

## Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Community Leadership - Local Advocacy

### The main matters that the Council is being asked to consider are....

- Maintaining existing levels of service, with a cost reduction focus.
- A change to the current funding policy.

#### 1. Council direction

The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was to retain existing levels of service; and provide for an enhanced and strengthened relationship between the Council and Community Boards.

#### 2. What the activity does

The Local Advocacy activity provides an opportunity for local communities to share their views and preferences with the Council. This is through providing for five geographical communities to be represented through Community Boards. The Community Board members are the key linkage between the community and the Council and are used to reflect community aspirations and concerns in a way that assists decision-making by the Council.

The Local Advocacy activity provides for governance of Community Boards.

#### 3. What the legislations says

The Local Government Act 2002 places emphasis and requirements upon the Council to consult with its communities, and providing community boards is one means of doing so. The Council has established five communities within the District (Thames, Coromandel-Colville, Mercury Bay, Tairua-Pauanui and Whangamata). The Act sets out the role of Community Boards and places a requirement on the Council to provide the necessary administrative and other facilities for a community board.

Council has determined to delegate a number of its powers and functions to Community Boards in order to better carry out its role under the Act.

#### 4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the Local Advocacy activity is:

*Ensure that the Council understands local views.*

NB: Whilst not the same, this is very similar to objective stated in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan.

#### 5. How this activity currently would contribute to the Council Outcomes

The activity will contribute to the achievement of the Council Outcomes as follows:

Council Outcome	The Local Advocacy activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps create an environment that enables our economy to grow by advocating for local community needs.</li></ul>
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides opportunities for members of the community to be actively involved in the direction of the district.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports initiatives that promote and reflect community responsibility.</li> <li>• Advocates for our communities' needs.</li> <li>• Supports a range of community and cultural amenities and opportunities, considering partnership opportunities not only self provision.</li> </ul>
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Advocacy activity can advocate to Council and other agencies for controls or incentives to ensure the District becomes and remains clean and green.</li> </ul>

### 6. Things to be aware of

- The structure of Community Boards, and functions delegated by the Council to those boards, is set out in "*Community Board Terms of Reference*". In that document it is noted: "*The prime purpose of Community Boards is to ensure that Council has a sound understanding of the needs and aspirations of each of its different Communities and that these needs are reflected in Council's decision-making about the range and levels of services to be provided.*"
- The fact that the Community Board Chairpersons are now present at the Council meetings should be improving communication back to the Boards and to the community.

### 7. A word from our customers....

- The 2010 community prioritisation survey shows that "provision of community boards" sits 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 27 activities surveyed. This activity remains in the lower third priority activities, as determined by the community, when compared to other Council activities.
- Previously the Council has used resident/non-resident ratepayers awareness of their ability to contact a Community Board Member as a measure of success in this activity. In the 2010 community survey, 60% of respondents felt they knew how to contact a Community Board Member.

### 8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- A strength is that representation occurs at the local level with a high ratio of elected members to ratepayers.
- A weakness is that Community Board meetings are difficult to attend if you are working or an absentee ratepayer and may not be a preferred method of engagement.
- There is an opportunity therefore to find more effective ways to engage with ratepayers. (eg. using new technology, social networking, holding meetings after hours).
- There is a risk that increasing delegations to Community Boards will increase costs to the Council.
- Community Board work programmes are sometimes mis-aligned with the Council work programme. This risk has been reduced by seeking Council endorsement of the Community Board's work programme at the start of each financial year.

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### 9. Proposed levels of service option

Staff proposed the following options with regards to the Local Advocacy activity:

#### **Option 1: Maintain existing levels of service, with a cost reduction focus**

- This option maintains existing levels of service but reduces costs by 5% by way of not providing the same level of administrative support to Community Boards.
- To achieve a cost saving of 5% (\$1.3 million x 5% = \$65000) approximately \$65,000 would need to be saved across all Community Boards.
- Current costs are made up of essentially overheads and elected member remuneration. Therefore it would be necessary to reduce costs by the equivalent of 1 FTE across all Community Board's to achieve this saving.
- This option may make it more difficult to achieve the Council's stated aim of enhancing relationships with Community Boards or to add additional work programmes if there is reduced administrative support to do so.
- Such a reduction in funding may direct Community Boards into a more advocacy focused role and allow the staff resource to be reduced or re-deployed to other Council priorities.
- Strengthening the role of Community Board members should reduce the reliance on administrative support.
- Community Boards are use to having a high level of administrative support. If this option is adopted there may still be pressure to use staff in administrative roles, such as meetings (including Committees of the Boards), when there is little in the way of decision-making to be done.

#### **Option 2: Higher level of administrative support for Community Boards**

- Arguably the Community Boards could increase their work programmes by having additional staff resources. However there may be other ways to achieve an increased work programme by elected members doing the work themselves. This could be at small additional cost.
- The only real variable costs relate to staff time/resources so an additional 5% funding would be used to employ more staff which in turn could assist the Community Boards to achieve more.

### 10. How is this activity managed?

Community Boards are currently support administratively by Area Managers, Area Coordinators and Governance Support team. As noted prior, the structure of Community Boards, and functions delegated by Council to those boards, is set out in "*Community Board Terms of Reference*".

### 11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of the Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Local Advocacy activity represents approximately 1.32% of total spend.

<b>2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan</b>	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$1.33m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
<b>Total budgeted spend for Local Advocacy for 2011/2012</b>	<b>\$1.33m</b>
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m

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Total percentage of budget spent on Local Advocacy	1.32%
<b>2009-2019 Ten Year Plan</b>	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$15.74m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
<b>Total budgeted spend for Local Advocacy for 10 years</b>	<b>\$15.74m</b>
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Local Advocacy	1.21%

### 12. How this activity is funded, and why.

The Local Advocacy activity is currently funded as follows:

*Funding rationale summary as outlined in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan*

The benefits of this activity are generally seen to benefit the particular community that is represented by each Community Board. However, a District-wide funding mechanism levels the cost of representation evenly across the District.

*The funding mechanisms used to fund operating expenditure are:*

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
	80-100%			

There is no capital expenditure associated with this activity.

To ensure better alignment to the Council's financial strategy of targeting beneficiaries where it is affordable to do so, staff propose the following changes to the funding of the Local Advocacy activity.

*The funding mechanisms proposed to fund operating expenditure are:*

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
	50%	50%		

### 13. Staff recommendation

- Staff recommend Option 1, maintaining existing levels of service with a cost reduction focus for the Local Advocacy activity.
- Staff recommend a change to the current funding mechanism, from District-wide, to 50% District-wide and 50% Local funding, or perhaps 100% locally funded as they represent, therefore benefit each individual Community Board area.