and purpose of the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

### **4. Putting it together: the project groups and their outcomes**

- Destination Pouto
- Access to Services
- Kaipara Youth Connections

### **5. Reflecting on the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

- What has worked well
- Current challenges
- Some insights

### **6. Looking to the future**

### **7. A final word**

### **Appendix One: Community Outcomes and Priorities: Project Team Terms of Reference**

### **Appendix Two: The Partnership Continuum**

## Foreword

The Department of Internal Affairs actively supports collaboration between local authorities, central government agencies, Māori and a wide range of non-government organisations, to enable more effective planning and better coordination and application of community resources.

This report focuses on collaboration among multiple agencies working together in a particular locality, Kaipara District, a rural, isolated community in Northland New Zealand. It was developed with the Interface Facilitation Team, which is part of the Local Government and Community Branch of the Department. The team has a role collecting and sharing good practice and experiences of collaboration as part of its work to strengthen central and local government relationships.

The story of the Kaipara Community Outcomes Process Steering Group (K-COP) is reported here as a resource to guide other people who are working to develop inter-agency networks and projects in their own areas. These are projects that aim to solve complex issues and achieve community wellbeing.

## Acknowledgements

This report recognises the valuable input from a number of members of K-COP. Their honest and thoughtful contributions form the basis of this document.

Jack McKerchar	Chief Executive, Kaipara District Council
Beth Neill	Social Development Manager, Ministry of Social Development
Leonie McGee	Regional Relationship Manager, Family and Community Services, Ministry of Social Development
Lisa Kidwell	Community Development and Funding Advisor, Department of Internal Affairs
Ken Kawiti	Labour Market Knowledge Manager, Department of Labour
Carol Ashton	Regional Manager, Career Services
Sheryl Davis	Kaiwhakarite, Te Puni Kokiri
Deb Harding	Manager, Te Uri o Hau Tangata Development Ltd
Debbie Evans	Chief Executive, Kaipara Community Health Trust
Raewyn Fowlie	Contracts Manager, Kaipara Care Inc PHO

## **Introduction**

This is the story of the experiences of interagency representatives involved in Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP) since its establishment in 2001. K-COP aims to develop and support the achievement of community outcomes<sup>1</sup> in the Kaipara District through collaboration between central government, local government and key community organisations.

This report documents the work of the steering group, captures steering group members' reflections on good practice, and their ideas on next steps. In so doing, the project aims to inform and strengthen ongoing and future collaboration in Kaipara and elsewhere.

### **Kaipara: the place**

Kaipara District is located at the entrance to Northland in the far North of the North Island, New Zealand. With 18,132 people, Kaipara ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in size of the 73 territorial authorities in New Zealand. Stretching from the west to the east coast, Kaipara covers 306 square kilometres and borders the Kaipara Harbour, the largest harbour in the Southern Hemisphere. The economy is based on pastoral farming and, to a lesser extent, horticulture, forestry and tourism.

Kaipara District Council is the seat of local government for the district. The Council provides local leadership and facilitates the delivery of services and activities that promote community wellbeing under the Local Government Act 2002. The Council has a lead role in working with central government and other agencies to progress the community's economic, social, cultural and environmental priorities, and in taking a collaborative approach to achieving the community's vision for the future.

K-COP is based in Dargaville.

### **Community outcomes: the context**

Community outcomes statements create a picture of what local communities want for their future social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. Communities identify their outcomes through processes led by their local authority. The outcomes are a guide for groups and government agencies serving the community. They reflect:

- a desired result
- the things that are important to people in a community
- what people want for their community in the future.

They provide a high-level focus that enables different organisations to work together to achieve common goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Community outcomes describe the priorities a district or region identifies that are important to the current or future social, economic, environmental or cultural wellbeing of the community

## **1. Community outcomes – the background for Kaipara**

Kaipara District Council began considering new ways to engage with its local communities prior to the passing of the Local Government Act in 2002.

Recognising the importance of local and central government and other organisations working together to promote community wellbeing, K-COP was brought together by the Council to oversee the process of identifying community outcomes. By the time the Act was passed, Kaipara was well on the way to developing a shared responsibilities approach to facilitating community outcomes processes.

*“Kaipara... were proactive in bringing people together before the Local Government Act 2002. There was strategic thinking and the staff were in place to do that thinking and take action. It was clear that the Mayor, Councillors and staff were aligned and there was shared leadership. The community were involved in conversations about who they were and prioritising outcomes, particularly those at the southern entrance to Dargaville and connected to the Twin Coast State Highway project.”*

### **The K-COP Steering Group**

The Steering Group involved:

- key government agencies - Te Puni Kokiri, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Social Development
- local/regional bodies - Northland District Health Board, Northland Regional Council and the Kaipara District Economic Development Trust (also known as the Kaipara Development Agency)
- local iwi/hāpu - Te Uri o Hau<sup>2</sup>, Ngati Whatua and Te Roroa.

It served the immediate purpose of setting up community consultation processes in various Kaipara localities to identify community outcomes.

The political arm of the Council was also supportive. The Mayor at the time was actively involved in promoting a collaborative approach with government agencies.

The Steering Group also had support from the Northland Intersectoral Forum, a regional network of local government chief executives and regional managers from central government agencies.

### **Kaipara – Our Future – Together consultation process**

In late 2002, the Council organised numerous community consultation opportunities under the banner ‘Kaipara – Our Future – Together’. These ran throughout the latter part of 2003 and provided the people of the Kaipara with an opportunity to have their say about the future of the district.

As well as distributing feedback pamphlets to all households and organising a telephone survey of 300 residents, Council and Steering Group members held

---

<sup>2</sup> Te Uri o Hau also has an MOU with Kaipara District Council that outlines the roles, responsibilities and relationship between the two parties.

thirteen community meetings around the District. Meetings were also held with iwi and hapū, visits were made to schools, and three meetings were held with employee groups.

In total over 850 responses were received from a district of 6,435 households (2001 Census), signalling significant interest from local people:

*“People joined in and by the time the council went out with its Long Term Council Community Plan in 2003, people had decided what was important. There were new ideas, people were coming home, new businesses were being established.”*

### **Kaipara’s community outcomes**

From the process of working alongside their local communities, the Council was able to identify and quickly prioritise four outcomes for the wellbeing of the District.

#### **The Community Outcomes**

<b>Sustainable economy</b>	Kaipara District has a diversified and sustainable economy that supports the wellbeing of its communities and residents.
<b>Strong communities</b>	Kaipara District is built on strong communities where people have a sense of belonging and work together to shape their collective future.
<b>Safety and a good quality of life</b>	Kaipara District is a safe place to live and raise a family, where people enjoy a good quality of life.
<b>Special character and healthy environment</b>	Kaipara District is proud of and renowned for its beautiful environment and sound management of natural resources, where residents enjoy a clean, healthy environment.

A *Kaipara Scorecard* was developed from the four community outcomes. This enabled the community outcomes to be used by Council, government agencies and other organisations to inform and guide their planning and decision-making.

The *Kaipara Scorecard* identified key areas to be monitored in achieving the outcomes. Thus it put in place a framework of accountability of these bodies to the Kaipara District and its communities.

### **Early focus on social policy**

The alignment between Kaipara District Council’s political wing (led by the Mayor), the Council’s Chief Executive and policy staff meant that the Council was able to advocate to central government, on behalf of the district, for a policy focus on social wellbeing.

To this end, Kaipara District Council and the Ministry of Social Development’s Regional Commissioner worked together to secure a social policy advisor position in the Ministry of Social Development’s regional office in Whangarei. A component of this pilot position was to develop an interagency response to the community

priorities. The position, established in 2003, was the first of a number of Ministry of Social Development policy positions to be regionally based.

*"This was really creative - for a small Council to take the opportunity to negotiate and argue for the value of a large Ministry doing work with such a small Council."*

### **Developing the Terms of Reference**

With momentum building, the interagency Steering Group was expanded and became formalised. In 2004/5, with the assistance of the Department of Internal Affairs central-local government Interface Facilitation Team, terms of reference were developed for the Steering Group (See Appendix One: Community Outcomes and Priorities: Project Team Terms of Reference).

The expected results were:

- more informed decision-making by organisations to better meet community outcomes
- better coordination and use of government and community resources within the Kaipara District
- stronger relationships between agencies, organisations and community.

The focus of K-COP began to shift to look at how to address the outcomes identified by the community. As a result, other organisations and groups that could also contribute towards achieving community well-being were brought into K-COP. This was with a view to developing joint projects, through smaller working groups (now called project groups), and bringing them together under the K-COP umbrella.

K-COP explicitly aimed at developing better collaboration and working relationships with, and between, central government agencies that were delivering services in Kaipara, and the Council.

*"Having the [Steering] Group helps keep Dargaville in the focus and attention of government departments, and we get to see what other agencies are doing."*

*"The original purpose of the group is still important – to leverage resources for Kaipara. It was successful for getting Kaipara on the radar and into the focus of central government agencies."*

For Council's leaders, the process of developing these relationships was vital. Through the establishment of connections and trust-based relationships the various agencies were able to work together in new and practical ways, for the first time.

*"Council used its newly forged relationship with central government to bring other skills to work alongside theirs – it was unusual for small Councils to have the confidence to work in an all-embracing way with central government."*

## **2. The parties involved in the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

When K-COP became formalised and permanent in 2004/5, a number of other organisations joined, and three project groups were established.

The number of agencies involved in K-COP continues to expand. The view of the Council's Chief Executive, who leads K-COP meetings<sup>3</sup>, is that "any agency that delivers in Kaipara is welcome" and "the group is as wide as who wants to be there."

Interestingly, there has generally been little 'churn' of representatives. For many other coordinating groups the continual changing of personnel is an issue because of the lack of continuity. This lack of 'churn' is possibly a comment on the relatively stable nature of the workforce in the Northland public sector.

### **The organisations at the K-COP table**

Organisations which have a representative who attend meetings on a regular or occasional basis currently include:

- Accident Compensation Corporation
- Career Services
- Community Employment Group<sup>4</sup>
- Department of Conservation (DOC)
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Enterprise Northland
- Family and Community Services (FACS)
- Housing NZ Corporation
- Kaipara Care Inc PHO
- Kaipara Community Health Trust
- Kaipara District Council
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Social Development (including Work and Income)
- Ministry of Youth Development
- Ngati Whatua
- Northland Disability Resource Centre
- Northland District Health Board (Public Health Unit)
- Northland Regional Council<sup>5</sup>
- NZ Police
- Sport Northland<sup>6</sup>
- Te Puni Kokiri
- Te Roroa
- Te Uri o Hau

---

<sup>3</sup> The Council also provides the secretariat, venue and catering

<sup>4</sup> The Kaipara Mayor at the time lobbied successfully for the Community Employment Group (CEG) of the Department of Labour to dedicate a resource to Kaipara, specifically the Pouto peninsula, to work on community employment issues. For this reason CEG was represented on K-COP before Department of Internal Affairs, with its wider more generic funding responsibilities. The Department of Labour's Knowledge Manager took the place of CEG on K-COP, but this position was itself disestablished in June 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The Kaipara Development Agency is no longer operating.

<sup>6</sup> This agency is responsible for the Northland region's health and physical activity strategy.

- Tertiary Education Commission
- Transit NZ (now NZ Transport Agency)

### **Diversity and decision makers**

K-COP is a hugely diverse group, and involves a number of players not normally involved in combined government-community fora<sup>7</sup>.

*"It's a good forum to be represented at. It's great to be able to meet with other services that play a role in service delivery in different ways for example, roading, transport, DoC. It's been a good reporting forum for sharing information."*

*"It's a way of finding out what big projects that are happening that may relate to us, and people get to know what we are planning. You can bring up projects – there is an agenda – and there's a good range of representatives, not just the usual suspects. For example, Transit and DoC are there."*

*"It's an interesting mix of government agencies and local groups. There's good agency buy-in – Ministry of Youth Development, Department of Internal Affairs etc. There's real value in agencies providing services getting together and aligning their work."*

Agencies are generally represented by 'decision-makers' - regional managers, or key advisory staff. Most of the agencies are based in Whangarei but several representatives travel from Auckland.

### **K-COP structure – information sharing and project groups**

K-COP meets about four times a year, attracting 30-40 people to meetings. The first half of the day is spent sharing information as a group, and the second half is for work-shopping specific issues or topics.

Under the Steering Group sit informal project groups. These are action-focused work streams related to the community outcomes, mainly, though not entirely, concerned with projects that have developed around the 'strong communities' outcome.

The groups have been active for different lengths of time, and progress ideas initiated by either the Steering Group or by themselves.

In addition to Steering Group representatives, the groups also provide an opportunity for other agency personnel to play a role in action to achieve community outcomes.

The project groups also reflect the core business of the agencies involved and provide an opportunity for agency staff to work in a different way – that is, collaboratively. They were able to make a difference in a practical sense, at a local

---

<sup>7</sup> The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is an example of a department that does not regularly participate in community forums like K-COP. But in Kaipara, where physical infrastructural issues have a huge impact on local communities (roading, transport issues) NZTA is a K-COP participant. DoC is another agency that does not normally have a permanent presence on such groupings, but again, in the case of Kaipara, attends K-COP meetings.

level. They felt they had more power to 'make things happen'. It is in the project groups that 'the rubber meets the road.'

### **3. The role and purpose of the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

The role of K-COP is to monitor progress on the jointly initiated projects, while continuing to identify further opportunities that would benefit from collaboration. This formal role, and the expected outcomes of the Steering Group (as outlined in the Terms of Reference), are paralleled by the more informal roles that K-COP plays.

#### **Networking and relationship building**

Being involved on K-COP means different things to different agencies but all see the networking and relationship building role as fundamental to progressing community outcomes.

*“The Steering Group provides huge opportunities for collaborative work on issues such as transport. Work on initiatives will go on anyway. Connections from the steering group make it easier to get directly to the right people. Joint thinking is done – and is needed on things like access to services and economic opportunities in Kaipara.”*

*“It’s about keeping in touch – it’s not easy to keep in touch when there are no formalised networks. A lot of people are working part-time and on multiple projects so there is little time to connect, reflect and share information. Changes in people doing the work can mean the original purpose for the project or the work is lost – the steering group can keep the history about why are we doing this. It’s also important to communicate the project and objectives to those who will be involved.”*

The CE of Kaipara District Council agrees:

*“It may not be particularly identifiable but things do happen. The aim is to get enthusiastic people round the table...even just for a social chat – just getting to know the other people....there’s been good engagement...there will be a whole lot of things that have happened because of the group...we hope that people will take initiatives – projects may come up apart from the group, just because of the links and relationships that have been made because of the group.”*

#### **Focusing on productivity, not process**

While the CE sees the role of the Steering Group is to “do on the ground some of the things that the Northern Intersectoral Forum aspires to do regionally” it is acknowledged that achieving this is not a linear or time-bound process, and requires time and patience.

At this point in the Steering Group’s development, the original purpose and scope, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, is not a critical driver for their leadership.<sup>8</sup>

Nor does the CE want to see K-COP tied up with unnecessary paperwork – developing project plans and so on. The focus is on the best use of people’s time.

---

<sup>8</sup> In fact, none of the people interviewed referred to the Terms of Reference document [see appendix one](#).

The CE sees this as developing processes that build the informal trust-based relationships critical to K-COP's future.

*"We're quite happy to have the uncertainty of it not doing anything for a while, as long as it keeps bubbling along...the last 18 months have focused on getting people together and talk about why are we here and what do we want to achieve."*

#### **4. Putting it together: the project groups and their outcomes**

In a general sense, the services and activities undertaken by Council, government agencies and other organisations to address community needs are already benefiting from increased collaboration between key parties.

A number of the priorities raised through the community outcomes process were identified as opportunities to work collaboratively, and project groups formed around three of these – Destination Pouto, Access to Services, and Kaipara Youth Connections.

##### **Project groups**

###### ***Destination Pouto***

The Pouto peninsula (south of Dargaville, bordering the Northern Wairoa River as it enters the Kaipara Harbour) is becoming a popular destination, with an increasing number of visitors arriving during summertime. However, there was a lack of facilities to support this influx.

The overall aim of this initiative was to ensure that tourism in the area was managed in a way that provided the maximum benefit for the community while safeguarding the environment. As such, the project contributed to three of the four community outcomes: 'sustainable economy', 'strong communities', 'special character and healthy environment'.

While this project initially preceded K-COP, Kaipara District Council and the Department of Conservation took a lead in developing the project with involvement from other project partners - the Kaipara Development Agency, Te Uri o Hau, Community Employment Group and the Pouto community.

The project objectives were to establish toilet facilities, erect appropriate signage, develop the wharf and ensure environmental management of sand dunes and other site access.

With the achievement of all the project objectives the Destination Pouto working group was disestablished. The Council and the Department of Conservation have continued to work together on progressing environmental outcomes in the area.

###### ***Access to Services***

Due to the relatively small, generally rural population of the Kaipara, ensuring that services reach those who require them can be a challenge.

This project aimed to contribute to the community outcomes of 'strong communities' and 'safety and a good quality of life' by ensuring that:

- the services currently available to Kaipara residents could continue to be made accessible in an efficient and cost effective way

- up-to-date information from service providers was readily accessible to front-line staff in community organisations and government agencies, as well as the wider community.

The project was built on the foundations of the already established Heartlands Services Centre and was initially led by Work and Income. Other project partners included the Accident Compensation Commission, Northland Disability Resource Centre, Northland Health/Kaipara Care Incorporated, Te Ha O Te Oranga, Department of Internal Affairs, Family and Community Services, Te Uri o Hau and Kaipara District Council.

Activities included a road-show to small Kaipara communities, an inter-agency staff training forum, and a successful '*Kaipara: our future – together*' Expo held in Dargaville.

Following these initiatives, and led by Family and Community Services and Te Uri o Hau, the project group took on the role of Steering Group for the Local Services Mapping exercise, the report for which is almost complete.

While the working group has not met since completing the Local Services Mapping work, there is interest in the group organising another Expo.

### ***Kaipara Youth Connections***

The community outcomes process identified gaps in services and opportunities available to youth in the district. The objective of Kaipara Youth Connections was to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities and needs for young people after they leave high school.

The work contributed to the community outcomes of 'strong communities' and 'safety and a good quality of life.'

This project group was led by the Ministry of Social Development and partners included Work and Income, Tertiary Education Commission, Career Services, Te Uri o Hau and the New Zealand Police.

The group has a role in bringing youth worker positions to Kaipara, including one at the local high school. The group also contributes to other inter-departmental youth initiatives including a regional 'Engaging Tai Tamariki in Learning' strategy, which focuses on educating young Maori.

The project group continues to meet formally and informally about a number of specific agency initiatives, though these are not necessarily all Kaipara-based.

## **5. Reflecting on the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

### **What has worked well**

K-COP and Council's community outcomes processes have involved each agency in its own learning. This has impacted differently on the way individuals have subsequently worked.

As a general rule, representatives from all of the agencies interviewed found a number of 'shared positives' from being involved in K-COP.

### ***Efficient use of resources***

Group members spoke of the valuable role K-COP has played in both maximising and focusing resources in Kaipara, helping to get the right resource to the right place at the right time.

*"K-COP was a catalyst for people to start thinking about what they were doing together and 'knowing together', rather than stumbling round, doing things on their own. We had to think - what are we already doing that fits in with the Kaipara community outcomes? And what could we be doing?"*

*"It's useful to have a collective voice for Kaipara and to hear about the broader objectives of organisations and agencies. A lot of goals and objectives are similar and the network provides opportunities to think about the best use of resources around where and what is happening."*

*"There's been joint thinking done – for example on access to services – and more is needed, like on how to open-up economic opportunities. The opportunities are huge for collaborative work on issues such as transport. Agencies will continue to work on initiatives, and the network connections made makes it easier to get directly to the right people."*

### ***Networking and relationship building***

K-COP members valued the work-related networks developed through involvement in K-COP, and how personal relationships (putting faces to names) could benefit both their own work and the work of K-COP.

*"It makes people commit to a particular thing in Kaipara, and look at how a group or an organisation can be used. It's meant to be more than just introducing yourself and saying what you do. It's useful depending on where projects are at. You can use the Steering Group to target people at that level for your own organisation's objectives. You can use it as a reference, you can utilise the role of the group, and the links to key agencies."*

*"The work and networking might have gone on anyway, but the group played an important part. It was visionary at start - now networking and information sharing is accepted behaviour. It makes it easier to contact the right people. New funding and projects are attracted to the idea that everyone is working together – they pick Kaipara because we are working together."*

*“The K-COP Steering Group has meant personal connections. When a problem comes over your desk, you can go to the right person in an organisation or agency – it makes it much easier to connect.”*

### ***Diversity, leadership, and limited ‘churn’***

As mentioned earlier, people commented positively on two particular characteristics of K-COP – the limited ‘churn’ of representatives, and the wide range of agencies represented.

People saw this as a product of the strong leadership role of the Kaipara District Council – agency representatives needed to be at this important forum and needed to be seen there, it was not a job to be delegated.

K-COP has also given agencies new experiences – both working with other agencies with whom they were not familiar, and also engaging at the coal-face with local people through the project groups.

There is a strongly held view that the Kaipara District Council led the way amongst local authorities in challenging government agencies to be accountable for the delivery of the outputs they are charged with ‘on the ground.’

### **Current challenges**

After some eight years of existence, K-COP has reached a ‘point of maturation,’<sup>9</sup> and there are a range of issues members identified as concerning. These can be grouped into three main areas.

#### ***1. The role of K-COP in a crowded intersectoral landscape***

Kaipara (and particularly Dargaville, where K-COP is based) is known as having strong and deep links within the local social services sector. As one K-COP participant commented there are ‘networks to Africa’ in Kaipara.

In particular there is an active Community Networkers Group, made of local health and education providers, that has regular meetings that some K-COP members attend.

There was debate as to whether K-COP, and more particularly the Access to Services and Youth Connections project groups, overlapped and duplicated the role of the Community Networkers Group.

As well as local Kaipara-based coordinating groups, a number of inter-departmental groupings exist in the Northland region: the Northland Labour Market Forum and the Northern Intersectoral Forum, for example.

---

<sup>9</sup> One K-COP member referred to the stages of group processes with regard to K-COP (forming, storming, norming, performing, transforming or adjourning) but did not express an opinion on what stage K-COP was at. While no K-COP members referred to the partnership model continuum (co-existence, networking, co-operation, collaboration, partnership head and heart), the evidence suggests that K-COP would sit at the co-operation/collaboration point on the continuum (see appendix two).

People were unclear whether K-COP connected with the Northern Intersectoral Forum, and what the relationship is between the two groups, particularly in the current political/economic environment.

*"I'm unsure what is happening now – the Northern Intersectoral Forum may have detracted from K-COP and increased focus on regional work."*

There was also a lack of clarity about where departmental plans, such as Local Service Mapping, fit with K-COP, whether they are explicitly linked to the community outcomes agenda, and if so, in what way.

There was a sense that some discussion about the roles of, and relationships between, the different organisations and their plans would be useful at this point.

## **2. The current status of K-COP and its project groups**

There is a perception held by most of those interviewed that K-COP has lost momentum over the last couple of years.

*"Sometimes there's frustration – I'm not sure what's going on or why we are there."*

*"It could maybe do with a bit more focus."*

*"It was visionary at the start – it feels that over time that the group has lost direction – are we just ticking boxes?"*

There were also some queries about the level and type of activity occurring in the project groups.

*"I'm unclear as to what the project groups were and where they're at now."*

*"Some things are in danger of just being 'tick box' exercises."*

*"What has it achieved? [Kaipara District Council's] drive for projects to be developed and happen didn't work."*

Some expressed the view that K-COP needed to be more open to the reality that all members had different and specific areas of responsibility, and attended as representatives of their organisations.

*"As a representative of a government agency, am I going to get bagged if I am not doing the right thing, when I can only improve on our core business?"*

*"It can be quite simplistic – for example 'if you people just aligned services' – it's not that simple. And it can be quite divisive – sometimes you can feel publicly attacked."*

Rather than challenging participants to get out of their silos, the consensus was that acknowledging the diverse nature of K-COP and exploring 'what can we work on together from our differing perspectives' would be a useful and timely approach to take.

### **3. The future direction of K-COP: the need for renewal**

The main challenge expressed was the need for new thinking within K-COP. This does not mean new people, but an injection of new ideas from existing members.

*"There was high energy in Kaipara District Council from 2001 to 2006/07. The group needs another injection of energy."*

*"It seems like it is time for people to invest in a group project (but) how do we prioritise and agree?"*

*"The group needs some achievements - runs on the board."*

While a diversity of views was expressed as to what is specifically needed<sup>10</sup>, there was a unanimous desire to be part of an active process to refresh K-COP. Members felt they have an investment in ensuring that K-COP continues to have traction within the Kaipara district, and to provide an example of good practice of central-local government/community sector collaboration.

#### **Some insights**

While K-COP works within one specific location, other organisations that are seeking to bring central government, local government and key community sector organisations together for a common purpose can learn from K-COP's experience.

#### **1. K-COP's role as a facilitator of networks, an information clearinghouse and a grower of collaborative practices**

*"It's another useful network - new people to connect to – and [a source of] government department information."*

*"The forum is a good place to learn about everyone's work and services – we assume that people know what is going on – but we have to keep updating the information. It plays a really important role of information sharing – who is doing what, what funding is around, who's using it."*

*"It provides a two-way link with what is going on – about personnel changes and updates to networks."*

#### **2. K-COP's role in providing critical leverage**

People pointed out the value K-COP adds by giving weight to a project, providing the opportunity to pool existing resources, and to link what would otherwise be discrete individual projects together.

*"The Steering Group is an opportunity for us to talk about collaborative projects currently in place or to be initiated. We can then look at pooling resources towards projects."*

---

<sup>10</sup> As examples, some people felt that K-COP needed dedicated project funding; others felt K-COP's lack of funding was "liberating"; some suggested meeting at different locations and having a revolving chairperson, while others felt the group needed the opposite at the moment to enhance its stability, consistency and cohesion.

*"Local Services Mapping would have happened in the Kaipara but having the Access to Services project group work as the steering group was really useful for pulling information together quickly."*

*"It's an opportunity to test ideas with heads of Departments – what works, what other links can be made – where is the money?"*

**3. K-COP's ability to maximise relationship-based networks and the capacity of organisations:**

K-COP has helped foster personal relationships and networks between agency representatives, and by so doing has opened up the institutional knowledge of agencies to practical effect.

*"The decisions we made were evidence based on the statistics we all had, plus anecdotal - based on people's personal knowledge."*

Its ability to harness the human and organisational capacity of a wide range of agencies on a consistent basis has given K-COP a vast stock of knowledge to draw on.

## 6. Looking to the future

Many measurable accomplishments have resulted from people working together through K-COP and its project groups. Many intangible benefits have also occurred. These achievements are equally important and both illustrate the value of K-COP.

*"Tangible things get done but the intangibles are important for long term work and development."*

This dual foundation of good process and clear outcomes is a strong base from which K-COP can plan its future direction.

### ***Reflecting on the past and looking to the future***

While this report was not intended as a review of K-COP, it has provided an opportunity for those involved to pause on the K-COP journey, reflect on their role in, take stock and think about the next step.

*"We need to go back to, and remind people of, the original Terms of Reference."*

*"We don't need to spend more time explaining what we do – that just confirms some peoples' frustrations and view that all we do is talk."*

*"I think we need to ask how we make each other's work better. What new work could we be doing? How can we make 'business as usual' work together?"*

There has been heightened awareness of the commitment required to keep an inter-sectoral organisation active and responsive, especially over a period of several years.

There are challenges in sustaining a coordinating group, as no one organisation has ownership of it. Each person comes to the group with accountabilities to their own organisation.

### ***The importance of council leadership***

The main reason that K-COP has continued for many years is the Council's active leadership role.

This leadership has given K-COP consistency with a key organisation in the area committed to the group in an ongoing way. The Council CE reflects this:

*"I want the agency people to be part of the solution for making Kaipara a better place. I don't have a mortgage on good ideas, so, given the above comment, I like to have the issues identified and let the group come up with the ideas. They should even challenge the issues I raise, and they sometimes do, because it is only by full, committed input from everyone that will we make progress."*

*"I see myself facilitating their potential, not driving my ideas into the Steering Group."*

The close association with Council and its senior management has also given K-COP the authority and mana that is often lacking in coordinating bodies.

*"The CE does try and make it a real working group – we're given homework to come back with at the next meeting. We have to be prepared to attend and support. Continuity is an issue of you have a big project on."*

#### **A 'strategic broker' to provide continuity**

However, apart from the Council's CE, K-COP lacks any dedicated human resource, and follow-up between meetings can be limited. The CE described following up K-COP members as akin to "herding butterflies".

K-COP members also identified a gap in terms of the responsibility to keep a handle on what is happening, be an active point of liaison with the project groups, and, as one person commented, start to lock-down decision-making.

*"Between meetings – who drives, connects, who does the continuing follow-up?"*

*"The outcome process needs leadership and once there is engagement, energy and meaningful consultation and plans, there is a need to resource a salary for someone to keep it going and achieve the outcomes."*

*"Interagency groups like K-COP require ongoing nurturing and leadership."*

Given that it is neither realistic or appropriate for the CE to take on what is effectively a 'strategic broker' role, leadership of K-COP between meetings is an area of importance if the group is to move forward and take on further projects.

## **7. A final word on the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group (K-COP)**

K-COP's original *raison d'être*, as its full name suggests, was to assist and support Council to act in accordance with Kaipara's agreed community outcomes.

As such, K-COP has a specific mandate, purpose and focus. Each participant comes to the K-COP table as a representative of their organisation, with the ability to make decisions related to community outcomes from their organisation's own perspective and within their own particular areas of responsibility.

*"The Kaipara District Council [strategic planner] has the role to run the outcomes processes and tell us if we miss the mark. K-COP can contribute to parts, but not meet the needs of the whole thing, as each agency can really only find ways of working within their core business."*

K-COP is not an answer to all the issues facing Kaipara. However, its longevity and the specific activities that have happened because of it demonstrate its credibility and provide the pre-conditions for its ongoing presence in Kaipara.

Its achievements are in large part due to the recognition, as one K-COP member put it, that "individuals count and can change things."

From this base of growing relationship-based networks between key people whose organisations impact on Kaipara, K-COP has been able to develop viable project-based activities that progress the achievement of community outcomes.

From the small, relatively isolated and diverse district of Kaipara, straddling Northland's east and west coasts, K-COP provides rich lessons for others who are seeking to work together - central government, local government and the community sector, in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The K-COP journey continues.

## Appendix One

### Community Outcomes and Priorities: Project Team Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

The purposes of the Project Team are to:

- Identify community outcomes and priorities for the Kaipara District.  
This information will be used to guide the preparation of long term community plans at both the regional and district levels.  
It will also be used to identify outcomes for government departments (and other bodies) and as such provides a basis for service delivery strategies in the Kaipara.
- Establish a regular forum for monitoring progress against common plans with the community's desired outcomes.

#### Expected Outcomes

- Clear priorities for the development (social, economic, environmental and cultural) Kaipara District.
- Better decision making due by the District Council, Regional Council and other bodies being aligned with community objectives.
- Better co-ordination and application of community resources within the Kaipara.
- Better co-ordination and application of government resources within the Kaipara.
- Identifiable community outcomes (social, economic, environmental and cultural) on a District-wide basis.

#### Membership

Provisional Members of the Project Team include:

- Kaipara District Council
- Te Uri o Hau, Ngati Whatua<sup>11</sup>
- Ministry of Social Development
- Department of Conservation
- Kaipara District Economic Development Trust<sup>12</sup>
- Northland Regional Council
- Te Roroa
- Te Puni Kokiri
- Northland District Health Board

Kaipara District Council will take responsibility for facilitating project team meetings and providing administrative services.

---

<sup>11</sup> Pending the agreement, Te Uri o Hau will also represent the interests of Ngati Whatua.

<sup>12</sup> Pending the agreement of the Trust.

## Reporting

Regular progress reports should be made to:

- Northland Regional Council
- Northland Intersectoral Forum
- Kaipara District Council
- Ministry of Social Development

## Initial Key Tasks

The project team will be responsible for carrying out the following key tasks. It should be noted that the tasks need not be completed in the order given and some tasks would be able to be carried out concurrently.

1. Confirmation of the scope of the project and definition of terms.
2. Collation of issues and identification of existing priorities.
3. Design of a consultation process for identifying community outcomes and priorities.
4. Implement consultation process.
5. Prepare draft community outcomes and priorities.
6. Invite public submissions and conduct hearings
7. Revise draft and submit final report.
8. Establish forum for monitoring progress.

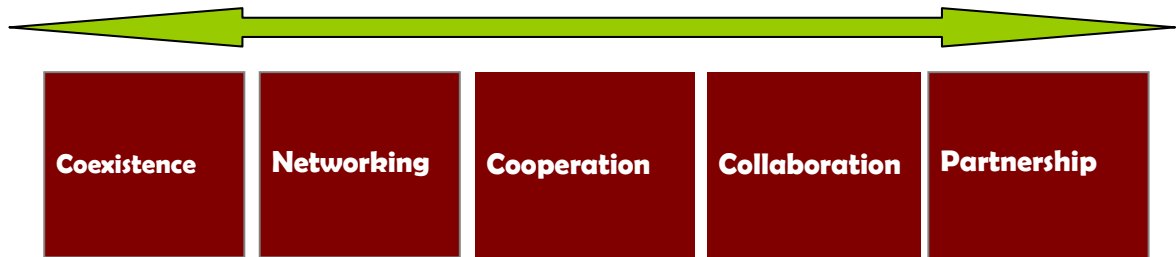
An important component of this process is the establishment of a forum that has ongoing responsibility for monitoring community outcomes and progress with the action plan.

## Assumptions

In preparing these terms of reference it is assumed that:

- The principles underlying Sections 73, 74 and 75 of the new Local Government Bill will be maintained although their current form may change.
- Government will remain committed to a 'whole of government' approach
- All of the information required to carry out this project is available through existing sources and there is no need to undertake any new research
- Members of the project team will make available their time to the project free of charge (with the exception of Te Roroa and Te Uri o Hau who will be funded by Te Puni Kokiri)
- Te Uri o Hau will represent the interests of Ngati Whatua
- Government agencies will support the process, allocate resources internally to consider its impact and be prepared to incorporate outcome measures and work collaboratively to achieve them.

## Appendix Two: the Partnering Continuum



### **CO-EXISTENCE**

- Know about each other but don't need to come together.

### **NETWORKING**

- Informal discussions, information sharing is the basis. It's about knowing and understanding who's doing what.

### **CO-OPERATION**

- Acknowledgment of common issues/interests/agendas.
- May involve helping another organisation to achieve their project/task etc but no ongoing or formal commitment to each other.

### **COLLABORATION**

- Trust is implicit. It's based on negotiated and agreed actions. Don't have to share same base values but have an agreed set of principles for working together.
- Sometimes documentation prepared to support different types of collaborative effort.

### **PARTNERSHIP (HEAD AND HEART)**

- Work from an agreed shared values base e.g. trust, honesty, openness etc.
- Is formal with contractual and relationship obligations.