
REPORT 6
(1215/52/IM)

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION PLAN: 2008/09 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval of the consultation and communication plan to be undertaken for the 2008/09 draft annual plan.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note the communication tools that will be used to support the consultation on the 2008/09 draft annual plan.*
3.
 - a) *Agree to delegate the hearing of oral submissions on the 2008/09 draft annual plan to a subcommittee.*
 - b) *Recommend to Council that it agree to establish the Draft Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee with the terms of reference attached in appendix 1 and that it elect a chairperson for the subcommittee.*
4. *Agree that the formal consultation period commences on Wednesday 16 April 2008 and closes on Monday 19 May 2008 with hearings scheduled in late May 2008.*

3. Discussion

3.1 *Background/context*

The 2008/09 draft annual plan describes the third and final year of the 2006-16 long-term plan. No significant changes are recommended and therefore the draft plan largely reconfirms what has previously been outlined in the long-term plan and the second year of the long-term plan (the 2007/08 annual plan).

As such, this annual plan is primarily a budgeting tool and reiterates the service levels and performance measures that have previously been consulted on and agreed¹. The wider matters of role, scope, service levels and priorities of Council have been dealt with and will be revisited as part of the 2009/19 long-term plan process².

Notwithstanding this, there are a small number of initiatives that are new. These are variations to the long-term plan and will be consulted on with the community³. They are largely focused on increases to existing projects or programmes or are feasibility studies/pilots.

3.2 Purpose of 2008/09 draft annual plan

The purpose of the 2008/09 draft annual plan is to:

- identify and consult on variations to the 2006-16 long-term plan
- extend the opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process and allow for new ideas to be tabled
- contribute to Council's accountability to the community
- detail the annual budget and funding impact statement.

3.3 Timing

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 Wednesday 16 April 2008 until Monday 19 May 2008. This will be followed by public hearings, which are scheduled for late May 2008.

The 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 late June (deliberations are scheduled for 18-19 June with Council sign-off scheduled for Friday 27 June 2008).

3.4 Hearings Subcommittee

It is recommended that a subcommittee be formed to hear all oral submissions. The less formal environment of a subcommittee acts as less of a barrier to participation and provides elected members the opportunity to engage in a discussion with the submitter to get a more detailed understanding of their views.

¹ Formal consultation to date has included: consultation on the community outcomes; contribution to the Wellington Regional Strategy; consultation on Council outcomes, priorities, levels of service and budgets as part of the draft 2006-16 long term plan. And consultation on variations to the long-term plan through the 2007/08 draft long term plan.

² A process paper outlining proposed engagement tools for the 2009-19 long-term plan will be presented to committee in the coming months.

³ Council is required by legislation to consult on draft annual plans ahead of them being adopted using the special consultative procedure as prescribed within the Local Government Act 2002.

It is recommended that as part of their portfolio responsibilities, Portfolio Leaders form the membership of the Draft Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee. This will ensure that the breadth of Council activities is represented. All elected members will be able to attend the hearings.

The Draft Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee will report to the Strategy and Policy Committee. Its terms of reference are attached as appendix 1.

3.5 Communication tools

The following communication tools will be used to support the draft annual plan. The tools have been chosen as collectively they have a substantial 'reach' – they allow citizens to become aware of the key issues and participate in the process.

Communication tools⁴	
Draft annual plan document	The draft annual plan document and its summary will be made available from Council's libraries, swimming pools, service centres and through the call centre.
Annual plan database	The draft annual plan and submission form will be sent to the 400 (approximate) customers on the Annual Plan database.
Media releases	News releases on the draft annual plan will be delivered in regular intervals leading up to, and during the consultation period.
Website	The draft annual plan document will be available online. People will once again be able to make a submission online and also by email.
Public Notices	Public notices are required to be placed in the local newspaper.
Newspaper advertisements 'Our Wellington' page	A newspaper advertisement and editorials on the draft annual plan will be run in the 'Our Wellington' page of the Dominion Post leading up to and during the consultation period.
Absolutely Positively	The APW will be used to highlight variances to the long-term plan and will also include a submission

⁴ Note: No video or radio advertisements will be undertaken for the 2008/09 draft annual plan. These communication tools will be re-introduced for next year's long-term plan. As with last year, PowerPoint presentations will be prepared and tailored to each specific meeting.

Wellington (APW) newspaper	form.
Public meeting/s	A DAP public meeting will be held at Council for the community. An offer to attend and discuss the draft annual plan at community and other meetings will be actively promoted.
Informal communications	<p>Informal communications will be used with council's existing networks i.e. city communities and other business units with high contact time with the community will be briefed on draft annual plan matters and asked to raise awareness of the draft annual plan and the process by which to provide feedback in their daily contact with the community.</p> <p>Informal communications remains a very effective mechanism to raise awareness about issues especially with hard to reach audiences such as youth etc.</p>

3.6 Public meetings

It is important to regularly revisit consultation techniques⁵. Constantly refreshing them keeps the process interesting for regular participants and can be an effective way to reach new audiences. Following a review of participation rates and the nature of the initiatives in this year's plan a fresh approach to public meetings is recommended.

It is recommended that Council focus on engaging with 'affected and interested' parties (on variations relevant to their area of interest) through:

- a) Council's existing fora, reference groups, community boards (ie. no portfolio or ward meetings will be called).
- b) communicating proposed variations to community groups and organisations known to have interests in the area of activity and:
 - encourage them to provide feedback; and

⁵ Formal public meetings based around portfolios and/or wards have been used in the last two years to inform/engage with the community. This was effective when consulting on the long-term plan where Council's strategic direction, priorities, outcomes and all of Council's services were being consulted on. It was less effective when consulting on last year's draft plan where the focus was on variations to the long-term plan. Even when portfolio meetings were bundled together turnout was relatively low.

- offer to attend one of their regular meetings during the consultation period to outline/detail any proposals⁶.

The approach acknowledges the fact that people tend to take interest when issues directly affect them. It also recognises that people's free time is limited and that they already contribute to a wide range of groups that meet on a regular basis.

The community based meeting approach will be actively promoted and officers will be available to attend meetings. It is anticipated that participation will vary depending on what issues a group wishes to discuss. It is likely that the relevant portfolio leader and ward councillors would attend. Officers will liaise with groups to determine who they would like to participate.

Notwithstanding the targeted approach, it is recommended that one draft annual plan public meeting be scheduled during the consultation period to ensure individuals and community groups have the opportunity to inform themselves in detail on Council's draft proposals, ask questions and provide feedback. Greater Wellington Regional Council will be invited to present their draft plan at this meeting.

Appendix 2 outlines a draft list of variations/proposals (subject to amendment at this meeting) and affected/interested parties.

3.7 Survey research

A residents satisfaction survey will be undertaken as a supplement to the consultation process. The survey will identify the general level of support for the new initiatives. As with last year, participants will also be asked to rank the initiatives in order of preference.

4. Conclusion

This consultation and communication plan provides a range of communication tools and an appropriate mix of opportunities for people to express their views on the 2008/09 draft annual plan.

A full copy of all submissions, a summary report of all the submissions, the survey results and the Subcommittee's report⁷ on the hearings will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee before final decisions are made.

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⁶ For example, the Pacific Island festival initiative will be discussed at the Pacific Island Forum and with the Pacific Island Advisory group; the artificial surfaces initiative will be discussed at the Sports Forum and Council would attend any meetings of sports clubs/user groups of the facility at their request etc.

⁷ The Subcommittee's report to the Strategy and Policy Committee will consist of an oral report by the chairperson and the formal minutes detailing a summary of all oral submissions.

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The consultation and communication plan contributes towards the following outcome:

“Wellington will operate an open and honest decision-making process that generates confidence and trust in the democratic system.”

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

Development and consultation on the DAP sits within the following project: C530 Annual Planning and reporting.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

Targeted consultation will be undertaken with support by the Director of Citizen Engagement and Treaty Relations.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

The report provides a sensible range of communication tools and an appropriate mix of opportunities for people to express their views on the draft annual plan 2008/09.

6) Legal Implications

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

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with Council’s Engagement Policy.

Draft Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee

Membership:

The Subcommittee's membership will consist of those elected members appointed as portfolio leaders.

Quorum:

4

Chair:

The Chair will be elected by Council.

Frequency of meetings

The Subcommittee will meet on an as required basis.

Sunset clause:

The Subcommittee will discontinue no later than 30 June 2008.

Parent Body:

The Subcommittee reports to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

General Purpose:

The Subcommittee has responsibility to hear submissions on the 2008/09 draft annual plan and report to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

Terms of Reference:

The Subcommittee will have responsibility and authority to:

- 1.0 Accept and hear submissions on Council's 2008/09 draft annual plan and report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

Delegated Authority

The Draft Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee will have delegated authority to carry out activities within its terms of reference.

Appendix 2

- The 2008/09 draft annual plan will be supported by a variety of communication tools. These are outlined in section 3.5 of this paper.
- Council will inform affected and interested parties of the proposed variations to the long-term plan for the coming year and offer to attend meetings of the community, organisations and clubs to present any proposals.
- Many of the proposed variations focus on existing projects/programmes which have previously been considered by the community (eg. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary) and the focus of the consultation is on the additional funding requirement proposed. In other instances (eg. feasibility studies) this is the first time they have been considered by the community and as plans progress, further consultation will likely be required.

Variation/initiative	Affected interested parties (indicative list)
Bioreactor feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Environmental Reference Group • Environmental community groups • Environmental Conservation Authority
Renewable Energy Project: Carey's Gully	
Pest management implementation plan	
Sustainable building features	
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary	
Pacific Island Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Pacific Advisory Group • Pacific Island Community
Safety initiatives (CCTV, Walkwise, Courtney place improvements and graffiti)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Central city businesses/retailers (particularly those in Courtney Place) • Youth Council • Police
Hataitai park access improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Users of the facility (netball clubs etc)
Artificial surface: Nairnville Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Users of the facility
Scoring stage feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Symphony Orchestra • Film companies
E-marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Downtown businesses
Cog park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Adjacent residents • Users of the park •
Earthquake assessment programme: Rephasing of programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Owners of earthquake prone buildings
Additional monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public
Thistle hall replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Users of the facility
National children's festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public
Capex deferrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public
Fees and charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Targeted to specific audiences as appropriate