

4.2. Long Term Plan - Engagement Campaign

Prepared for:	Council
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PURPOSE

- [1] To provide an update on the consultation campaign for the ORC's Long-term Plan 2021-31 (LTP) and engagement to date, and on the delivery of the associated hardcopy of the Long-term Plan consultation document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] Otago Regional Council's consultation period for its LTP began on 9 April 2021 and closes on 9 May 2021. The communications and engagement plan for the LTP consultation (as approved by Finance Committee on 25 November 2020) has involved extensive regionwide advertising on radio, online/digital and social media, billboards in Dunedin and Queenstown, advertising on bus backs, councillor videos promoted via Facebook and YourSay, the regionwide delivery of the consultation document and printed advertising. Engagement to date via ORC's YourSay online platform has exceeded the total engagement via YourSay for the 2018 LTP process (with another 10 days to run in the consultation period – as at the time of the Council Meeting).
- [3] One element of the communications and engagement plan was to deliver a hardcopy of the LTP consultation document to letterboxes throughout Otago. ORC used a media company to undertake the deliveries and became aware on Thursday 22 April 2021 that there were some key gaps where delivery had not taken place, including most of Cromwell, central Oamaru, and most of Mosgiel, as well as some specific parts of Dunedin and Balclutha (this accounts for approximately 12.1 percent of the documents as reported by the media company).
- [4] We have subsequently arranged for libraries and most supermarkets in the affected areas to display copies of the consultation document for residents to collect. Following this Council meeting we will also publish a media release, which acknowledges the missed deliveries and explains how residents can access a copy of the document.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

- 1) **Receives** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that the communications campaign to raise awareness of the LTP consultation period has been carried out in accordance with the approved communications and engagement plan.

- 3) **Notes** that there has been a gap in delivery of the hard copy of the consultation documents to some urban areas, and additional copies of the document have been put in libraries and most supermarkets in these areas for residents to access.
- 4) **Notes** that there will be a media release acknowledging the delivery issue and advising residents how they can access a copy of the document.

BACKGROUND

- [5] At the Finance Committee Meeting on 25 November 2020, councillors considered, and endorsed the following elements for communicating the LTP consultation period:
 - a. broad promotion of the consultation through print, radio and online/digital
 - b. videos from our Chair/councillors talking about the key consultation areas and overall context of the LTP
 - c. submissions managed through “YourSay” online platform (physical submissions also available)
 - d. promotion for contacting of constituent councillors to discuss the LTP
 - e. A hard copy of the full consultation document delivered to all households
 - f. Zoom discussions with councillors on key topics
 - g. training of customer experience staff and rural liaison in the content of the LTP for answering questions and engaging on it
- [6] Since consultation opened on 9 April 2021, we have seen evidence of good engagement and reach, as outlined below. Consultation closes on 9 May 2021.
- [7] Campaign channels and metrics to date:
 - a. A proactive media campaign, which has resulted in 19 stories in print and online news media, including coverage in the ODT, Stuff, Star, Wanaka Sun, Farmers Weekly, and Lakes Weekly Bulletin as well as news coverage on RNZ and Newshub, and interviews on Radio Dunedin, The Breeze, and Otago Access Radio. Coverage to date has largely reflected neutral sentiment towards the proposals in the LTP.
 - b. Twenty-four print adverts published, with nine further booked for the remainder of the consultation period. Publications include Otago Daily Times and seven community newspapers.
 - c. A comprehensive radio campaign across stations Otago-wide, including More FM, The Breeze, The Sound, Magic, The Edge, Radio Dunedin, Radio Central, Hokonui, Hits, Newstalk ZB, ZM, Coast, Flava, Gold AM and Hauraki, with 619 adverts aired to date the full campaign will include 1,274 adverts).
 - d. Geo-targeted digital advertising via online banner display and others adverts, including Stuff and ODT online (delivering 2.2 million impressions to date, with an estimated reach of 179,000 individuals; generating 3,841 click throughs)
 - e. Digital advertising via social media, with the highest performing advert gaining 44,315 impressions.
 - f. Online consultation and submissions via the YourSay platform, which has had 4,000 visits (2,844 unique visitors).
 - g. Videos featuring Councillors promoted via YourSay and social media.
 - h. A hard copy of the full consultation document delivered to most households in Otago
 - i. A digital billboard for one week in Dunedin (a further week is upcoming), and a large format display board outside the Queenstown i-SITE. Likely view

numbers in Dunedin, based on daily traffic visuals of 21,780 x 7: 152,460.
Likely view numbers in Queenstown: 17,000 x 21 days: 357,000.

j. Ads on two bus-backs in Dunedin and two in Queenstown

[8] As at 28 April 2021, 215 submissions (100 mailed in; 115 submitted online) have been received.

DISCUSSION

[9] A hard copy of the LTP consultation document was delivered to most households in Otago, via a media company. The media company used rural delivery staff for rural areas, and in urban areas used circular delivery staff.

[10] Staff became aware on Thursday 22 April 2021 that there were some key gaps where delivery had not taken place, including most of Cromwell, central Oamaru, and most of Mosgiel, as well as some specific parts of Dunedin and Balclutha (which account for approximately 12.1 percent of the documents as reported by the media company).

[11] To remedy the gaps in delivery, our staff have organised for additional copies of the consultation document to be placed in all libraries and most supermarkets in the affected areas for residents to access. Following this meeting a media release will be published, which acknowledges and apologises for the missed deliveries and explains how residents can access a copy of the document.

[12] It is regrettable that not all households have received a copy of the consultation document, as governors intended. Despite this, staff advice is that the overall quality of the consultation campaign has not been significantly compromised due to the variety of advertising mediums used and the predominantly urban locations of the missed properties, where internet access is widely available to access the consultation document online.

[13] The ORC's obligations to consult on its LTP under the Local Government Act 2002 have not been compromised by the gaps in delivery. The ORC had gone over and above what is legislatively required with its consultation campaign. Delivering consultation documents to letter boxes, while important, was just one aspect of the special consultative procedure. The required aspects are: that the process is advertised; the consultation document is accessible; that individuals and groups have a process to provide feedback; that Councillors consider that feedback before they adopt the draft LTP as final.

[14] Consideration of a further, or widespread extension of the consultation period introduces risk that ORC will not meet its statutory requirements for approving an LTP by 30 June 2021. The likelihood of this risk is high, given: the tight timeframes to manage and report submissions (including Hearings); time for Council to decide final changes; time for staff to implement Council decisions; and finally Deloitte to audit and report on the final LTP and consultation process.

[15] A widespread extension of the consultation period would require shifting the dates for hearings (20-21 May 2021) and deliberations (26 May 2021), and review by Deloitte (from 31 May 2021). A subsequent time with the auditors would be very difficult to achieve before 30 June 2021.

- [16] We are currently in discussions with the media company about the failure to deliver on the contract.

CONSIDERATIONS

Policy Considerations

- [17] Not applicable.

Financial Considerations

- [18] Not applicable.

Significance and Engagement

- [19] The issue discussed in this report does not trigger or require any action under the ORC's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Legislative Considerations

- [20] Council has met its consultation requirements under the Local Government Act 2002.

Risk Considerations

- [21] There may be some residents who do not engage in the consultation process, due to not receiving the hard copy of the Consultation Document. This risk is mitigated by the extensive advertising campaign to raise awareness of the LTP consultation, and the fact that most of the gaps in delivery were in urban areas where internet is more readily available.

NEXT STEPS

- [22] Staff will continue to promote and support the LTP consultation period. A media release will notify residents of the issue and advise how they are able to access a consultation document should they wish to.
- [23] Following the closure of submissions, hearings will take place on 20-21 May 2021, deliberations will take place at Finance Committee on 26 May, and the auditors will begin reviewing the LTP from 31 May 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil