

LTP Consultation Document Update

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 14 October 2020
Reporting officer: Ben Hope, Senior Communications Advisor

Purpose/Ngā whāinga

To update Council on draft consultation document topics and provide the draft key issues that will form the basis of consultation on the Long Term Plan 2021/2031 (LTP).

Context/Horopaki

Consultation

The consultation process, alongside pre-engagement, provides opportunities for Elected Members to gather information, thoughts and views of the public to include in their decision-making process.

While a consultation is a conversation about options and possible outcomes, the ultimate decision around budget requirements and what is best for the community is decided by elected members in the post consultation phase (April/May/June).

There are also requirements around providing “a reasonable opportunity to present views to the local authority in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons¹.” This can be achieved through the standard post submission process or could be incorporated into the engagement period of March 2021 removing the need for post submission hearings.

Consultation can be a confusing term, The Court of Appeal decision around Wellington Airport v Air New Zealand in 1993 came up with some principles around consultation including the idea that “consultation is not to be equated with “negotiation”. The word “negotiation” implies a process that has as its objective arriving at agreement. However, “consultation” may occur without those consulted agreeing with the outcome.²”

Consultation Document

The first formal step with engaging our community on the 2021/31 LTP is the release of our Consultation Document (CD). Its purpose is to provide an effective basis for public participation in local authority decision-making processes relating to the content of an LTP. A CD is “expected to concisely and clearly present the significant issues, plans, and projects that councils intend to include in their LTPs. Key issues should be presented in a way that is easy for people to understand and respond to.³”

It shouldn't just be a summary LTP, but should describe the key issues proposed, the choices on offer and the implications for the community.

The CD is also subject to audit, to meet legislative requirements and ensure it presents the community with clear, relevant and accurate options. We will be working with our auditors to achieve this with the adoption of the CD scheduled for the February 2021 Council meeting. As part of this work we will also be seeking a high level ‘name’ or ‘direction’ for the LTP. The last CD was entitled “A bright future”, for example.

Discussion/Ngā kōrerorero

Themes

As the high-level focus of the LTP is still being defined, we have established some key themes

¹ <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0084/latest/DLM172327.html#DLM172327>

² Office of Auditor General, <https://oag.parliament.nz/1998/public-consultation/docs/public-consultation.pdf>

³ Audit NZ, <https://auditnz.parliament.nz/good-practice/ltps/ltps-consultation>

- Increased emphasis on unsealed network, bridges and footpaths,
- Maintaining and renewing all other current aging infrastructure,
- 'New' projects will require a majority of outside funding to proceed

These high-level themes will be included in the CD. Coupled with these themes, the Auditor General has advised that climate change and the impacts of COVID-19 will be specific focus areas for the auditors in this LTP.

There will be some clarifying and background information included in the document to give a fair and accurate presentation of Council's roles, responsibilities and response to Climate Change. Likewise, the impacts of COVID-19 will be specifically discussed in the CD.

Consultation Document Questions

There are seven draft questions currently planned for the Consultation Document. These are larger direction setting questions, rather than operational decisions that can be managed under Activity Profiles and business as usual decisions. The basic questions are provided here, but further contextual information will be provided.

Waste Minimisation

Background – Following on from an earlier survey and community feedback there is appetite for a change to the way we collect rubbish and recycling. While 'wheelie bins' are a popular option, there are significant costs and logistical issues involved in the urban to rural spread of Kaipara. The options provided include a change to the collection of recycling in line with a new waste minimisation plan, while the contract changes allow for personal household bin usage to be arranged.

1) How should Council continue to manage its waste collection?

- a) Option One (Preferred) – A weekly collection of user pays bags, with contractor making bins available via private contract. A weekly alternating receptacle for glass then mixed plastics.
 - i) Funded by a targeted rate across all of the District
- b) Status Quo
 - i) User pays bags, recycling managed through transfer stations

2) Water Rates Equalisation – Should all connected users across the district pay an equal amount for the operating expenses of Council provided water schemes?

Background – Currently the capital costs involved with the Water Supply, Wastewater, Storm Water networks of Kaipara are distributed across the district, with connected users paying shared costs for works. In order to align costs, it's proposed to harmonise the operating expenses across those who are connected to the networks. This would allow for a more even share of expenses and reduce a number of various targeted rates.

- a) Option One (Preferred) – Yes, all connected users across the district pay an equal amount
- b) Option Two – No. Ring fence every network, where connected users pay the full cost of all operating expenses for that specific scheme.
- c) Option Three – Status Quo. What each ratepayer currently pays.

3) Water Security – How do we secure additional water supply in Dargaville?ⁱ

Background – As part of the PGF funded Tai Tokerau Water Storage Trust, there is an opportunity for Council to contribute to the programme in order to secure additional municipal supply to lessen the impacts of drought.

- a) Option One (Preferred) – Fund a contribution of \$4 million to the Water Storage Project for municipal supply
- b) Option Two – Status Quo

4) Climate Change – How much should Council contribute financially to being Climate Smart (across 10 years)?

Background – This section introduces a minimum budget required to incorporate a climate change work programme into the LTP in order to meet current and forthcoming climate change adaptation and mitigation obligations. There are also three additional options to expand on the minimum budget and deliver a more comprehensive degree of climate change work.

- a) Option One (Preferred) – Partial Climate Smart Outcomes \$1,821,000
- b) Option Two – Strong Climate Smart Outcomes \$3,042,000
- c) Option Three – Best Practice \$3,327,000
- d) Option Four – Minimum required to meet government requirements \$1,506,000

5) CCTV – Do you support the implementation of a targeted rate, administered by the Dargaville Community Development Board, to increase the CCTV network across Dargaville and Ruawai?

Background – The DCDB have approached Council staff to administer an extension to the CCTV network, funded through a targeted rate. This information has not yet been received from the DCDB but it is anticipated that the targeted rate would be charged to western ratepayers only.

- a) Option One – Yes
- b) Option Two – No

6) Regional Economic Development CCO (Northland Inc.)

Wording for this question is being formulated by a region-wide council staff group so that there is consistency in messaging/wording across the participating Council's. This will be provided at a future briefing.

Other Possible Topics (pending further briefings)

7) Civic Precinct/s – What is the best option for Council/Civic Building across Kaipara?

Next steps/E whaiake nei

1. Provide ideas around potential names of the Long Term Plan
2. Staff will report back to the November and December briefings with updates to the Consultation Document questions
3. A draft Consultation Document will be provided to the February Council briefing and the final audited version will be presented to the February Council meeting for adoption.

ⁱ Should the decision be made to harmonise OpEx costs, the contribution by the connected Dargaville & Baylys Beach would be shared across the district.