
CLUSTERING ACTIVITIES IN THE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines changes to the way information will be presented in the Draft Annual Plan. It has been prepared in response to discussions at the Audit and Risk Management Subcommittee in December 2006. The overall aim of the changes is to ensure that the Council's activities are presented in a clear and succinct way.

2. Executive Summary

The report recommends that greater clarity and understanding of the Council's work would occur if 'like' activities were clustered together and that budgets were presented at activity level in the 2007/08 Annual Plan.

It is important to note:

1. The proposed clustering relates only to the commentary within the annual plan. The content of the activities outlined in the long term plan remain unchanged (aside from some minor project transfers noted in the attached schedule and any funding decisions made at the deliberations in March).
2. The level of accountability will remain unchanged as budgets and measures have always been provided at the activity level (and not project level) in the Annual Report.
3. The public's right to access more 'detailed' information is governed by the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act
4. That the approach is compliant with the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the subcommittee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note the proposed clustering of activities (and associated performance measures) outlined in Appendix One.*

4. Background

In December¹, the subcommittee discussed how the Council's activities had been presented in the Long Term Council Community Plan. It was noted that while the information was legally compliant there was an opportunity to review how this might be presented in the future.

Discussion focused on the level of detail that the Council provided. The Council currently describes its work at the strategy, activity and project level. This level of detail means:

- that some 'like' activities are presented in a disparate way
- that the performance framework and project budget information provided different levels of detail.

5. Discussion

The Council is required to adopt an Annual Plan for the forthcoming financial year. The Annual Plan comprises year two of the Long Term Council Community Plan and any variations to that. It is subject to public consultation.

The Council has a strong track record at providing informative, accessible annual plans and reports. The number of submissions to our plans have roughly doubled year on year since 2003 and the reports have been recognised nationally for their excellence.

As part of the organisation's commitment to build on that tradition, officers regularly meet with community groups and other interested parties to see how the documents can be further refined to meet their needs. Common themes from those meetings include:

- the size of the document can be a barrier for individuals
- the level of detail means it is sometimes difficult to gain a complete picture of the Council's work.

Officers have also reviewed practice elsewhere and sought Audit NZ advice. The key finding from this is that the Council presents its activities in more detail than other metro councils (see the table below) and that this can affect the logic flow, potentially impacting on people's understanding of the Council's work overall.

¹ As part of discussion on the Audit NZ management letter on the Long Term Council Community Plan.

Council	No. Activities
Wellington City Council	81
Christchurch City Council	46
Auckland City Council	38
Dunedin City Council	37
Tauranga City Council	33
Hamilton City Council	25
Northshore City Council	18

5.1 The proposal

As a means of addressing the findings above, it is proposed that the Council's current 81 activities be clustered around 28 headings in the 2007/08 draft annual plan. This will be done for the purposes of commentary and is expected to noticeably reduce the size of the publication and allow people to easily find information.

The proposal would see performance measures continue to be presented at the activity level. These are outlined in appendix one². The Revenue and Financing Policy would also continue to be structured around 81 activities.

It should also be noted that the proposal does not alter the linkages between outcomes and activities as they are presented in the long term plan.

The proposal would ensure that performance measures and budgets are presented at a uniform level. This means that budgets will be presented at the activity and group of activity level and not as project and programme budgets. These budgets will continue to be part of the decision making process (e.g. they will be outlined at the deliberations). Elected members would continue to have access to them. Any requests from individuals or community groups would be considered inline with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act.

The proposal is consistent with the Local Government Act 2002. It will ensure that individuals have information that allows them to meaningfully comment on the Council's plans.

5.2 Monitoring

The changes to the 2007/08 document will be reviewed, and any feedback considered prior to preparation of the 2008/09 draft annual plan. Officers will also continue to investigate options for further improvements to the planning process - including options for financial clustering. Any options will be presented back to committee.

² Note that the performance measures are not altered by the proposal. A separate 'health check' of these will be completed by officers ahead of their review by the Strategy and Policy Committee. Appendix two shows the activities as they currently appear in the long term plan.

6. Conclusion

It is proposed that greater clarity and understanding of the Council's work would occur if its 81 activities were clustered together and financial information was scaled up to be congruent with performance information in the forthcoming annual plan.

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Supporting Information
1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome <i>Not applicable.</i>
2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact <i>The report has no financial impact.</i>
3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations <i>Not applicable.</i>
4) Decision-Making <i>This is not a significant decision.</i>
5) Consultation a) General Consultation <i>The report draws from meetings that staff have had with members of the public on how to best present information in the plan.</i> b) Consultation with Maori <i>No specific consultation has occurred with Maori. Mana Whenua will be consulted</i> <i>As part of the annual plan process proper.</i>
6) Legal Implications <i>The proposal is consistent with the Local Government Act 2002.</i>
7) Consistency with existing policy <i>Not applicable.</i>