

Policy committee - establishing a framework within which we can develop a policy platform

Policy committee should be developed in line with these ideas: [sociocracy](#), [fractal](#), [decentralised networks](#).

Following the idea of being fractal, the policy committee should be organised in as similar way as possible to the Board.

To maintain independence of policy and adhere to our value of #researchsays, the Policy Committee links directly to the Board and has no reporting lines to any other part of Civic, including the CEO Group. The Policy Committee may establish policy circles to work on specific policy issues. These circles do not link to any other part of the Civic organisation.

Who is on the Policy Committee and how are they chosen?

If we follow the principles of double linked circles from Sociocracy, then the Board would appoint the leader of the Policy Committee. The leader of the Policy Committee would become a voting member of the Board, if they were not already. The Policy Committee would elect a representative, who would also become a member of the Board. (If this is in addition to the elected positions, that could make the Board up to 10 members.)

For now all the members of the Policy Committee will be appointed by the Board, until we can adopt new rules at the first AGM. (In those rules we might consider whether we want some of the Policy Committee to be elected positions.)

There should be a core of permanent (say 2 or 3 year terms) members, and the ability to appoint subject matter experts as needed. Any policy circle established would add 2 temporary members to the Policy Committee - the appointed leader and the elected representative.

For practicality there should be a limit to how many policy circles can be active at one time. My gut says no more than 3, but fewer is better. So there could be a maximum of 6 temporary Policy Committee members at any time.

To keep numbers manageable I would suggest there should therefore be only 3 or 4 permanent members of the Policy Committee.

Do we want any requirements for people to be members of the Policy Committee? Do we want to have diversity requirements, such as gender and ethnicity? Do we want to require a qualification level, such as postgrad study or experience conducting research? I suggest that of the maximum 4 permanent members of the Policy Committee, one should be not a man, one should be not white, and one should have research experience - a Masters (with

research thesis component) or PhD, or equivalent research experience (as determined at the discretion of the Board).

(It probably isn't practical yet, given our small pool of resources, but in future it might be good to separate the Policy Committee from the CEO Group in some way. That no one can be on both. Or that at least the leader of the Policy Committee can't be on the CEO Group.)

Proposal:

- That the Board establishes a Policy Committee
- That the Board appoints 3 - 4 people to the Policy Committee, including at least one each of: not a man, not white, has research experience.
- That the Board appoints a leader of the Policy Committee, who will become a member of the Board if they are not already
- That the Board gives the Policy Committee the power to establish subject matter policy circles - no more than 3 at any one time
- That the appointed leader and elected representative of the subject matter policy circles become members of the Policy Committee until that circle is disestablished.

How does the Policy Committee make decisions?

If we follow the decision making principles of Sociocracy, then every member of the Policy Committee has an equal vote, and the bar for decisions would be consent minus n.

The Committee should be given clear guidelines from the Board about what decisions they are supposed to be making and how to go about making them.

Purpose of the Policy Committee:

- to identify three policy priorities for Civic for the upcoming election.
- to determine the policy position of Civic for those three priority areas.
- To determine the policy position of Civic to future-proof the foundations of our society: representative government, competitive markets, rule of law, civil rights, social mobility, and science.
- to determine the policy position of Civic on any specific issue they are directed to consider by the Board

Identifying Policy Priorities

In identifying the three priority areas the Policy Committee will be guided by key concepts from the vision and mission:

- Our people thrive - utilitarianism, the greatest good for the greatest number; each person decides for themselves what "thriving" means for them.
 - We prioritise policies that can deliver the greatest increase to overall life satisfaction scores in NZ
- Our ecosystems thrive
 - We prioritise policies that will increase [a measure of ecosystems]

- Fairness
 - We prioritise policies that reduce inequalities in life satisfaction scores among groups in NZ
- Future proof society - long-term legacy over short-term gain
 - We prioritise policies that increase Adjusted National Savings in NZ
- Research-based policy
 - We use evidence to make these determinations, guided by available research on what works to increase these measures

Choosing a Policy Position

In choosing a policy position on a specific issue the Policy Committee will be guided by:

- The balance of the available evidence
- The hierarchy of evidence
- Lived experience of those who will be affected by the policy position

Where this evidence leads to a clear policy position the Policy Committee should still consider:

- whether an approach that has been successful overseas could be transferred into New Zealand culture
- Whether there are alternative solutions that would accomplish similar goals while requiring fewer changes
- Whether the policy breaches any obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi

Where this evidence does not lead to a clear policy position the Policy Committee may, at its discretion:

- survey the views and values of Civic members on an issue
- conduct a citizen jury or citizen assembly on an issue
- Develop a policy position calling for more evidence to be gathered in some way - perhaps a policy to improve data collection, or fund a research study or pilot project.