

2012-2022 Ten Year Planning **Communications and Engagement Strategy**

Summary

March 2011



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1. Introduction

Community engagement is increasingly acknowledged as a valuable process, not only for ensuring communities can participate in decisions that affect them and at level that meets their expectations, but also to strengthen and enhance the relationship between communities and governments.

(Local Government Association of South Australia, Community Engagement Handbook, March 2008)

The Council's role is to determine what level of engagement is going to deliver the required information at the various engagement opportunities throughout the ten year plan process.

Getting the planning right first will ensure that the selection of communications techniques and strategies is based on achieving the purpose of the engagement and meeting objectives set. The purpose of this community engagement strategy is to ensure considered planning. This approach has been based on good-sector practice within the Local Government context.

2. Who are our customers?

There are a diverse range of customers that will be considered throughout the development of the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan. Understanding this diverse range of customers and how they are best communicated with is a critical point to get right.

The following are identified as key stakeholders in relation to the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan project

- Councillors and community boards
- Community and interest groups and organisations
- Residents and Ratepayers Associations
- Residents
- Non-resident ratepayers
- Businesses
- Iwi
- Staff

- Media
- Environment Waikato
- Other interested and service organisations (e.g. Tourism Coromandel, Government departments)
- Special interest groups (e.g. environmental groups, Federated Farmers)
- Landowner groups
- Infrastructure providers (e.g. Transit, Telecom, power companies)
- Developers, builders
- Auditors
- Youth

3. Objectives

Having regard to the ten year plan project objectives and the information known about our customers; and good-sector practice, specific communications and engagement objectives are proposed as follows:

No.	Objective	This means...
1	Adopt a targeted approach to involving the right groups, using the right level of engagement, at the most appropriate time within the context of local government decision making, with a focus on early consultation on key issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that our customers are diverse • Deploying a variety of communications techniques to ensure appropriate coverage where required • Ensuring elected members are aware of and engaged in the communications • Recognise the interest levels of Iwi with regard to the identified issues • Communicating early on key parts of the Ten Year Plan in “bite-sized” pieces and targeting consultation on key policies to interested stakeholders • Have regard to any other council or related consultation processes occurring concurrently or within a close timeframe
2	Ensure a high quality of useful information gathered through the consultation processes to better inform Council decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using simpler, less-complicated language and diagrammatically representing options to clearly and effectively communicate with our customers • Providing information on what is and is not within the scope of the ten year plan process • Structuring the feedback forms provided to direct

No.	Objective	This means...
		<p>feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cater for particular targeted questions or key issues on which the Council wishes to specifically consult • Targeted consultation to interested stakeholders, ensuring the councillors and community board members enable these opportunities (where it makes sense to do so) • Communicating early on key parts of the Ten Year Plan in “bite-sized” pieces
3	<p>Focusing on enabling the ‘right debate’ - To explain the relationship between the services our communities want and the impact on rates – what’s needed and wanted vs what’s affordable and sustainable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using simpler, less-complicated language and diagrammatically representing options • Providing information on what is and is not within the scope of the ten year plan process and the Local Government Act 2002 • Explain the context within which decisions are made • Be more savvy about presenting the rates impact • Engaging key stakeholders such as residents and ratepayers groups early
4	<p>Provide opportunities that make involvement in engaging with the Council easy where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that our customers are diverse • Deploying a variety of communications techniques to ensure appropriate coverage where required • Provide sufficient and appropriately presented information for all key stakeholders to decide whether or not they want to engage and at what level, rather than proactively trying to drive a high level of public engagement • And subsequently, widely circulating the summary document promoting the proposed key decisions and how to provide feedback. • Using advertising to promote opportunities for customers to find out more including public notices, newspaper advertisements, radio, council office posters, Council material (TC Talk etc) • Ensuring that the community have access to councillors and community board members leading up to and during the consultation periods

No.	Objective	This means...
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through advertising teasers, invite our customers to access further information on the Council's website if they are interested • Ensure engagement tools are as simple and straight forward as possible • Provide the opportunity for our customers to submit their views online • Making a considered effort engage local Iwi on their terms
5	To treat our statutory consultation obligations as a minimum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying with our statutory obligations • Reviewing and challenging our interpretation of the legislation to ensure a better customer focus and a higher quality of feedback that will inform Council decision making
6	Ensure intelligent and efficient use of resources to get the best outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and responding to issues and risks • Preparing a detailed media execution plan and meeting deadlines • Good internal communication • Clear communication with external agencies and customers

4. Generic Key Messages

The following generic key messages will be used throughout the development of the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan. Staff recognise that at various stages throughout the process more specific and targeted key messages will be required.

Generic proposed key messages are proposed as follows:

- We're planning ahead for our unique peninsula
- This review of the Council's ten year plan is the key time to make changes – in what we deliver; how it is funded and how much it costs you.
- The Council needs to balance wants and needs with financial constraints.

5. Key Engagement Opportunities, Tasks and Timeframes

The purpose of this section is to provide a broad overview of the tasks and timeframes associated with the engagement opportunities currently identified for the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan. Upon confirmation from the Council that this approach is on track, detailed execution plans (eg. media plans) will be developed by staff.

Engagement Opportunities	Tasks and engagement strategies to be arranged	Timeframes
Awareness Campaign	Media release to raise awareness of what the ten year plan is and what the Council will be considering in May 2011	April-May 2011
	Council advertising (TC Talk, Council Notes, Coastal Notes etc) to raise awareness of what the ten year plan is and what the Council will be considering in May 2011	April-May 2011
	Radio advertising to raise awareness	April-May 2011
Levels of Service options	Media release signalling 1. the matters on which the Council wishes to consult, 2. opportunities to find out more	May 2011 - July 2011
	Council advertising (TC Talk, Council Notes, Coastal Notes etc) to signal consultation matters and opportunities	June 2011 onwards
	Targeted consultation as determined by the issues arising. May include attendance at existing community meetings or targeted mail outs.	June 2011 onwards
	Residents and Ratepayers groups attended by relevant staff and elected members to update the groups on options and issues being considered.	June 2011 onwards
	Hui with local Iwi as appropriate regarding the matters they are interested in.	June 2011 onwards
	Staff workshop, obtain feedback and suggestions from staff	June 2011
2012-2022 Ten Year Plan - draft document	Council endorsement of draft 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan and summary document	January 2012
	Media release signalling 1. the ten year plan direction, 2. opportunities to find out more	January 2012 and February 2012
	Council advertising (TC Talk,	January - February 2012

Engagement Opportunities	Tasks and engagement strategies to be arranged	Timeframes
	Council Notes, Coastal Notes etc) to signal submission period details	
	Radio advertising will be useful to target non-resident ratepayers holidaying in the area	January - February 2012
	Hui with local Iwi	January 2012
	Presentations to high schools in the District	February 2012 (need to check school term dates)
	Submission period launched: Public notices printed Advertisements printed E-information on website, including draft summary document, draft ten year plan, online submissions form, interactive tools such as rates calculator Paper information distributed Posters in council offices	9 January 2012 (date tbc)
	Acknowledging previous submitters: letters to be sent to those annual plan submitters (both 10/11 and 11/12) who were told their issues should be directed to the review of the Ten Year Plan	Early January 2012
	Staff workshop , as a means of obtaining feedback and suggestions	January 2012
	Residents and Ratepayers groups will be attended by relevant staff and elected members to update them on options and issues being considered.	January 2012 (NB: need to check that these groups meet over this period)
	Media Release & Media Interviews	January - February 2012
	Mayor's Weekly Radio Spot	January - February 2012
	Open days to be held in Thames, Whitianga, Whangamata, Coromandel and Tairua or Pauanui	January - February 2012
	Presentations as requested	January - February 2012
	Written submissions close	8 February 2012 (date tbc)
	Written submissions acknowledged and opportunity to be heard provided	February 2012
	Verbal submissions heard	April 2012
Confirming and distributing the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan -	Decisions made on submissions and Ten Year Plan revised	April 2012

Engagement Opportunities	Tasks and engagement strategies to be arranged	Timeframes
	Final Ten Year Plan adopted	30 th June 2012
	Media release following adoption signalling key decisions made.	July 2012
	Response letters sent to all submitters acknowledging their input and the decisions made.	July 2012
	Debrief gather feedback from the community regarding the effectiveness of the ten year plan communications	July - August 2012

6. We'll know that we've been successful when...

- An increasing proportion of the public understand Council processes and how to engage with these, at a basic level.
- As far as is possible, all of those likely to be affected by particular changes to levels of service have had a reasonable opportunity to have a say.
- The key messages are clearly understood by all those who choose to engage.
- The feedback received during consultation is able to be taken into account.
- By the time the draft Ten Year Plan is out for consultation, consultation on the key issues has occurred with those most impacted by proposed changes.
- Web statistics demonstrate increased patronage to the TCDC website.
- That a majority of those questioned in the annual 2013 NRB ratepayer survey rate the level of consultation as good or better than in previous years.
- The Council debrief of the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan indicates an improvement from the last Ten Year Planning process.
- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) deems that the Council has satisfactorily met the LGA requirements.
- Council and staff view that the ten year planning process has been an intelligent and efficient use of resources.