
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Purpose of Report

Share with elected members the communications plan to promote the existence of Council committees, their respective roles and the opportunity for public participation.

This Report has been prepared in response to the request made at the Council meeting on 28 October 2020 to 'prepare a communications/action plan for promoting Council's committees and the availability of the public forum (Action 570)'.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council receives the report including the communications plan in Appendix 1.

1. *Receive the Communications Plan for Council Committees Report.*

1. Background

Council has appointed and delegated authority to committees to consider matters within the committees' terms of reference. The purpose is to enable committees to develop technical and governance expertise in their respective areas in order to provide robust advice to Council. The work of the committees has not been well promoted in the past. The details of the committees and how the public can express their views via public participation are available on the website for those who look for them.

Council meetings are relatively well attended by the public, both in the audience and in public participation, but meetings of the committees are less well attended. Topics raised in public participation at Council meeting would often be more appropriately raised at the relevant committee meeting. These facts support the notion that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the existence and role of the various committees.

Furthermore, starting next calendar year, Council meetings are moving from a six-weekly to eight-weekly schedule so now is a good time to increase public awareness of committees and the opportunities their meetings present for public participation.

The current Council committee structure, which was revised last October by the new Council, is as follows:

- Māori Standing Committee
- Assets and Services Committee
- Planning and Regulatory Committee
- Finance, Audit and Risk.

1.1 Financial Considerations

The communications approach outlined in Appendix 1 requires no cost budget, just staff/Committee Chair time.

2. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Communication Plan for Council Committees

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Appendix 1 – Communication Plan for Council Committees

COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES

1. Objective

Promote the Council committees, their respective roles and the opportunity for public participation.

2. Stakeholders

All South Wairarapa ratepayers and interested stakeholders.

3. Key messages

- Council has delegated authority to committees to consider matters within the committees' terms of reference. The purpose is to enable committees to develop technical and governance expertise in their respective areas in order to provide robust advice to Council.
- Many important matters relating to Council activities are discussed at committee meetings before decisions are taken by Council.
- Committees get into the detail of key issues. They then make recommendations to Council about the decisions they should make. No decisions are made at committee meetings.
- As with Council meetings, anyone can attend a committee meeting, including media.
- Committee meetings are held every eight weeks, with upcoming meeting dates advertised on at www.swdc.govt.nz, monthly in the Times Age and Midweek, and promoted on social media (Facebook, Neighbourly and now Instagram)
- Did you know you can share your views on any topic at Council and committee meetings, during a session at the start of each meeting? More information at www.swdc.govt.nz.
- The committees are Māori Standing Committee, Assets and Services Committee, Planning and Regulatory Committee, and Finance, Audit and Risk. There are also joint committees and subcommittees.
- To see local democracy in action, check out the meeting videos on our SWDC Youtube channel. Meeting agendas and minutes are also available on the Council website.

4. Proposed communication activities (planned for December/January)

- Website - Review and promote website information on the homepage
 - Note - committees information will be made more prominent on the new website coming Q1 next year
- YouTube videos - Committee Chair YouTube videos x 4, explaining role of each Committee
- Social media - FB/Instagram and Neighbourly posts
 - General promotion of committees and opportunities for public participation
 - Promotion of Committee Chair YouTube videos
 - FB events for committee meetings
- Rates newsletter – article in January Community Focus Newsletter, sent out to all ratepayers
- Media/PR possibilities – investigate potential for earned media.