

Report 03.130
Date 6 March 2003
File CC 1/1/1

Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy
Author Andrew Cutler Strategic Communication Manager

Communication Framework and Strategy Development

1. Purpose

To update the committee on progress towards completion of a communication strategy and to recommend adoption of a strategy framework as requested by Council on March 4th in the following resolution:

That the officers prepare for formal approval by the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee an overall strategic framework for the Council's Communications Plan in which the proposed \$325,000 for social marketing can be identified.

(Aitken / Turver)

2. Background

In 2000 and the first half of 2001 staff worked on developing a single 'comprehensive' communication strategy. That process was not completed.

Since late 2001 a different approach has been taken to developing a strategy.

A/ Clarifying the purpose and key messages of the Council through the brand development process.

B/ Working with the Council to clarify the 'product' – the Take Ten for Quality for Life – and then developing a marketing programme designed to support these strategic outcomes – the social marketing campaign.

C/ Refocusing the existing strategic communication initiative (Elements, radio, television) to support the achievement of the Council's Take Ten outcomes.

At the Solway Park workshop in November 2002 a three-part framework for a communication strategy based on this approach was presented to Councillors (see Attachment One).

Following the positive response to this approach we proceeded to develop the social marketing proposal in more detail and to refocus the existing strategic communication initiative through the departmental operating plan. On March 4th the social marketing proposal and the communication department operating plan were approved for consultation as part of the LTCCP.

Approval of the social marketing proposal and the communication department operational plan means that the three major elements of the strategy framework are nearing completion and it is therefore an appropriate time to formally approve these as the basis for a communication strategy.

3. Next Steps

Once the three-part framework has been adopted it will be elaborated into a strategy for consideration by the Council (see Attachment Two).

The communication strategy will be the guiding document for the Council's communications over the next three years and will include the following:

- The strategy framework and how the desired outcomes of 'Take Ten' will be supported.
- The policies and principles by which the Council's communication are undertaken. For example, a consultation policy, media policy, and principles such as developing co-operative programmes with central government and other local authorities.
- The tools and communication channels that will be used. For example, identifying particular media (such as opinion pieces in newspapers) for use in communicating on particular issues.
- The key audiences and stakeholders with whom we wish to communicate.

The strategy will also provide a framework for the communication activities of divisions. Following completion of a communication strategy work will be done to complete or prepare divisional communication plans.

Three divisions have developed communication plans to draft stage (Transport, Landcare, Utility Services) while preliminary work has been done with the Wairarapa and Environment divisions.

Divisional plans will specify the activities that will be undertaken to contribute to the outcomes of the overall communication strategy, and to manage specific issues relevant to that division.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) *receives the paper and notes its contents.*

- (2) ***adopts** the three communication elements previously approved (brand, social marketing campaign, strategic communication initiative) as the framework for a communication strategy.*
- (3) ***directs** officers to develop a communication strategy document for consideration by the Committee before the end of June.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Andrew Cutler
Strategic Communication
Manager

John Allard
Corporate Advisory Services