
CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT: 2013/14 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval for consultation and engagement to be undertaken for the 2013/14 Draft Annual Plan.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree the consultation and engagement activity for the 2013/14 Draft Annual Plan as outlined in this paper and the corresponding timetable.*
- 3. Agree to changes to oral hearings.*
- 4. Agree that the formal consultation period start 16 April and close at 5pm on 16 May 2013 with hearings scheduled 21-23 May 2013.*

3. Discussion

3.1 Background

The purpose of consultation and engagement on the 2013/14 Draft Annual Plan is to:

- provide the opportunity for the community to give feedback on proposed variations to the current Long-Term Plan including proposals for savings and income generation
- provide the opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process
- contribute to Council's accountability to the community

- detail the Council's annual budget and programme of activity for the 2013/14 financial year.

The Council's strategic direction, including the Community Outcomes and priorities in its 2012-22 Long-Term Plan, remain unchanged and are not subject to further consultation through this process.

3.2 Overall approach of the Draft Annual Plan

The draft Annual Plan will highlight and describe any planned variations from the activities and budgets contained within the Long-Term Plan; and explain why the changes are necessary.

3.3 Key messages of the Draft Annual Plan

It is proposed that the following key messages will be included in communication around the draft annual plan.

- This is the second year of the 2012-22 Long-Term Plan and so significant changes to Council's programmes are not being planned.
- Council is proposing to reduce its expenditure by \$9 million so that it can keep the average rates rise after growth in 2013/14 to 2.5%.
- This reduction in expenditure is largely being achieved by Council working smarter and reducing its internal operating costs.
- Some moderate changes to service levels are proposed in order to achieve this level of rate rise. These are detailed in our consultation documents and we would like the community's feedback on these.
- Council is committed to progressing key projects that contribute to its Smart Capital vision. These include projects like Destination Wellington which will help develop Wellington's economy as well as projects that will increase the resilience of our water and transport networks in the event of a natural disaster.
- A small number of proposals to increase progress towards our key priorities, and investigate future projects with a strategic focus, are also proposed in the draft plan.

3.4 Consultation and engagement

The Council is committed to ongoing improvements in its consultation and engagement processes. Following the discussions at the December and February workshops with Councillors on the 2013/14 Annual Plan, it is proposed that the focus will be on the following elements of the engagement process:

'Our Capital Voice' - an online engagement panel

Council is establishing an on-line platform for members of the public to participate in discussions, polls and surveys relating to the activities of the

Council. People will be able to opt into the panel, which will be called *Our Capital Voice*.

Recruitment for the panel has begun through *Our Wellington Page*, online advertising and face to face recruitment at events over the next few months.

The first survey will be focused on topics related to impacts from the Draft Annual Plan. It is expected numbers participating in discussions in the initial stages may be low but will build over time.

Key stakeholder organisations

As part of Council's pre-engagement process, the Mayor invited representatives from key stakeholder organisations to a combined meeting on 7 March 2013 to hear about Council's approach to, and key proposals related to, the draft annual plan. This included representatives from residents' associations, Council's reference groups and community boards. Feedback from this session will be incorporated into presentations on key proposals during deliberations before the draft plan is released for consultation.

At this session, the groups were also invited to indicate how they would like to participate in the consultation process, including through the hosting of meetings within their communities. Officers will report back on the response to this invitation when this paper is presented to the Committee.

Oral hearings

During last year's long-term planning process, we received a lot of feedback from Councillors and the public about the process used for oral hearings. It is noted that last year's process did include managing two concurrent but separate consultation processes, and a record number of submissions.

This year, officers are focused on improving the process based on what was learnt and feedback from last year. The following proposals have been informed by a discussion with the Engagement Working Party:

- Use an online booking system for the hearings so that submitters can select their preferred time from the available scheduled timeslots. This will be carefully managed to avoid gaps between appointments.
- Initially limiting the oral hearing timeslots to between 9.30am and 12.30pm on Tuesday 21 May to Thursday 23 May 2013.
- Schedule one additional hearings session in the evening. Bookings would initially be taken from 5.30pm until 6.30pm, with a further hour from 6.30pm to 7.30pm made available if demand warrants it.
- Dependant on the number of submitters and availability of Councillors, run two hearings panels in parallel. The legal implications of this proposal are being clarified. This would require the formation of two subcommittees.
- Pilot the use of Skype or teleconferencing with submitters if requested.

- Provide an updated guidance sheet to oral submitters with information on what to expect and key pointers on making an effective oral submission.
- Provide improved signage in the committee room foyer and additional staff to guide submitters through the submission process when they arrive for their scheduled slot.
- Retain the current practice of offering individual submitters a 5 minute slot to make their submission and organisations a 10 minute slot.
- Provide a countdown clock so that submitters can see how much time they have left on their time slot.

Māori engagement

Officers have already undertaken early engagement on proposals for the draft annual plan with Council's mana whenua partners. The iwi representatives did not identify any issues with the proposals as they were presented.

During the formal consultation process, our mana whenua partners will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the full draft plan. Also, representatives of Māori organisations, with which Council has a working relationship, will be invited to a joint session to hear about proposals in the draft plan and provide feedback.

Consultation on specific matters

At the February workshop, Councillors were presented with options for the future of the Brooklyn and Wadestown Libraries. These options were, and are still, not included in the proposed budget for the draft 2013/14 Annual Plan.

Subsequently, a meeting with invited stakeholders from the Brooklyn community was held to provide them with up to date information on the earthquake issues with the Brooklyn Library building and options for strengthening. The meeting was also asked how the Council should best proceed in terms of discussing options for a library service in Brooklyn with the community. As a result, a public meeting is planned for 2pm on Sunday 24 March to present information and explore options for a future service.

It is proposed that a public meeting should also be held with the Wadestown community to explore options for the future of their current library service as well.

Other engagement and research tools:

In addition to the above, Council will engage the public in the annual planning process by:

- Producing the summary document, submission form and full draft annual plan

- Dedicated features will be published in the Council's *Our Wellington Page* in the Dominion Post
- Council will make use of social media tools to inform people about and engage with them on the draft plan.
- A survey will be conducted on the key proposals included in the draft annual plan.

This year the accessibility of Council's annual plan documents will be greatly increased by the use of the Popdoc publishing system developed by Wellington based company Gusto Design. This system outputs a single document in multiple formats at the same time, including accessible documents and applications for mobile devices.

Evaluation:

The Council will undertake an evaluation of its consultation and engagement practices during this annual planning process. As well as improving future processes, the evaluation will also inform the development of Council's Engagement Policy and Action Plan, which are to be developed in the coming months.

3.5 Community feedback

The community will be able to make submissions online, through email, by letter or through submission forms that are included with the Draft Annual Plan document and its summary.

A full copy of all submissions will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee before final decisions are made.

All submissions will be acknowledged and a link to the final documents sent to submitters.

3.6 Timeframes

The formal consultation period is scheduled to run for one month in keeping with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002. It is set to run from 16 April to 16 May 2013. This will be followed by public hearings, which are scheduled for 21 to 23 May 2013.

This schedule will provide sufficient time for the public to prepare submissions and for officers to evaluate them and prepare any commentary ahead of the final plan being agreed in June.

4. Conclusion

This consultation and engagement plan provides the opportunity for the community to give feedback on the draft annual plan, and the opportunity for public participation in the decision-making processes of Council.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

This report outlines the consultation and engagement plan for the 2013/14 Annual Plan.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Development of draft annual plans sits within the following project: C530 Annual Planning and Reporting.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

Targeted consultation will be undertaken with support by the Treaty Relations Manager.

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

The options proposed in this report provide a mix of opportunities for people to submit their views on the Draft Annual Plan 2013/14.

6) Legal implications

The consultation and engagement plan meets all statutory requirements of the LGA 2002.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with Council's Engagement Policy.