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## **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE 2014/15 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN**

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### **1. Purpose of report**

This report seeks approval for consultation and engagement to be undertaken for the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan.

### **2. Executive summary**

The 2014/15 Annual Plan will cover the third and final year of the current 2012-22 Long-term Plan. Due to the actions taken in the 2013/14 Annual Plan to develop a budget within the limits of its Financial Strategy, the Council is not proposing to make significant changes to its programmes, service levels and fees in this draft plan. The Council is consulting on the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan earlier than usual so it can focus on working with the business community and the public on its three-year priorities and the next long-term plan.

The purpose of consultation and engagement on the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan is to:

- Provide the opportunity for stakeholders and the community to give feedback on proposed variations to the current Long-term Plan;
- Provide the opportunity for public participation in our decision-making process;
- Contribute to Council's accountability to the community;
- Provide details on the Council's annual budget and programme of activity for the 2014/15 financial year.

The key messages proposed for communication about the draft plan include:

- A rates increase in line with local government inflation at 2.5%;
- Sustained delivery of all services at or above 2013/14 levels;
- Council's services represent excellent value for money;
- New proposals, responding to issues raised during the recent local body elections, to transform cycling, provide a living wage-rate for Council employees, stimulate economic growth and advance the city's earthquake strengthening.

The consultation and engagement proposals are similar to those used for the 2013/14 Annual Plan process with the following improvements:

- A new consultation database will be used to streamline and improve the administration of the written and oral submissions;
- The guidance to oral submitters will be further improved;
- The Pacific and Multicultural Forums will focus on the draft plan;

- Resources will be available to help Councillors conduct public and stakeholder engagement. Councillors may consider doing this work in collaboration with resident and business organisations;
- The Council will promote the draft plan at three summer festivals;
- Members of the Council's online engagement panel, *Our Capital Voice*, will be invited to express their opinions about proposals in the draft plan;
- The Council will look to partner with up to two urban Māori stakeholders organisations to engage urban Māori residents;
- Targeted engagement will be conducted on specific issues as necessary.

### **3. Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Governance, Finance and Planning Committee:

1. *Receive the information*
2. *Agree the key messages for the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan consultation as set out in section 5.2 of this paper*
3. *Agree the consultation and engagement activities for the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan as set out in section 5.3 of this paper*
4. *Agree that the format of the oral hearings be the same as for the 2013/14 Draft Annual Plan process*
5. *Agree that the formal consultation period start on 11 February 2014 and close at 5pm on 11 March 2014, with hearings scheduled for 25 to 27 March 2014.*

### **4. Background**

The 2014/15 Annual Plan will cover the third and final year of the current Long Term Plan. When it was adopted, the programme of activities in the 2012-22 Long-term Plan (LTP) was not affordable within the parameters of our Financial Strategy. The Council made a range of changes last year to deliver the work programme within the limits of the Financial Strategy.

As a result of this concerted effort by the Mayor, Councillors and staff, the proposed programme of activities for 2014/15 can be delivered within our financial parameters. This means that the Council does not need to make significant changes to its service levels and fees, except to address certain priority areas for improvement.

The Council decided to bring the 2014/15 Annual Plan timeframe forward so that it can focus on working with the business community and the wider public on its three-year priorities and the next LTP.

The Council is required to consult on its draft plan using the special consultative procedure as set out in the Local Government Act 2002.

The Council's strategic direction, including the community outcomes and priorities in its LTP, remain unchanged and are not subject to further consultation through this process.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Overall approach to and key dates for the 2014/15 Annual Plan**

The draft and final plans will highlight and describe any variations from the activities and budgets contained within the 2012-22 Long-term Plan, and explain why the changes are necessary.

Key dates for the annual plan process are:

- 19 December 2013: Council adopts the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan;
- 11 February to 11 March 2014: Public consultation period;
- 25 to 27 March 2014: Oral hearings on the draft plan;
- 15 & 16 April 2014: Council deliberations on the 2014/15 Annual Plan;
- 7 May 2014: Council adopts the plan;
- 1 July 2014: Plan comes into effect.

These dates are subject to the Council's meeting schedule being confirmed on 19 December 2013.

### **5.2 Key messages of the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan**

The following key messages are proposed for communication about the Draft Annual Plan:

**A rates increase in line with local government inflation at 2.5%.**

**Sustained delivery of all services at or above this year's levels.**

**The proposed services set out in the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan represent excellent value for money.**

**Additions that respond to issues raised during the recent local body elections include:**

- a scheme to transform cycling in the city
- a living wage-rate for Council employees
- a change in Development Contributions aimed at stimulating growth
- a funding package to further advance the city's earthquake strengthening.

**The plan has proposals that add to our safety, biodiversity and transport programmes:**

- an increase in minor safety initiatives on rural roads in Ohariu and Makara
- a fund for minor CBD improvements (these are in addition to longer term enhancements)
- the creation of a Kilbirnie walkway
- initiating feasibility work on a community hub / centre for Newtown

- investment into pest management
- additional funding to ensure removal of hazardous trees
- commitment to major road improvements in Johnsonville.

**In parallel to these, we will be advancing our three year priority agenda that includes key projects to stimulate economic growth and create jobs.**

### **5.3 Consultation and Engagement Activities**

The Council is committed to making ongoing improvements in its consultation and engagement processes. The proposed programme includes general consultation and targeted engagement for specific issues and stakeholders. The Council must use the special consultative procedure prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002 for consulting on a draft annual plan.

#### **5.3.1 Consultation materials and promotion**

The Council will:

- Produce the full Draft Annual Plan, summary document and submission form in hard-copy and electronic formats;
- A statutory notice about the consultation and dedicated features will be published in the Council's *Our Wellington Page* in the Dominion Post;
- Council will use its social media tools to raise awareness about the value of its services and to inform people about the draft plan and the consultation process.

The documents for this draft plan consultation will be generated using the 'popdocs' process used for the first time last year. This will enable the content to be accessible for all users and through mobile devices.

#### **5.3.2 Submissions**

The community will be able to make submissions online, through email, by letter or through a paper submission form, which will be included with the Draft Annual Plan document and its summary. The Council will acknowledge the receipt of all submissions. A full copy of all written submissions will be presented to the Governance, Finance and Policy Committee before the oral hearings.

A new consultation database will be used to streamline and improve the administration of the written and oral submission processes. The database will speed up analysis of submissions and feedback to submitters.

#### **5.3.3 Summer events**

Council plans to attend a number of community events during the consultation period. These include the Island Bay Festival (16 February), the Newtown

Festival (2 March) and the Kilbirnie Festival (9 March). We will use the opportunity to:

- Inform people about the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan and ways to provide input;
- Raise awareness of what services and activities Council provides;
- Recruit people for the Council's online engagement panel.

#### ***5.3.4 'Our Capital Voice' – the Council's online engagement panel***

Members of the Council's online engagement panel, *Our Capital Voice*, will be invited to express their opinions about proposals in the Draft Annual Plan. Our Capital Voice currently has 443 members and it is proposed to run a recruitment campaign alongside consultation activities.

#### ***5.3.5 Māori engagement***

Officers will undertake early engagement on proposals in the Draft Annual Plan with Council's mana whenua partners. Iwi representatives will be provided with opportunities to meet with Council to discuss any of the proposals or other matters.

Urban Māori stakeholders will receive relevant information including on how to provide feedback and make submissions. This will be a targeted approach including working in partnership with two identified urban Māori stakeholders to ensure the information is distributed and to deliver hui/forums in the local community. This will provide opportunities for urban Māori residents and stakeholders to participate in the discussions and conversations. If this proves to be an effective model of engagement, this 'partnership' approach could be used for engaging with urban Māori to inform the next LTP.

#### ***5.3.6 Pacific and Multicultural Forums***

The Pacific and Multicultural<sup>1</sup> Forums, which are provisionally scheduled for 17 and 24 February 2014 respectively, will have a focus on the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan. Feedback from the forums will be reported in officer advice to the Governance, Finance and Planning Committee to be considered alongside formal submissions.

#### ***5.3.7 Targeted engagement for specific issues***

Where a particular proposal has an impact on a defined group within the community, targeted consultation will be undertaken by the relevant officers. For example, extensive consultation will take place on how the proposed new funding could be applied to achieve Council's cycling priorities. The Consultation and Engagement team will help develop engagement plans with officers. These engagement activities will be resourced by relevant business unit.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly called the Ethnic Forum.

### **5.3.8 Councillor engagement**

It is envisaged that the Mayor and Councillors will be active participants in many of the engagement activities listed above. If Councillors wish to host additional public meetings as part of Council's overall engagement on the draft plan, some financial and officer support will be made available. This will be provided from the Annual Plan budget.

As part of this support, Councillors will be able to promote public meetings through the Council's existing communication channels, using generic materials such as consultation documents and posters. Councillors can also request that some meeting costs are met by the Council. These costs would include venue hire, basic catering and the use of audio-visual equipment. The Council would not meet the costs of producing materials that duplicate or reinterpret information already contained in consultation documents, or personnel costs associated with convening or facilitating the meetings.

Councillors may wish to host such meetings in collaboration with external parties such as resident or business associations. Officers will consider requests to support engagement activities led by external parties (such as resident and business associations) separately to the above. This would include providing publications as well as helping to arrange presentations from Councillors and officers.

### **5.3.9 Oral hearings**

Officers propose that the hearings process be the same as for the 2013/14 Annual Plan with some incremental improvements.

- Initially only schedule submission slots between 9.30am and 12.30pm on 25 to 27 March 2014.
- 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.
- Pilot the use of Skype if requested by submitters. Last year no one took up this option.
- Provide an updated guidance sheet to oral submitters with information on what to expect and pointers on making an effective oral submission. The guidance sheet will also let submitters know that their written submissions have been pre-circulated to Councillors, that they are able to use the audio-visual facilities, and that there is a timer so that submitters can see how much time they have left.
- 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. Staff will try to minimise the distraction caused by people arriving or leaving while a submission is being made.
- Retain the current practice of offering individual submitters a 5 minute slot to make their submission and organisations a 10 minute slot.

#### **5.4 Evaluation**

To help improve future annual plan consultation and engagement processes, it is proposed that the Councillor engagement, engagement with urban Māori and the targeted-engagement on specific issues, be evaluated. The evaluation should also look at how effective Skype was for oral submissions, if it is used.

#### **5.5 Feedback to submitters**

All submitters will receive feedback that identifies how the final 2014/15 Annual Plan was modified in relation to their submission and other public input. Submitters will be given links to the adopted Annual Plan.

#### **5.6 Financial considerations**

The budget for the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan consultation and engagement activities detailed above is \$10,000. This budget is from existing allocations.

### **6. Conclusion**

This consultation and engagement plan provides the opportunity for the community to give feedback on the 2014/15 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 2014/15 Draft 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 of the Manager, Treaty Relations.*

### 4) Decision-making

*This is not a significant decision.*

### 5) Consultation

#### a) General consultation

*The options proposed in this report provide a mix of opportunities for people to submit their views on the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan.*

### 6) Legal implications

*The consultation and engagement plan meets all statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.*

### 7) Consistency with existing policy

*The proposals in this report are consistent with Council's Engagement Policy.*