EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Waitaki District Council

Adopted 17 December 2013
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Introduction to the Communication Strategy

Scope of the strategy

The focus of this strategy is external communications – that is, how Council communicates with external customers. However, many of the proposed priorities and actions relate to, and need to be, owned by internal parts of Council.

This first edition of the strategy does not include:
- Day-to-day communication from individual elected members to constituents (at this stage, this is addressed through the Code of Conduct) or communication using their own resources;
- Communication from Council-Controlled Organisations;
- Council’s Customer Request Management System (CRMS) - it is intended that they will be addressed as part of Council’s Customer Services Strategy
- Communication from Council contractors;
- Council’s internal communication, except where it has a direct link and impact on an external communication channel or practice.

Our communications context

Communication is key to everything Council does as an organisation. It is a critical component in the efficient and effective delivery of our services and in our relationship with the community we serve.

Effective communication allows Council to engage with the community on challenging issues, as well as promote understanding when things work or don’t work.

Its scope is broad - it encompasses many people, skills, practices, channels and tools.

The communications context for Council is unique and has the following characteristics:
- Our audience is large, diverse and evolving.
- Our business is large, diverse, complex and evolving.
- Our resources are always limited.

Every person in Council communicates every day. We are all responsible for its success and its failure. Ensuring success is therefore too important to leave to chance – or to any one person.

Finding a way forward

This strategy has been developed to provide scope and direction for Council’s communication. For several years, Council has sought through a variety of ways and means, to improve its communication with the community - resulting in a range of successful and unsuccessful outcomes.

Communication is constantly evolving over time. Council recognises it must evolve too in order to communicate successfully. However, to evolve effectively, Council recognised it needed to consider and address the key questions – what do we need to deliver, why do we need to deliver it, who do we need to deliver it to, and how can we deliver it in a sustainable, cost-effective way?

In order the answer these questions, Council has taken the time to step back and review its communications with a view to stepping forward with a clearer sense of purpose. In summary, the strategy process has sought to:
- Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for our communication
- Generate and prioritise specific recommendations for how actual communication practice can be structured and enhanced, and clearly outline the purpose and benefits of adopting any particular options/actions
- Identify and address resourcing implications for both the Policy Unit and the wider Council environment.
Definitions

Stakeholder

Channel

Community
SECTION ONE:
Why we communicate & what we want to achieve

“Councils need to be clear about what they want to be famous for. No organisation can communicate unless it has a clarity of purpose which can be expressed concisely in a way that passes a “pub test”. Can your staff or councillors explain the purpose of the authority?

“They need to understand how their reputation really stands in the community. Too many organisations believe that their corporate values are their brand; they are mistaken. Their reputation is the sum of opinions that people assess from their actions. Understanding this, through research and engagement, is critical to communications.”

Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster City Council
Definition & purpose

What external communication is

For the purposes of this Strategy, communication is ‘the proactive transfer of information’, between Council and its external customers - usually in written or visual form. It is intended to be a two-way process wherever possible.

Why we communicate

Communication is an essential component in the efficient and effective delivery of Council’s services to its customers. We communicate to ensure:

- Our customers know about and can access the services and facilities we deliver
- Our customers know about the issues that affect them so they can choose to respond
- We know what our customers think before we make decisions
- We can tailor our service delivery based on customer feedback

Communication also plays various roles in the delivery of the following Council Community Outcomes, which are outlined in its 2012-22 Long Term Plan – in particular:

**Waitaki is served by responsive and efficient local government (Council)**

- Council conducts its business in a transparent, efficient and prudent manner
- Council is viewed by our community as knowledgeable, trustworthy, approachable and accountable
- Waitaki residents actively contribute to Council decisions that affect their work, life and play
- We recognise and support the work of our volunteers
- We effectively engage with government and other stakeholders in the delivery of our community outcomes.

How we communicate

In general, Council communicates with its customers through:

- Sharing information through various channels – such the website, letters, signage
- Sending non-verbal cues through design and branding
- Media releases initiating or responding to public comment
- Receiving feedback through Council processes – e.g. public meetings, submission forms, questionnaires
- Receiving feedback through other channels – e.g. letters to the editor, conversations
- Receiving information – e.g. application forms
Current state – SWOT analysis

During the review of communication, internal and external customers identified a range of issues and opportunities relating to communication. Some common themes emerged which are included in the SWOT below and were used in developing the outcomes listed on the following page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL to achieving communication objectives</th>
<th>HARMFUL to achieving communication objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>WEAKNESSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High level of commitment to improving our communication</td>
<td>• Lack of defined scope and deliverables for .5 FTE communication role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some clear communication ‘successes’ and many others we don’t hear about because they are successful</td>
<td>• Lack of policies and procedures/standards and guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A range of different skills and talents within the organisation</td>
<td>• Limited resources [service-level expectations significantly higher than resources available to deliver on them]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness and enthusiasm to try new things – e.g. digital media</td>
<td>• Inconsistency across the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two previous communications strategies for reference</td>
<td>• Relatively less resourcing dedicated to communications than most other councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good ideas generated from throughout the organisation</td>
<td>• Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good level of satisfaction with The Link recorded through Residents’ Survey</td>
<td>• No clear prioritisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing awareness across the organisation about the importance of communication</td>
<td>• ‘Doing communication’ seen as one role within the organisation resulting in reliance on the talents, skills and/or preferences of one person rather than taking organisational/process-based approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Progress has been made in some areas of communication since the first communications strategy in 2007</td>
<td>• Not clearly identifying the outcomes we are trying to achieve from using particular tools or the benefits/risks of using those tools (e.g. Facebook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Despite limited resources, the website is a valuable communication channel</td>
<td>• Officers undertaking communication processes without support or advice and no process for monitoring and gatekeeping what goes out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPPORTUNITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>THREATS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting the basics right and working from there</td>
<td>• Growing service level expectations in a way that outstrips available resources and is unsustainable</td>
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<td>• Better utilising new channels available – e.g. digital</td>
<td>• The website will go backwards if nobody ‘owns’ it and resources aren’t dedicated to it</td>
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<td>• Working more with the organisations and groups within the community who want to help with Council’s communication – more opportunities for informal face-to-face discussions</td>
<td>• A growth in competition with the plethora of information going to the community from other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using a range of resources to respond to changing demands and to enable a flexible approach</td>
<td>• A large, diverse audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaging with communities in the more remote areas of the District through their preferred mediums</td>
<td>• One ‘bad’ experience or interaction with Council colouring view of all subsequent Council communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeting communications to audiences more effectively</td>
<td>• Negative public perceptions of Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making more use of the quarterly rates invoices to distribute information</td>
<td>• Public perception of ‘Council propaganda’, too much information, not enough information or the wrong information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving the look and accessibility of website and increasing its functionality – e.g. online transactions</td>
<td>• Confusion around consultation vs communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing the Link &amp; maximising distribution</td>
<td>• Lack of interest in Council activities until it directly affects people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL ORIGIN (ATTRIBUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT)</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL ORIGIN (ATTRIBUTES OF THE ORGANISATION)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Issues around website accessibility and functionality
- Not ‘closing the loop’ with some of our communication
- Lack of coordination of communication across the organisation
- Wrong or insufficient information going out at times

- Growing service level expectations in a way that outstrips available resources and is unsustainable
- The website will go backwards if nobody ‘owns’ it and resources aren’t dedicated to it
- A growth in competition with the plethora of information going to the community from other sources
- A large, diverse audience
- One ‘bad’ experience or interaction with Council colouring view of all subsequent Council communication
- Negative public perceptions of Council
- Public perception of ‘Council propaganda’, too much information, not enough information or the wrong information
- Confusion around consultation vs communication
- Lack of interest in Council activities until it directly affects people
- Unpredictability of social media – high risk
Desired future state - strategic outcomes

The following strategic outcomes are the desired future state Council wants to work towards. They describe the ideal end result of implementing this strategy:

**Strategic outcomes**

**A well-informed community**
Customers get the information from Council they need, when they need it

**Satisfied customers**
Quality communication is an integral part of our excellent customer service

**Skilled communicators**
All Council officers recognise, value, practice and take accountability for quality communication in their daily activities

**‘Closed loops’**
Communication with customers continues until an issue is resolved or a project is completed

**Productive exchanges**
Two-way communication with our customers creates shared understanding, ideas and goals

**One team**
We communicate as a team and in partnership with stakeholders, and as individuals take pride in representing Council as an organisation

**Value for money**
We get the results we want at a price we can afford and our communications are sustainable
Guiding principles

Guiding principles are the values that guide our approach to communication and provide a reference point for reviewing our performance. In our overall communications, we should aim to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Corresponding behaviours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be responsive</strong></td>
<td>o Identifying our audiences and their communication needs and catering to these as much as possible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Regularly gauging community opinions to help review and streamline communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Involving stakeholders representatives in the development of communication, where possible and appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Ensuring customers know what communication to expect, when to expect it, and how and where to find it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be purposeful</strong></td>
<td>o Understanding Council’s purpose and considering this in all communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Understanding the outcome we are seeking from communication and ensuring the communication channels used are fit for purpose</td>
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<td><strong>Be trustworthy</strong></td>
<td>o Always aiming to be accurate – not talking about what we don’t know</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Maintaining the integrity of our communication by ensuring communication is up to date and correct</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be accessible</strong></td>
<td>o Not assuming people have prior knowledge or access to information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Communicating in terms that our target audiences can understand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Using Plain English wherever possible</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Add value</strong></td>
<td>o Only speaking when we have something worthwhile to say</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Ensuring communication is relevant and available when required</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Monitoring communication and accounting for the resources used</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Represent Council</strong></td>
<td>o Sending the right message by using appropriate tone and level of formality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Taking pride in what we produce, maintaining high standards of quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Ensuring our corporate identity is appropriate to Council and is easily recognisable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Working together as a team on important communication issues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o When communicating as individuals, remembering we are representing Council and taking accountability for how we communicate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SECTION TWO:
How we’re going to achieve it

Strategic priorities
Targeted outcomes & goals
Actions plans
Introduction

In order to work towards achieving its desired outcomes for external communication, Council must use a variety of communication channels, practices and resources.

This section outlines the primary channels, practices and resources Council will use, why we use them and how we intend to use them to achieve our outcomes.

Communication Channels:
These are the methods we use send information to and/or receive information back from our customers. Use of these channels must be congruent with our customer’s needs, Council’s communication objectives and the message capacity of the channel. Each channel has an implementation plan in which includes the following details:

- **Purpose** – why Council uses the channel
- **Targeted audiences** – who we are trying to reach through using the channel
- **Priority** – the level of priority the channel has in terms of achieving the desired outcomes and its focus for implementation
- **Responsibilities** – who is responsible for, and associated with, leading the delivery of the channel
- **Issues & opportunities** – channel-specific detail from the 2013 review
- **Targeted outcome** – a desired outcome specific to each channel
- **Goals** – what we are aiming for with this channel to help achieve the outcomes, what the purpose of each goal is, and how we will track our progress towards the goals (Key Result Areas – KRAs)
- **Action Plans** – the specific actions required to achieve the goals (including responsibilities, timeframes, and resources)

Communication Practices (Communications Management Plan):
These are the operational mechanisms that support our communication channels and communication with our customers. Collectively these will form a Communications Management Plan, which will be developed as part of the Strategy implementation. It will be a ‘living document’, designed to be amended and added to on an ongoing basis.

Implementation plans for each practice have been set out as for channels (refer above).

Communication resources:
Resources for communication include people and tools (such as InDesign software, a submissions database). Improving and sustaining communication requires sufficient and appropriate resourcing.

The Good Practice for Managing Public Communications by Local Authorities (The Controller and Auditor-General, 2004, page 4) states as a first principle that “A council can lawfully, and should, spend money on communications to meet a community’s (or a section of a community’s) justifiable need for information about the Council’s role and activities”.

A summary of the resources used for Council’s communication – including their purpose – is included at the end of the section.
Overarching strategic priorities

1. **Resourcing matched to desired outcomes and agreed deliverables:**
   - Appointment of a full-time Communications Advisor early 2014 (within existing budgets)
   - Appointment of a full-time Website Administrator early 2014 (within existing budgets)
   - Allocation of sufficient budgets (one off/ongoing as required, to support strategy implementation – e.g. graphic design support, social media advice and support, Waitaki Link development

2. **Development of a Communications Management Plan which includes:**
   - A Communications and Style Guide – Branding guidance: Logo, design standards, templates, Communications guidance: grammar, language, content structure (within existing budgets)
   - Important standards, policies and procedures relating to priority channels & practices (within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)
   - Communication/consultation plan templates (within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)
   - Templates for media releases and channels (within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)

3. **Strategic planning and gatekeeping - development and implementation of an ‘Issues Register’ which records and tracks the following:**
   - Specific issues (by unit or group)
   - Council-initiated communication on each issue
   - Related media coverage (print and digital) on each issue
   - Accountabilities and spokesperson/spokespeople for each issue
   - Planned communication/responses each for issue
   - Stakeholder/elected member representatives for each issue
   - Process for gatekeeping outgoing communication on important issues
   (Development and Management of Issues Register within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)

4. **Involvement of elected members (Communications Portfolio) and stakeholder representatives:**
   - Policy and process in place to clarify elected members’ roles and responsibilities relating to communication (within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)
   - Process in place for involving stakeholder representatives in the development of important communications and consultation material identified through the Issues Register (as above)

5. **Development of the Council website, Waitaki Link, advertising and notices:**
   - Confirm proposals for development of these primary channels early 2014 (within scope of Communications Advisor FTE)
   - Commence implementation of development of primary channels by mid-2014
   - These channels (and supporting practices) will be the priority focus for implementation of the Strategy, however, work on developing and improving other communication channels – such as forms, fact sheets, leaflets and brochures – will also commence in tandem with development of Communication and Branding Style Guide.
## Priority channels & practices - summary

### Priority communication channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Targeted outcome</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Priority actions</th>
<th>Timeframes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Website                  | The website is valued by customers and used as the “first port of call” for information about Council’s activities and services | • Accurate, current & consistent content  
• Logically grouped & structured content  
• Improved design & functionality | Appointment of Website Administrator and implementation of staged improvements – beginning with a ‘spring clean’ [e.g. grammar, spelling, currency] | Work on ‘spring clean’ commenced early 2014. Structure and design review underway by mid-2014 – structural and design changes implemented from mid-2014 through to mid-2015. |
| Waitaki Link             | The Waitaki Link is widely read and viewed by customers as a relevant and valuable source of Council news and information | • Content that addresses issues of strategic importance & of interest to the community  
• Maximalised distribution | Link developed into 2 publications (The Waitaki Link and the Link Noticeboard)  
- each with a clearly defined and agreed purpose, publication timeframe & distribution network. | Redevelopment and distribution proposal confirmed early 2014 and implementation underway early-mid 2014. |
| Advertising & Notices    | Customers are aware of important Council services, events and facilities through effective distribution of notices and advertising. | • Maximalised use of current budgets  
• Guidelines and processes  
• A Link Noticeboard | Portions of existing budgets from across Council consolidated into one budget for a Link Noticeboard page. | Link Noticeboard proposal confirmed and implemented in tandem with Waitaki Link proposal. |
| Social Media             | Council’s Facebook page contains up to date information about a wide range of Council activities and events, and user numbers continue to grow. | • Use of Facebook maximised for Council information  
• Agreed social media policy and plan in place | Process developed to maximise information on Facebook from across Council. Workshop with Communications Portfolio on social media use in a local government context. Social Media Policy and Plan developed and confirmed. | Process for maximising current use developed and implemented early 2014. Workshop held early 2014. Policy and plan for future development confirmed and implemented by mid to late-2014. |
| Forms                    | Council forms are customer-friendly and provide the important information customers and Council officers need to complete successful transactions. | • Consistent standard and quality  
• Design that signals a particular unit or activity of Council  
• Online completion of forms maximised through website | Redesign/update of priority forms. Confirmation of forms that could be completed online. Functionality of website upgraded for online completion of forms, as appropriate and compatible with Sharepoint. | Review of current forms completed, priorities identified and updates underway by mid-2014 (including implementation of Style Guide standards). Review of online forms & website functionality completed mid-2014. |
| Brochures, leaflets and fact sheets | Customers have access to relevant, useful information on Council services through well-designed and distributed leaflets, brochures and fact sheets. | • Clearly identified purpose and audience  
• Consistent quality and branding  
• Easy to access and understand | Editing, updating or deletion of brochures etc. not currently achieving their purpose (ensuring consistency with Style Guide). Make all current brochures etc. available on Council’s website and at other high-use locations. | Development of priority leaflets, brochures and facts sheets underway prior to mid-2014. All current brochures, leaflets and fact sheets on website by mid-2014. |

### Priority communication practices (Communications Management Plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Targeted outcome</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Priority actions</th>
<th>Timeframes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strategic Communications Planning             | Council plans ahead to ensure information on key issues is provided to the right audiences, at the right time, using the right channels | • Communication on important issues planned in advance  
• Elected members involved in identifying and planning for key communication issues | Appointment of 1 FTE Communications Advisor, development & implementation of a Communication Issues Register & a process in place for working with elected members & stakeholder representatives | Issues register developed by end of 2013. Process for elected members early 2014. Appointment of Communications Advisor made early 2014. |
| Communication and Branding Style Guide        | Council’s print and online communication is consistent, professional and easily recognised as coming from Council | • A Communication and Style Guide implemented  
| Standards, policies, processes & templates    | Council’s communication is supported and enhanced through implementation of agreed standards, policies and procedures. | • Priority standards, policies and procedures in place  
• Council officers familiar with standards, policies and procedures and adhering to these | Development of standards, policies, processes & templates relating to priority channels and practices (including the website, Link, advertising & notices, media releases, Issues Register). Inclusion of these in Communications Management Plan. | High priority standards, policies, procedures & templates underway before end of 2013 and drafts completed and adopted by mid-2014. |
Communication Channels – goals and action plans for:

- The Website
- The Waitaki Link
- Advertising & notices
- Media releases & liaison
- Social media
- E-mails and letters
- Community newsletters
- Forms
- Leaflets, brochures & fact sheets
- Letters to the editor responses
- Community newsletters
- Other - summary (signage and posters, cell phone apps & other digital media, maps & spatial data)
- Stakeholders to be considered (for channels & practices)

“The communications toolbox has got bigger, but choose your tools carefully. Mass media still reaches large audiences. TV, radio and the daily newspapers have a powerful impact. Social media matters, but should act as a support to the main tools of communications.”

Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster City Council
The website

Purpose
The website represents everything Council does as an organisation. It’s the ‘virtual’ gateway into our business. The primary purpose of the website is to provide customers with access to immediate, up-to-date information on Council’s services and activities in a convenient and cost-effective way.

Target audiences
Of all Council’s communication channels, the website reaches the largest and most diverse range of audience. Anyone with access to the internet is able to access Council’s website, and so it must cater for a general audience.

Priority
Because of its scope of content and reach, and its ability to provide information quickly and conveniently, the website is considered by Council to be a priority communication channel. It was also highlighted by stakeholders as an important and priority channel during the 2013 review.

Responsibilities
Because of its strategic importance, the website will be coordinated through Council’s Policy and Communications Unit using a dedicated Website Administrator. The Administrator will work closely with a dedicated Communications Coordinator, the Corporate Planner, Council’s IT and Customer Service Teams, as well as dedicated officers from each Council unit.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Not user-friendly (internal & external) - ‘clunky’, hard to find information
- Inconsistent and sometimes out-of-date information
- Not attractive or engaging for users

The key opportunities:
- To increase its functionality for users – e.g. online forms and payments, feedback
- To use it to represent the District and as an economic development tool
- To simplify and redesign the content

Target outcome
The website is valued by customers and used as the first ‘port of call’ for information about Council’s activities and services.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key Result Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Accurate, current and consistent website content</td>
<td>• To give users confidence that the website is a reliable source of up-to-date information&lt;br&gt;• To reduce the risks created by misinformation to website users and Council&lt;br&gt;• To illustrate Council’s ‘one team’</td>
<td>All information on the website is up to date and accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Logically grouped and structured website content</td>
<td>• To make it easier and quicker for customers to access the information they want</td>
<td>Feedback from users (internal and external) indicates they can find/are satisfied with information on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 3: Improved design and functionality</td>
<td>• To make it more visually appealing for customers&lt;br&gt;• To provide more options for customers to make transactions or provide feedback&lt;br&gt;• To enhance the District’s reputation as a desirable place to live, work and play</td>
<td>The number of website users increases by more than 10% by the end of 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Website - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1:</strong> Accurate, current and consistent website content</td>
<td>Audit website content for accuracy (e.g. spelling, correct documents), currency and consistency (including Plain English) and amend as required.</td>
<td>Website Administrator, Communications Advisor, IT and website representatives from each unit</td>
<td>Commence Jan/Feb 2013 Ongoing</td>
<td>Approx 40 hours of within scope of proposed FTE. 10 hours IT support. Approximately 2 hours of time from each unit.</td>
<td>Information on the website is up to date and accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upload website content and review regularly for accuracy, currency and consistency</td>
<td>Website Administrator (with trained back-up people) in consultation with unit website representatives</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within scope of proposed FTE</td>
<td>Feedback from users (internal and external) indicates they can find/are satisfied with information on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2:</strong> Logically grouped and structured website content</td>
<td>Establish Website Focus Group to have input into the restructuring and development of the website.</td>
<td>Led by Website Administrator and Communications Advisor, Unit website representatives, Elected Member Portfolio Leads</td>
<td>Meet monthly (or as required)</td>
<td>2 hours per month from each unit (or more as required in initial restructure/redevelopment phase).</td>
<td>Feedback from users (internal and external) indicates they can find/are satisfied with information on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review website content structure, reorganise and consolidate information</td>
<td>Website Administrator in consultation with Website Focus Group</td>
<td>By end of January 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of proposed FTEs</td>
<td>As above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 3:</strong> Improved website design and functionality</td>
<td>Identify additional functionality for transactions and customer feedback (both formal and informal), and implement approved changes</td>
<td>Website Administrator in consultation with IT</td>
<td>By December 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of proposed FTE, however additional resource may be required – additional funding may need to be included in the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan (see below also).</td>
<td>The number of website users increases by more than 10% by the end of 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review design of website and implement proposed changes</td>
<td>Website Administrator in consultation with external resource</td>
<td>By December 2014</td>
<td>Additional design expertise required – proposal for funding to be included in 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan</td>
<td>As above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Waitaki Link

### Purpose
The primary purpose of the Waitaki Link is to provide news and information about issues which are known, or likely, to be of concern or interest to the wider community. Its other purpose is to direct people to other sources of information and communication channels, such as Customer Services, and Council’s website and Facebook pages.

### Target audiences
Because the Waitaki Link contains general news and information about Council, it is intended to reach as many people in the community as possible, and cater for a variety of interests and geographical locations.

### Priority
Because of its scope of content and ability to provide information to a wide audience, and its capacity for development, the Waitaki Link is considered to be a strategic priority. Although the Resident’s Survey has rated indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the Link in recent years, it was highlighted by stakeholders during the 2013 review as a channel that can be developed to be a key source of Council information for the community.

### Responsibilities
Council’s Policy and Communications Unit will be responsible for determining the content and for production of the Link, with assistance from other Council units, elected members and external contractors as required.

### Issues & opportunities
**The key issues:**
- Limited distribution
- Lack of space for substantial news items
- No strategic planning for news items

**The key opportunities:**
- Widen digital distribution
- Strategically plan and write more content
- Provide feedback opportunities

### Targeted outcome
*The Waitaki Link is widely read and is viewed by customers as a relevant and valuable source of Council news and information.*

### Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GOAL 1: Content that addresses issues of interest strategic importance and of interest to the community** | • To ensure content caters for the various information needs and interests of residents and stakeholders  
• To provide people with an opportunity respond to issues/opportunities in a timely way  
• To give people greater understanding of the issues that affect them and to keep them informed about progress and outcomes on these issues | At least 80% of residents surveyed are satisfied with the information provided in the Link  
A Communication Issues Register is maintained and updated weekly. |

| **GOAL 2: Maximised distribution** | • To ensure as many people as possible get the information they need from Council | At least 80% of residents surveyed have read the Link in the past 12 months |
## Goal: Content that addresses issues of strategic importance and of interest to the community

**Action:** Use Communication Issues Register developed under this strategy to identify Link content, while continuing to request content from throughout the organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>A Communication Issues Register is maintained and updated weekly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Council Officers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Identify agenda items of high public interest

**Action:** Identify agenda items of high public interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Council agenda</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>At least 80% of residents surveyed are satisfied with the information in provided in the Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Team</td>
<td>meeting cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Create a process for including elected members and external stakeholders in developing relevant content, and for obtaining informal community feedback.

**Action:** Create a process for including elected members and external stakeholders in developing relevant content, and for obtaining informal community feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Develop a proposal for the re-configuration of the Link (i.e. number of pages, advertising/notices, frequency) to create scope for more in-depth news stories.

**Action:** Develop a proposal for the re-configuration of the Link (i.e. number of pages, advertising/notices, frequency) to create scope for more in-depth news stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>CURRENT - $15,000</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Goal: Maximised distribution

**Action:** Review current distribution (including frequency), recommend changes and implement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>AS above</td>
<td>At least 80% of residents surveyed have read the Link in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Engage resource to implement 6-weekly digital and printed edition of the Link, maintain and grow distribution network, maintain database & other associated services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>PROPOSED - $17,000 (based on 6-weekly digital editions with associated services), $8,000 proposed for limited print runs.</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advertising & notices

Purpose
The primary purpose of advertising and notices is to ensure our stakeholders and the community are aware of and up to date with important Council events, activities and deadlines, and are able to choose to respond accordingly.

Target audiences
Advertising and notices are targeted at a range of audiences, depending on which activity, event or issue they relate to. Some are intended to reach as many people in the community as possible, and cater for a variety of interests and geographical locations.

Priority
Because notices usually communicate essential information on Council activities and processes, and are in some cases a statutory requirement, they are a high priority for Council. Advertising is also considered to be a high priority because if done effectively, it ensures use of our services and facilities is maximised.

Responsibilities
Council’s Policy and Communications Unit will be responsible for the development and ongoing implementation of a Council noticeboard (the proposed Link Noticeboard). Layout and digital print-ready delivery to newspapers will be part of the outsourced contract for the digital edition of the Link.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Ad hoc approach across organisation
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of branding & design consistency

The key opportunities:
- Consolidate budget to achieve savings
- Create a ‘go to’ page for Council notices
- Develop process & design consistency

Targeted outcome
The community is aware of important Council services, events and activities through effective distribution of notices & advertising.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Maximised use of current budgets</strong></td>
<td>• To ensure we are getting maximum value for money</td>
<td>We get more advertising and notices from our current budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Guidelines and processes in place</strong></td>
<td>• To increase efficiency and ensure standards and design consistency are maintained across the organisation</td>
<td>A Council-wide process is in place (including design) for advertising and notices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 3: A Link Noticeboard in print and digital media</strong></td>
<td>• To create a ‘go to’ space for important Council notices that is easily recognised and accessed by customers</td>
<td>More than 80% of the community have viewed Council’s Link Noticeboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Advertising & notices - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Maximised use of current budgets</strong></td>
<td>Money from existing budgets set aside for a new Link Noticeboard</td>
<td>Communications Advisor, Chief Financial Officer</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>PROPOSED - $20,000 from existing advertising budgets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor ratio of advertising from each unit against budget</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>We get more advertising and notices from our current budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Guidelines &amp; processes in place</strong></td>
<td>Template developed for advertising and notices as part of Style Guide</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process developed for placing ads with media and in Link Noticeboard</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>A Council-wide process is in place (including design) for advertising and notices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 3: A Link Noticeboard in print and digital media</strong></td>
<td>Develop a proposal for the Link Noticeboard in tandem with Waitaki Link reconfiguration</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place fortnightly Link Noticeboard in 2-3 local newspapers, on the website and on Facebook, and send to community newsletters for their information/use.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor to coordinate, External resource to complete noticeboard layout and make print/digital ready as part of contract for the Link</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>PROPOSED – as above under Goal 1.</td>
<td>More than 80% of the community have viewed Council’s Link Noticeboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related key outcomes:** A well-informed community, Satisfied customers, One team, Value for money

**Targeted outcome:** The community is aware of important Council services, events and activities through effective notices & advertising.
Media Releases & Media Liaison

Purpose
The main purpose of Council’s media releases and other interaction is to alert the media to, and provide key information on, ‘newsworthy’ Council activities, and to answer media queries on any issues, so they can be widely reported to the community through a variety of media channels.

Target audiences
Media releases are generally targeted to the widest possible audience because they contain newsworthy information that is likely to affect, or be of interest to, a large number of people.

Priority
Media releases are a priority for Council because they are an efficient and cost-effective way of disseminating Council news to a wide audience, via a range of channels, in a timely way. Although Council does not control if or how media will use media releases, a newsworthy and well-structured media release increases the chance of it being taken up by media and should ensure Council’s key messages are maintained in any subsequent reporting. It is therefore a priority that the standards of media releases and good relationships with media are maintained, and media coverage monitored.

Responsibilities
Council’s Communications Advisor is responsible for writing or editing all media releases prior to final approval by the relevant manager, as per Council’s Media Policy and also for day-to-day liaison with the media. Media releases will only be distributed to the media via the Communications Advisor following approval by the relevant manager in accordance with Council’s Media Policy.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- No strategic planning for releases
- Lack of up-to-date guidance and a standard template
- No media monitoring process

The key opportunities:
- To use an issues register to strategically plan media releases
- To review and update the 2007 Media Policy
- To develop a template/guidance

Targeted outcome
The community receives news about important Council issues, events and activities through a variety of media channels.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Monitored media coverage and strategically planned media releases</td>
<td>To ensure we are aware of issues that are developing and are able to address these proactively through the media before they become problematic</td>
<td>Council is aware of any news and developments before they in the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Updated Media Policy, practices and guidelines in place</td>
<td>To ensure we have relevant policy and guidelines that reduce risk and ensure we maintain professional integrity in our relationship with media</td>
<td>The Media Policy is reviewed and updated, guidelines are in place. All Council officers are aware of these and where to find them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Media Releases & Liaison - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Monitored media coverage and strategically planned media releases</strong></td>
<td>Monitor media coverage and include in Communication Issues Register for discussion with Executive Team (to be developed as part of this strategy)</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from 2013</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Council is aware of any news and developments before they in the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include strategic planning of media releases as part of Consultation Plan Template (under ‘Practices’ on page ???)</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Council is aware of any news and developments before they in the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Updated Media Policy, practices and guidelines in place</strong></td>
<td>Review current media policy, update if required and reconfirm</td>
<td>Communications Advisor with support from Policy and Communications Manager</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>The Media Policy is reviewed and updated, guidelines are in place. All Council officers are aware of these and where to find them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review current media practices and guidelines and update if required (including process for sending agendas out to media)</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribute updated policy and guidelines around organisation and ensure they are easily accessible for ongoing reference</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social media

Purpose
Council’s longer term purpose for use social media is yet to be determined and is one of the priority goals under this strategy. In the interim, until Council fully understands the range of options for using social media in a local government context, the benefits and risks involved, and the resourcing implications, its purpose (currently through our Facebook page) is to act as another channel for sharing information such as media releases, notices and the Waitaki Link.

Target audiences
Target audiences are yet to be confirmed and will need to align with the agreed purpose and goals for social media. In the interim, content is aimed at a general audience with access to Facebook.

Priority
Council acknowledges the increasing importance of social media (particularly Facebook) as a mainstream communication channel and its potential for engaging effectively with the community. It is therefore viewed as a priority. However, Council is also aware of the importance of understanding how this channel works within a local government context, what the risks and benefits are, and potential resourcing implications. It is therefore considered that researching seeking expert advice on Council’s potential use of social media is a high priority in order for an agreed purpose to be determined and a framework put in place which supports this and ensures the use of this channel is sustainable.

Responsibilities
Council has an interim policy for social media which includes current responsibilities. This will need to be reviewed once advice is sought and Council agrees its approach. In the interim, the Communications Advisor is responsible for placing content on Facebook. The Twitter account is currently on hold.

Issues & opportunities

**The key issues:**
- Lack of clarity around purpose or goals
- Conflicting views and information
- Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities
- Managing content and risk

**The key opportunities:**
- Able reach a wide audience quickly – particularly useful for emergency situations
- Can focus and provide updates on specific topics/projects/activities
- Can obtain immediate feedback from audiences

Targeted outcome (interim – for Facebook)
Council’s Facebook page contains up to date information about a wide range of Council activities and events, and user numbers continue to grow.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Use of Facebook for Council information maximised</td>
<td>• To ensure a variety of useful/relevant information from across the organisation is provided to users</td>
<td>User numbers continue to increase (rate to be determined once Social Media Plan confirmed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Agreed social media policy and plan in place</td>
<td>• To confirm Council’s objectives for social media and how they will be achieved • To ensure communication resources are consistent with Council’s objectives</td>
<td>Social media policy and plan is in place by July 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Social media - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Use of Facebook for Council information maximised</strong></td>
<td>Create process for other units to regularly notify Comms Lead or deliver content for Facebook</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote use of Facebook by Council Units for notices, advertising and other small news items</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post content on Facebook from across units</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage advice on social media use in a local government context – including advice on Facebook page configuration, maximising user numbers and ongoing resourcing requirements.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>$2000-$3000 from within existing budgets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Agreed social media policy and plan in place</strong></td>
<td>Develop and confirm Social Media Policy and Plan</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Social media policy and plan is in place by July 2014 (with relevant KRAs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E-mails & letters

Purpose
The purpose of e-mail and letters is communicate directly with individuals, groups or organisations on specific matters, often with the intention of receiving a response of some kind. Other than conversation, letters and e-mails are Council’s most prolific form of communication and provide an important record of both formal and informal interaction between Council officers and customers.

Target audiences
E-mails and letters always have a specific target audience relating to the matter or matters addressed. The tone and formality of the correspondence should be appropriate to this and the audience.

Priority
Due to the volume of letters and e-mails sent to and from Council every day, and the wide range of matters addressed, they are a priority communication channel. Ensuring that professional standards and efficiency are maintained, customer needs are met and risk is reduced for both Council and its customers is a key priority.

Responsibilities
All Council officers correspond at some time or another with external customers and are responsible for ensuring professional standards are maintained in both writing and responding to letters and e-mails. However, Council as an organisation, has a responsibility to ensure officers are equipped with the skills, knowledge and support required to uphold this responsibility. The Communications Advisor has a role developing and monitoring standards and processes for these channels, in conjunction with unit and group managers.

Issues & opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The key issues:</th>
<th>The key opportunities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Minimal standards and guidelines</td>
<td>• To enable and support officers to write professional letters and e-mails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of monitoring of what’s going out</td>
<td>• To have a letter tracking process in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Variable skillsets across the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targeted outcome
Council officers’ written correspondence to customers is always timely, courteous and professional.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: Standards and guidelines in place for written correspondence | • To ensure officers correspond with customers in a professional manner  
• To protect and enhance Council’s reputation | No complaints received about the standards of written correspondence |
| GOAL 2: A process in place for acknowledging and tracking all incoming written correspondence | • To ensure customers know their correspondence has reached Council and is being  
• To ensure accountability for timely responses | All written correspondence from customers acknowledged within 5 working days |
## E-mails & letters - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Standards and guidelines in place for written correspondence</td>
<td>Review current standards and templates and confirm what is still relevant for current use</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Administration &amp; CSU staff</td>
<td>By end of 2013</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create new standards and guidance for written correspondence incorporating any current standards and guidelines which are still relevant, along with any useful information from other councils</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Administration &amp; CSU staff</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make standards and guidance available to all Council officers and provide ongoing education and support as required</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>July 2014 onwards</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and implement a system for monitoring the overall standard of correspondence going out</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Administration &amp; CSU staff</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>No complaints received about the standards of written correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: A process in place for acknowledging and tracking all incoming written correspondence</td>
<td>Develop a tracking process for written correspondence that compliments and/or integrates with the current CRM process</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Administration &amp; CSU staff</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>All written correspondence from customers acknowledged within 3 working days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forms

Purpose
The purpose of forms is to obtain information from customers in order to complete a wide variety of transactions between Council and its customers - from resource and building consents, liquor licences, direct debits and dog registrations, to Library memberships and community housing applications. Forms usually also communicate essential information to customers, so are an important two-way communication channel.

Target audiences
The target audiences for forms is dependent on what sort of information Council is trying to gather or communicate. Some forms have a more general audience (such as direct debits for rates), while community housing application forms have a more specific audience (usually those over 65 years old). Regardless of the audience, it is important that all forms are designed to be as customer-friendly as possible while also enabling Council to conduct its business in the most efficient way.

Priority
Because of the important role forms play in the way Council’s day-to-day business is conducted and in our two-way communication with customers, they are considered to be a priority.

Responsibilities
Most business units of Council are responsible for managing their own forms. The Assets, Finance, Regulatory and Planning Units are the most regular users of forms for conducting day-to-day business. Council’s Communications Advisor has a role in monitoring forms, ensuring they are of a consistent standard across the organisation and supporting other units to make improvements to forms where required. This should be done in consultation with Council’s Customer Service staff.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Inconsistent quality across the organisation
- No standard styles or templates available

The key opportunities:
- Review and improve structure and content of all forms across the organisation
- Create standard identities for each unit

Targeted outcome
Council forms are customer-friendly and provide the key information customers and Council officers need to complete successful transactions.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: Forms of consistent standard and quality | • To ensure forms are customer-friendly and enable smooth transactions  
• To reflect Council’s professional standards | Forms are formatted in accordance with Style Guide |
| GOAL 2: Design that signals a particular unit or activity of Council | • To make it easier for customers and Council officers to determine the particular purpose of a form | Forms are formatted in accordance with Style Guide |
| GOAL 3: Online completion of forms, where appropriate | • To make the completion of certain transactions more convenient and cost-effective for customers and Council | All forms that can be completed online are available on the website by the end on 2014 |
### Forms - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1:</strong> Consistent standard and quality</td>
<td>Review current forms and identify ones that are examples of best-practice and those need to be updated and/or amended.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Unit representatives</td>
<td>By July 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent. Some additional resource may be required.</td>
<td>Forms are formatted in accordance with Style Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Update forms to ensure consistent language, look and ease of use for customers and Council officers.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Unit representatives</td>
<td>End of 2014 Ongoing review</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent. Some additional resource may be required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2:</strong> Design that reflects a particular unit or activity of Council</td>
<td>Implement Style Guide design applications as appropriate for forms.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor • Graphic designer</td>
<td>End of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent. Graphic design resource as per Style Guide proposal in this strategy.</td>
<td>Forms are formatted in accordance with Style Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop unique design identifiers for forms from different units for different activities.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor • Graphic designer</td>
<td>End of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent. Graphic design resource as per Style Guide proposal in this strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 3:</strong> Forms can be completed online where appropriate</td>
<td>Identify forms that can be completed online/are a priority and maximise online completion of forms through Council website.</td>
<td>• IT (lead) • CSU • Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Dependent of website upgrades</td>
<td>Within scope of IT function.</td>
<td>All forms that can be completed online are available on the website by the end on 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leaflets, brochures & fact sheets

Purpose
The purpose of leaflets, brochures and fact sheets is to provide useful ‘take-away’ information for customers about Council-related activities, services and facilities - such as Development Contributions, building and resource consent processes, opening hours and services available Council-run facilities, and waste services. They can provide more information about a service they are currently accessing or intending to access, and can also help attract new customers to Council facilities.

Target audiences
The target audiences for leaflets, brochures and fact sheets depend on the activity or service to which they relate and what their main purpose is. They are usually only available at Council service centres and Council-run facilities, with some made available on the website.

Priority
Leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are useful communication channels for Council, however, their usefulness is limited unless they are readily available or widely distributed to their target audience. It can also be expensive for Council to produce them and maintain their currency in print form. The initial priority is ensuring current leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are useful, relevant and professional, and easily accessed by their target audiences – particularly through Council’s website. Design and branding is also a key priority, however, this can only be addressed with the Style Guide to be developed under this strategy. The development of new or additional leaflets, brochures and fact sheets is considered to be of lesser priority and will only be addressed once current productions are reviewed and the Style Guide is completed (unless there is a compelling reason to do so).

Responsibilities
Officers in each unit are responsible for identifying whether or not a leaflet, brochure or fact sheet may be required to help in the effective delivery of their services, and for the funding of any design and printing required. The Communication Advisor’s role is to advise whether a leaflet, brochure or fact sheet would be useful and to help determine its purpose and target audience. They can also assist with the development and structure of content, or the review of proposed content. The Communications Advisor also has a role in assisting with the arrangement and coordination of graphic design (this will be in accordance with the Style Guide being developed as part of this strategy).

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Limited distribution
- Inconsistent content, quality and design
- No process for production or graphic design resourcing

The key opportunities:
- Use website and digital media more for distributing this information
- Review and improve current productions
- Redesign using Style Guide

Targeted outcome
Customers have access to relevant and useful information on specific Council services through the production of well-designed and appropriately distributed leaflets, brochures and fact sheets.
## Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GOAL 1: Clearly identified purpose and audience** | • To ensure each leaflet, brochure or fact sheet is meeting a specified need or purpose  
• To ensure we are getting value for money  
• To ensure each leaflet, brochure or fact sheet is appropriate for the intended audience | Leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are only produced if there is a clearly stated purpose and defined audience |
| **GOAL 2: Consistent quality and branding** | • To ensure all leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are instantly recognised as coming from Council  
• To maintain and enhance Council’s professional reputation | Leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are updated or produced to reflect Council’s Style Guide |
| **GOAL 3: Easy to access and read** | • To ensure customers can easily get the information they need, when they need it  
• To ensure all customers can understand the information provided | All leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are available on Council’s website |
# Leaflets, brochures & fact sheets - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Clearly identified purpose and audience</strong></td>
<td>Review current leaflets, brochures and fact sheets to identify purpose and audience requirements.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with unit representatives.</td>
<td>Mid-2014 and ongoing review</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are only produced if there is a clearly stated purpose and defined audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edit, update or discontinue leaflets, brochures and fact sheets which are not achieving their purpose or meeting the needs of their target audience.</td>
<td>Unit representatives with assistance from Communications Advisor</td>
<td>End of 2014 and ongoing review</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent [some additional resource may be required depending on workload].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advise officers in the development or redevelopment of any leaflets, brochures and fact sheets – including determining purpose, target audiences, and appropriate content and language.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Consistent quality and branding</strong></td>
<td>Ensure all new or updated leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are consistent with Council’s Style Guide.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with unit representatives</td>
<td>Ongoing from completion of Style Guide</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are updated or produced to reflect Council’s Style Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approve all new or redeveloped leaflets, brochures and fact sheets.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Unit Managers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 3: Easy to access and read</strong></td>
<td>Ensure all leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are readily available on Council’s website and at other locations where target audiences can easily access them.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor and Website Administrator</td>
<td>Commence beginning of 2014 and complete mid-2014 Then ongoing for any new productions</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalents</td>
<td>All leaflets, brochures and fact sheets are available on Council’s website.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Letter to the editor responses

Purpose
To ensure Council has an opportunity to tell its ‘side of the story’ when letters are written to editors outlining the view or opinion of an individual or a group on a Council-related matter.

Target audiences
All interested readers of the publication to whom the letter has been written.

Priority
Letters to the editor are received infrequently and usually require a quick turnaround for a response (2-3 days). Although they are an important channel in terms of providing Council with an opportunity to provide a public response to an issue, they are not frequent enough or distributed widely enough to be considered a strategic priority. The priority lies in ensuring responses are provided within the required timeframes and that they are given the appropriate sign-off.

Responsibilities
Responses to letters to the editor are coordinated by the Communications Advisor. The final decision on whether or not to respond, and the sign-off for a response must be made by the Chief Executive or Group Manager (depending on the issue) in accordance with Council’s Media Policy.

Issues & opportunities

The key issues:
- Tight timeframes
- Managers not always being available

The key opportunities:
- To put a process in place
- To include Elected Members

Targeted outcome
Letters to the Editor are responded to in a timely, consistent and professional manner.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: Consistent responses to letters to the editor | • To reduce risk to Council’s reputation  
• To ensure consistency and quality of responses | All responses to letters to the editor are coordinated through Communications Advisor in accordance with Council’s Media Policy and related process |
<p>| GOAL 2: Elected members included in developing responses related to key issues | • To ensure elected members’ views are considered when responding to issues of strategic importance | Inclusion of Elected Members in Council’s Media Policy |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Consistent responses to letters to the editor</td>
<td>Review current Media Policy and ensure letter to the editor responses is included.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Executive Team</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>All responses to letters to the editor are coordinated through Communications Advisor in accordance with Council’s Media Policy and related process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document a process for letter to the editor responses based on Media Policy</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Elected members included in developing responses related to key issues</td>
<td>Document a process for including elected members in responses relating to key issues</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Inclusion of Elected Members in Council’s Media Policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related key outcomes:**
- A well-informed community, Satisfied customers, Productive exchanges, Closed loops

**Targeted outcome:**
Letters to the Editor are responded to in a timely, consistent and professional manner.
Community newsletters

Purpose
To enable Council to provide information to specific communities within the Waitaki District.

Target audiences
For general information, targeted audiences for community newsletters are all those living within the readership area for the specific community newsletters. Council currently uses the following:
- The Hamraki Rag (Hamden-Moeraki area), The Review (in Waitaki covers from Herbert to south of Palmerston), The Oamaru Telegram (Oamaru area south to Hampden and west to Kurow), Duntroon Digger (Duntroon area), Kurow Bugle (Kurow and Otematata areas), Otematata Chronicle, Omarama Gazette, Lake Ohau Newsletter

Priority
Community newsletters are generally well read within their respective communities. They are also a cost-effective way of getting information to local residents. Council aims to use community newsletters wherever possible, however, use of these publications can be limited in terms of space and formatting options, and frequency (most are only published monthly).

Responsibilities
Use of community newsletters is promoted and coordinated by the Communications Advisor, although officers may elect to deal with editors directly. However, the Communications Advisor must review all information to be published. In the case of letters to the editor, responses must be coordinated through the Communications Advisor in accordance with the Media Policy.

Issues & opportunities

The key issues:
- Low frequency (usually monthly) and a variety of deadlines across publications
- Lack of awareness of these newsletters across Council
- Can be labour-intensive and more costly to use all available newsletters

The key opportunities:
- To maximise use of community newsletters
- To get feedback on local issues that can be addressed by Council
- To direct local readers to other Council communication channels for further information

Targeted outcome
Community newsletters are regularly utilised by Council for getting relevant information out to local communities and for receiving updates on community issues.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Use of community newsletters maximised</strong></td>
<td>• To ensure information is getting to residents in areas of the District beyond Oamaru</td>
<td>Key information (including advertising and notices) is published in community newsletters whenever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Regular engagement with community newsletter editors</strong></td>
<td>• To get feedback and information on local issues • To enable Council to provide information to newsletters targeting specific local issues</td>
<td>Community-focused information/articles contributed to each community newsletter at least twice a year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Community newsletters - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Use of community newsletters maximised</strong></td>
<td>Investigate the development of monthly version of the Link Noticeboard specifically for community newsletters and implement if viable.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with newsletter editors.</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Key information (including advertising and notices) is published in community newsletters whenever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly advertise the online edition of the Waitaki Link and Facebook page in community newsletters.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Regular engagement with community newsletter editors</strong></td>
<td>Contact community newsletter editors to discuss feedback opportunities</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and implement a process for regular liaison with editors and development of information/articles targeted at local community issues.</td>
<td>Communications advisor</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Community-focused information/articles contributed to each community newsletter at least twice a year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signage & posters

Purpose
To provide easily accessible information from Council to people in specific locations.

Target audiences
Signage and posters communicate information to people who are visiting a particular location. Signage will usually relate to the location itself, or a specific activity associated with the location, so is targeted at people visiting the site or involved in the activity. They can also direct people to another location or activity. Posters often do not have any relationship with the location in which they are placed, however, they can reach audiences who tend to visit particular locations.

Priority
Signage conveys essential information to target audiences at specific location. It can be regarded as a priority channel, especially where it relates to public safety. Ensuring signage is highly visible, easy to understand and is clearly branded as coming from Council is a high priority. Posters are temporary, used less frequently and tend to advertise events or convey less important information, and are therefore are of lower priority. However, they should still be easy to understand and reflect Council’s branding.

Responsibilities
The provision of signage has usually left to the Council units responsible. However, future provision of signage will need to be consistent with Council’s Communication and Style Guide. Therefore all new signage should be reviewed by the Communications Advisor before it is finalised.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
• Lack of standards and inconsistent branding.
• No process for gatekeeping or quality assurance.

The key opportunities:
• Use of Communications and Style Guide.
• Review and quality assurance process.

Targeted outcome
Council signage and posters are consistently branded, and are easily read and understood.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GOAL 1: All signage and posters reviewed by Communications Advisor** | • To ensure signage and posters are easily recognised as coming from Council and are in ‘plain English’  
• To enhance Council’s image | All signage and posters developed from mid-2014 onwards from consistent with Council’s Communication & Branding Style Guide |
| **GOAL 2: Templates for standard/high use signage and posters** | • To make the creation of signage and posters more efficient | Templates for priority signage and posters available for use as part of Communication & Branding Style Guide by end of 2014 |
### Signage & Posters - Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: All signage and posters reviewed by Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Signage and posters included as part of Communication &amp; Branding Style Guide</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with graphic designer</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of budget for Communication &amp; Branding Style Guide development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process developed and documented for reviewing signage and posters as part of Communications Management Plan. All officers advised of process.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Form mid-2014 onwards</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>All signage and posters developed from mid-2014 onwards from consistent with Council’s Communication &amp; Branding Style Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Templates for standard/high use signage and posters</td>
<td>Develop templates for standard/priority signage and posters</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Templates for standard/priority signage and posters available for use as part of Communication &amp; Branding Style Guide by end of 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting channels

Council often uses, or has the potential to use, other channels to communicate with customers, including but not limited to:

- Maps and spatial data
- Cell phone apps
- Other social media – e.g. Twitter

Purpose

The purpose of these channels is either to support or enhance Council’s core communication channels, or to provide specific information to a target audience. Over time, some of these may evolve to become core communication channels in themselves.

Target audiences

These vary depending on the channel and what is being communicated. For example, at this stage, Twitter and cell phone apps would be targeted at younger audiences to communicate on issues of relevance to them.

Priority

Currently, these are not considered core communication channels and will have a lower priority until those considered to be core channels are developed and improved.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the appropriate use of any communication channel lies with individual officers. The Communications Advisor can provide oversight and guidance, and where a relevant policy or procedure is in place, these will apply to any channel. As these channels are developed, more specific responsibilities may be assigned.

Issues & opportunities

The key issues:

- Lack of resourcing to cover the wider range of channels available – adding more without ‘weeding out’ the ones that are no longer fit for purpose or resourcing adequately
- Lack of general policies, standards and guidelines to support use of these channels

The key opportunities:

- To use general policies and standards ‘across the board’ for all channels
- To replace outdated/underutilised communication channels with more efficient and effective channels where there is a clear business case to do so.

Targeted outcome

_Council uses new or supporting communication channels in a purposeful, considered and consistent way and ensures resourcing matches agreed deliverables._

Goals

Goals and action plans for these channels have not been developed as part of this strategy. Where possible and relevant policies, procedures and guidance developed for other channels will be applied to any supporting and new channels – e.g. the Communication and Branding Style Guide.
Communication Practices – goals and action plans:

- Strategic Communication Planning
- Communication and Branding Style Guide
- Policies & procedures
- Guidance & support for officers
- Consultation process communication
- Liaison with stakeholder representatives
- Emergency event communication
- ‘Special projects’

“Communications must be implemented consistently, proactively and be constantly reinforced. Saying things once, twice or three times doesn’t work. A message needs to reach the target group around 10 times before it makes an impact.”

“Never assume that anything will go right...communications requires evidence of competence to instill public confidence in the organisation.”

“Communication should build advocates. Identifying people who support your cause should be a primary goal of any communications campaign, and utilising them to support your drive to enhance reputation is essential.”

Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster city council
Strategic communications planning

Purpose
To document and monitor key issues relating to any Council activity so communications can be planned in advance and followed through until an issue is conclude or no longer of public interest.

Target audiences
Strategic communications planning should identify target audiences relating to a specific issue. In many cases, key issues will be of interest to all stakeholders.

Priority
Strategic communications planning is considered to be a high priority because of its role in enabling issues management and proactive communication on key issues, and for its role in maximising use of the key communication channels – for example, the website, Waitaki Link and media releases. It is also a priority, in terms of enabling the Communications Advisor to effectively do their job, that they are well briefed by the CEO and Management Team about forthcoming issues and attend Council meetings when potential issues are being discussed.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible for coordinating strategic communications with active input from unit managers, the Executive Team and elected members. The Communications Advisor will also assist managers in developing and implementing communication plans for key issues.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- No current framework for strategic communications planning
- Tendency to react rather than respond or plan ahead

The key opportunities:
- To establish a planning framework
- To include Elected Members

Targeted outcome
Council officers work together and plan ahead to ensure information on key issues is provided to the right audiences, at the right time, using the right channels.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Communication on key issues planned in advance</td>
<td>• To document and monitor key issues&lt;br&gt;• To assist managers to plan communications in advance or respond to issues more proactively&lt;br&gt;• To enable the Communications Advisor to effectively undertake their role</td>
<td>A ‘Communication Issues Register’ is in place and regularly monitored and updated, and the Communications Advisor attends relevant Council meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Elected Members involved in identifying and planning for key communication issues</td>
<td>• To ensure shared understanding of the key issues&lt;br&gt;• To have a wider perspective on communication on the key issues&lt;br&gt;• To ensure there are ‘no surprises’ for elected members</td>
<td>A process is in place for working with elected members on strategic communications planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Strategic communications planning - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Communication on key issues planned in advance</td>
<td>A Communication Issues Register is developed.</td>
<td>Communications Adviser in consultation with unit and executive managers</td>
<td>Early 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>A ‘Communication Issues Register’ is in place and regularly monitored and updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and document a process for liaising with unit and group managers on key communication issues.</td>
<td>Communications Adviser in consultation with unit and executive managers</td>
<td>Early 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications Advisor attends Council meetings when potential issues are being discussed.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from early 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Elected Members involved in identifying and planning for key communication issues</td>
<td>Ensure Mayor and Communications Portfolio elected members have input into monitoring and contributing to the Communication Issues Register.</td>
<td>Communications Adviser in consultation with Mayor and Communications Portfolio elected members</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>A process is in place for working with elected members on strategic communications planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication & Branding Style Guide

Purpose
To provide a set of standards for the writing and design of documents. The implementation of a style guide provides uniformity in style and formatting within a document and across multiple documents. Adherence to a style guide helps to ensure our written communication reflects our identity as an organisation and a high level of professionalism.

Target audiences
A style guide is designed for use by all Council officers in their day-to-day written communication.

Priority
A style guide is considered to be a high priority because of its role in setting the standards for how the organisation is represented through its written material. A style guide also provides officers with the guidance they need to effectively and efficiently communicate with customers.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible for coordinating the development of the style guide and ensuring it is widely disseminated throughout the organisation. All Council officers are responsible for adherence to the style guide and for updating the Communications Advisor on any issues.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- No current style guide
- Lack of consistency across Council’s written communication

The key opportunities:
- To develop and implement a style guide
- To update Council’s branding and visual identity

Targeted outcome
Council’s print and online communication is consistent, professional and easily recognised as coming from Council.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: A style guide in place | • To provide standards and guidelines for use of Council’s branding  
• To ensure consistency and professionalism in all of Council’s written communication | All Council officers are aware of and consistently using the style guide |
| GOAL 2: Ongoing monitoring of style guide implementation | • To ensure the style guide is adhered to by all officers  
• To ensure it is update if required | A process is in place for monitoring use of the style guide |
### Style guide - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: A style guide in place | Develop style guide plan and present to Executive Team for approval | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Before end of 2013 | Budget as outlined below | All Council officers are aware of and consistently using the style guide |
| | Develop draft style guide and distribute to officers for feedback | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Early 2014 | $2000-$5000 from existing budgets |  |
| | Incorporate any edits and present final draft to Executive Team and Communications Portfolio members | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Early 2014 | As above |  |
| | Finalise Style Guide and fully implement | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | By end of March 2014 | As above |  |

**GOAL 2: Ongoing monitoring of style guide implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and document a process for monitoring use of the style guide</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Mid to late-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>A process is in place for monitoring use of the style guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Monitor use of style guide in Council’s written material/publications  
• Take any actions required to update or educate officers about use of style guide  
• Make any required amendments to the style guide | • Communications Advisor in consultation with graphic designer and Executive Team | Ongoing | Within scope of FTE equivalent |  |
Policies & procedures

Purpose
To ensure consistency, efficiency and continuity in Council's communication channels and practices, and to reduce risk.

Priority
Because of the current lack of policies and procedures, and their importance in providing a supporting framework for Council’s communication, it is considered a high priority to have these in place for key channels and practices.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of policies and procedures for Council’s communication, in consultation with the Executive Team and Communication Portfolio elected members. The Communications Advisor is also responsible for ensuring Council officers are aware of key policies and procedures.

Individual officers are responsible for adhering to key policies and procedures in their communications.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Lack of policies and procedures for key communication channels and practices
- Outdated policies
- No centralised record for policies and procedures

The key opportunities:
- To develop and implement key policies and procedures
- To update current policies
- To include policies and procedures in a Communications Management Plan (hard copy and electronic)

Targeted outcome
Council’s communication is supported and enhanced through implementation of agreed standards, policies and procedures.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: Priority standards, policies and procedures in place | • To provide guidance, support and ‘rules’  
• To ensure continuity across Council and over time  
• To reduce risk to Council | Communications Management Plan contains priority policies and procedures the end of 2014 |
| GOAL 2: Council officers familiar with standards, policies and procedures and adhering to these | • To provide guidance, support and ‘rules’  
• To ensure continuity across Council and over time  
• To reduce risk to Council | Policies and procedures available on SharePoint by end of 2014. |
## Policies & procedures - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Priority standards, policies and procedures in place</td>
<td>Identify and list priority policies and procedures which are currently lacking.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and document priority policies and include in Communications Management Plan.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with Executive Team and Communications Portfolio elected members.</td>
<td>By end of 2014 and then ongoing review and updating as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent – some external expertise and assistance may be required</td>
<td>Communications Management Plan contains priority policies and procedures the end of 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Council officers familiar with standards, policies and procedures and adhering to these</td>
<td>Make communication policies and procedures available on SharePoint and update officers on availability.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Policies and procedures available on SharePoint by end of 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Run education sessions on key policies and processes with officers as required.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>As policies and procedures become available and ongoing as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidance & support for officers

Purpose
To assist officers in communicating confidently and effectively with customers as part of their roles within Council.

Priority
Officers are communicating with customers every day. Often the impression customers have of Council as an organisation is impacted by their direct communication with individual Council officers, therefore ensuring they are supported and guided in communicating effectively is a priority. However, although support and guidance should be provided, officers are also expected to accept responsibility and be accountable for the quality of their communication.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible for identifying, in consultation with officers and management, where support and guidance is required. The extent of support and guidance provided by the Communications Advisor is contingent on time availability and level of the risk associated with not providing support and guidance.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Lack of scope for what guidance and support is required and what resources are required
- Service level expectations for support exceeding available resources

The key opportunities:
- To identifying where support and guidance is most needed (or where potential risk to Council of not providing support is highest).
- To develop guidance that will support officers in communication and reduce the need for ongoing support from the Communications Advisor.

Targeted outcome
Officers can confidently and effectively undertake day-to-day communication with customers required as part of their roles within Council.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: An understanding of where support and guidance for officers is most needed</td>
<td>To better understand the ‘gaps’ in officers’ communication skills across the organisation</td>
<td>Priority areas for support and guidance identified on an ongoing basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To target support and guidance as effectively and efficiently as possible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Support and guidance in place for priority areas</td>
<td>To ‘up-skill’ officers who need support and ensure they are able to communicate effectively</td>
<td>The general standard of communication from officers is perceived to have improved over the year following implementation of this strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure consistency across the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To avoid an ad hoc approach to communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Guidance & support for officers - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: An understanding of where support and guidance is most needed</strong></td>
<td>Liaise with Unit Managers to identify areas for support and guidance.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Priority areas for support and guidance identified on an ongoing basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research other Councils and organisations for examples of best practice guidance</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Support and guidance in place for priority areas</strong></td>
<td>Develop guidance identified as a priority (this may include workshops or training sessions)</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Ongoing from end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>The general standard of communication from officers is perceived to have improved over the year following implementation of this strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and process for monitoring outgoing communication from officers and use this to target ongoing support and guidance.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>As policies and procedures become available and ongoing as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related key outcomes:** Skilled communicators, One team, A well-informed community

**Targeted outcome:** Officers are supported to confidently and effectively undertake day-to-day communication with customers required as part of their roles within Council.
Consultation process communication

Purpose
To ensure Council effectively and consistently communicates the issues on which it is seeking feedback from the community.

Priority
To ensure Council effectively and consistently communicates on the issues which require feedback from the community – including statutory communication processes such as the Draft Annual Plan and Draft Long Term Plan.

Responsibilities
The Corporate Planner is responsible for coordinating key public consultation processes, including the Draft Annual Plan and Draft Long Term Plan. The role of the Communications Advisor is to develop and review public communications material associated with a consultation process, in consultation with the Corporate Planner – for example, the Draft Annual Plan Summary and website material. The Communications Advisor is also responsible for coordinating any contractors involved in producing the material, such as graphic designers.

Issues & opportunities

The key issues:
- Lack of supporting information and guidance documented for officers
- Lack of scope for support or coordination of consultation processes outside those considered to be ‘core’ – such as the Draft Annual Plan

The key opportunities:
- To document consultation processes for officers and develop a Consultation Process and Communication Plan template.
- To confirm scope of support for general consultation processes – i.e. who does what, and when

Targeted outcome
Council’s consultation processes are consistently and effectively communicated to customers who choose to engage with Council on issues that matter to them.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Responsibilities for consultation processes and communication documented</td>
<td>To provide clarity for officers</td>
<td>Responsibilities for consultation processes and communication documented by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To create efficiencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Guidance and templates for consultation processes and communication</td>
<td>To ensure consistency and quality</td>
<td>A general consultation guide and a Consultation Process and Communication Plan Template created by end of 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure continuity when there are staff changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To create efficiencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To up-skill officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Consultation process communication - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>GOAL 1:</strong> Responsibilities for consultation processes documented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities for consultation processes and communication documented by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liaise with other officers involved in consultation processes to confirm required tasks and outputs for consultation processes.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor • Corporate Planner In consultation with other officers identified.</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and document who is responsible for different tasks and outputs of consultation processes. Include in Communications Management Plan.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor in consultation with other officers identified</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a consultation process guide (incorporate existing Council guidance and research best practice guidance already available and tailor to WDC where possible)</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Some additional assistance from external contractor may be required – expected to be minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a Consultation Process and Communication template for use across the organisation – including check lists for key items.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>A general consultation guide and a Consultation Process and Communication Plan Template created by end of 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and maintain a centralised stakeholder database and make available on SharePoint for use across the organisation</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related key outcomes:** Skilled communicators, Satisfied customers, One team, A well-informed community, Closed loops, productive exchanges, value for money

**Targeted outcome:** Council’s consultation processes are consistently and effectively communicated to customers who choose to engage with Council on issues that matter to them.

**Related key outcomes:** Closed loops, productive exchanges, value for money
Liaison with stakeholder representatives

Purpose
The key purpose of stakeholder liaison is to ensure community, organisation and business representatives are included in the development of communication material on issues that will go out to the people they represent. Involving stakeholder representatives early on in communication processes can help ensure communication is appropriate to the target audiences and that all items of relevance to them are addressed. Building and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholder representative can also create efficiencies in the longer term as they provide information to, and distribute information on behalf of, Council. It is considered to be a ‘win-win’ approach.

Priority
Working alongside stakeholder representatives is key to ensuring our communications are appropriate to the audiences they represent, in getting information to the right people and to developing a positive image for Council. It is therefore considered to be a priority in our day-to-day communication practice.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible for developing and maintaining a register of stakeholder representatives and for advising officers on who they should liaise with as part of any communication or consultation process. Individual officers are responsible for liaising with stakeholder representatives on issues they are dealing with, with guidance and support from the Communications Advisor.

Issues & opportunities

The key issues:
- No centralised, updated stakeholder representatives database
- No process for including stakeholder representatives in communications

The key opportunities:
- To create a centralised and maintained database on SharePoint
- To create a policy and process for including stakeholder representatives
- Identifying stakeholder representatives in the Communication Issues Register

Targeted outcome
Council’s communication is supported and enhanced through positive relationships with stakeholder representatives and their inclusion in the development of key communication material.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Up-to-date stakeholder representatives database available to all officers on SharePoint</td>
<td>To provide officers with a centralised resource for consultation purposes</td>
<td>Centralised stakeholder database available on SharePoint by mid-2014 and currency maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure all relevant stakeholder representatives are considered for consultation/communication processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To improve efficiency by not having multiple contact databases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure continuity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Stakeholders included in development of key communication processes, where appropriate</td>
<td>To assist with ensuring communication is appropriate for target audiences</td>
<td>Process for including stakeholders in key communications processes documented and shared with officers by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure all items of importance have been captured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To strengthen relationships with stakeholders and create efficiencies around communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Stakeholder liaison - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Up-to-date stakeholder representatives database available to all officers on SharePoint</td>
<td>E-mail all officers to obtain individual stakeholder contact lists, ascertain most current information and consolidate into one database. Make available for all officers via SharePoint.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor in consultation with other officers.</td>
<td>By mid-2014 and then ongoing review and updating as required</td>
<td>Centralised stakeholder database available on SharePoint by mid-2014 and currency maintained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify key issues stakeholder representatives may be interested in and assign stakeholders representatives to issues identified in Communication Issues Register</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor in consultation with other officers.</td>
<td>Ongoing from date of implementation of Issues Register</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Stakeholders included in development of key communication processes, where appropriate</td>
<td>Review feedback from 2013 communications audit regarding stakeholder representative involvement and representatives as required to determine preferences for contact. Document preferences with contact database.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a policy and process for stakeholder representative involvement in the development of communication processes.</td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Process for including stakeholders in key communications processes documented and shared with officers by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency event communication

Purpose
To ensure stakeholders are kept informed during emergency events.

Priority
Because communication during emergency events has the potential to save lives and property, it is considered to be a high priority.

Responsibilities
Responsibility for emergency event communication is shared between Council’s Civil Defence Public Information Managers (PIMs - which includes the Communications Advisor). Roles and responsibilities within the PIMs group will be defined and documented in the Communications Management Plan as part of strategy implementation.

Issues & opportunities
The key issues:
- Lack of clarity around responsibilities
- Lack of documented processes

The key opportunities:
- To define and document roles and responsibilities
- To document processes for use of channels such as the website and Facebook
- To investigate use of other channels, such as text messaging

Targeted outcome
Stakeholders can easily access the information they need when they need it during emergency events.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1: Responsibilities and procedures for emergency event communication clearly defined and documented</td>
<td>To ensure officers understand their roles and responsibilities&lt;br&gt;To ensure the effective and efficient flow of information during an emergency event</td>
<td>Communications Management Plan includes a completed section on emergency event communication by mid-2014 (which is regularly reviewed and updated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Effective channels for emergency event communication channels confirmed and easily accessible to stakeholders</td>
<td>To ensure flow of information to stakeholders is maximised through use of the most effective channels&lt;br&gt;To ensure the needs of all stakeholders are taken into consideration&lt;br&gt;To ensure stakeholders can easily access information on their preferred channels – e.g. the website</td>
<td>Standard emergency event communication channels defined, documented and included in Communications Management Plan section by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Emergency event communication - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: Responsibilities and procedures for emergency event communication clearly defined and documented</strong></td>
<td>Meet with Emergency Services Manager and PIMs to determine current job description and identify any gaps</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with PIMs</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document responsibilities and procedures for emergency event communication and place in Communications Management Plan (CMP). Review and update as required.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with PIMs and Emergency Services Manager</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a summary flow chart of communication procedures and channels during emergency events, distribute, and place in CMP. Update as required.</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with PIMs and Emergency Services Manager</td>
<td>By mid-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Communications Management Plan includes a completed section on emergency event communication by mid-2014 (which is regularly reviewed and updated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: Effective channels for emergency event communication channels confirmed and easily accessible to stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>Review current and potential channels for emergency event communication</td>
<td>Communications Advisor in consultation with PIMs</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement new channels as deemed appropriated – e.g. text alerts, RSS feeds</td>
<td>Communications Advisor</td>
<td>As policies and procedures become available and ongoing as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td>Standard emergency event communication channels defined, documented and included in Communications Management Plan section by mid-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Special communication projects’

Purpose
To communicate with stakeholders on projects outside the scope of normal Council business – for example, the Hospital Hill project.

Priority
This depends on the project itself and ultimately must be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with relevant managers.

Responsibilities
The Communications Advisor is responsible

Issues & opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The key issues:</th>
<th>The key opportunities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack</td>
<td>• To</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Targeted outcome

Officers are enabled to confidently and effectively undertake day-to-day communication with customers required as part of their roles with Council.

Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1:</td>
<td>• To</td>
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</table>

GOAL 2: 

|        | • To    |                  |
|        | •       |                  |
### Special projects - Action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>Early-2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communications Advisor in consultation with Executive Team and Communications Portfolio elected members.</td>
<td>By end of 2014 and then ongoing review and updating as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>By end of 2014</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communications Advisor</td>
<td>As policies and procedures become available and ongoing as required</td>
<td>Within scope of FTE equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Resources – goals and action plans:

- People
- Tools

“Communication should build advocates. Identifying people who support your cause should be a primary goal of any communications campaign, and utilising them to support your drive to enhance reputation is essential.”

Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster City Council
People

Purpose
Every Council officer and elected member has a role in, and accountability for, positively representing Council in their day-to-day communication. However, specific officers and elected members have specific communication tasks and a responsibility for ensuring Council’s objectives for communication are met.

Issues & opportunities
The single biggest issue with the communication function within Council has been the lack of defined scope around resourcing. The former Communications and Policy Support Officer position description encompassed a wide range of responsibilities for communication that was not supported by clear strategic priorities or a supporting framework to further defines those responsibilities. As a result, there was an ad hoc approach to communication and service level expectations were becoming disproportionate to what the role could actually achieve.

The development of this strategy has been an opportunity

Responsibilities
Responsibilities for communication will be more clearly defined as the strategy is implemented, however, at these stage the key officers and elected members and their communication responsibilities are:

- **Communications Advisor**
  The key focus for the newly appointed Communications Advisor is (CA) to coordinate and monitor the implementation of this strategy and to fulfill the functions outlined in the position description (a copy of which will be included in the Communications Management Plan).

  The role will have a strong strategic focus to ensure Council is continuously and consistently planning and reviewing its communication. The CA should also attend Council meetings when potential issues are being discussed – whether or not there is local media there.

  The CA also has a role in educating and enabling Council officers to become skilled communicators themselves, in the interests of more efficient and effective communications across the Council.

  The CA is the only officer empowered to send out a media release, with prior approval from the Chief Executive, the Mayor or an Executive Manager (who are also empowered to send out media releases in the CA’s absence).

- **Chief Executive and Management Team**
  The involvement of the Chief Executive in leading and supporting the implementation of the Communication Strategy across the organisation is essential to its success.

  In order for the CA to be able to effectively do their job it is essential that they are well-briefed by the Chief Executive and management team about forthcoming issues. The CA should have opportunities to discuss planning for strategic communication issues through regular attendance at Executive Team meetings.

- **Policy and Communications Manager**
  The Policy and Communications Manager is the CA’s direct manager and is responsible for ensuring they fulfill the duties outlined in their position description. They are also responsible for
monitoring the implementation of the strategy and accountability to the Executive Team for ensuring the strategy's objectives are met.

- **Mayor and elected members**

- **Customer Services Group Manager**
  [this needs to be defined]

- **Customer Contact Manager**

- **Website Administrator**

- **Corporate Planner**

- **Other Council officers**
### Tools

#### Purpose
Communication tools enable Council to

#### Priority
Although a useful

#### Responsibilities
The Communications

#### Issues & opportunities

**The key issues:**
- No
- 

**The key opportunities:**
- To

#### Targeted outcome
**Council’s**

### Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Key result areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: A style guide in place</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- To provide standards and guidelines for use of Council’s branding  
- To ensure consistency and professionalism in all of Council’s written communication | All Council officers are aware of and consistently using the style guide |
| **GOAL 2: Ongoing monitoring of style guide implementation** |  
- To ensure the style guide is adhered to by all officers  
- To ensure it is update if required | A process is in place for monitoring use of the style guide |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>KRAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GOAL 1: A style guide in place | Develop style guide plan and present to Executive Team for approval | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Before end of 2013 | Budget as outlined below |  |
| | Develop draft style guide and distribute to officers for feedback | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Early 2014 | $2000-$5000 from existing budgets |  |
| | Incorporate any edits and present final draft to Executive Team and Communications Portfolio members | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | Early 2014 | As above |  |
| | Finalise Style Guide and fully implement | • Communications Advisor  
• Graphic Designer | By end of March 2014 | As above | All Council officers are aware of and consistently using the style guide |
| GOAL 2: Ongoing monitoring of style guide implementation | Develop and document a process for monitoring use of the style guide | • Communications Advisor | Mid to late-2014 | Within scope of FTE equivalent | A process is in place for monitoring use of the style guide |
| | • Monitor use of style guide in Council’s written material/publications  
• Take any actions required to update or educate offices about use of style guide  
• Make any required amendments to the style guide | • Communications Advisor in consultation with graphic designer and Executive Team | Ongoing | Within scope of FTE equivalent |  |
SECTION THREE:
How we’re going to stay on track

“Evaluate your communications. Too much money is spent on leaflets, posters and websites, and too little on research and evaluation. Working out what works has to be integral to a good communication strategy. Westminster’s campaign research informs everything we do, and allows us to make incremental improvements that increase mail open rates, publications read and media hits – all improving the effectiveness of communications, and enhancing reputation.”

Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster City Council
SECTION FOUR:
How the strategy was developed

Review  SWOT  Outcomes
Review purpose:
To ensure the smooth flow of communication, achievement of desired outcomes and the sustainability of any communications-related role, Council needs to ensure it has in place a strategic framework that clearly tells everyone ‘what, why, how, when, and who.’

The key purpose of this Communications Review was to better understand our current communications framework, performance and capacity, and to gain a realistic sense of what is possible and desirable in terms of developing and improving our external communications functions.

In summary the review process aims to:

- Demonstrate through the collation of relevant information how issues with communication are currently causing Council problems, while also reinforcing practices that are current organisational strengths
- Generate and prioritise specific recommendations for how actual communication practice can be structured and enhanced, and clearly outline the benefits of adopting any particular options/actions;
- Provide a sound basis for developing any particular course of action;
- Clearly identify and address resourcing implications for both the Policy Unit and the wider Council environment.

Wider context:
In recent years there has been an increasing focus on how Council communicates as an organisation – both internally and externally. Communication has been identified as a key priority for Council and is pivotal to how well we operate as an organisation in the wider community. When it works well, it creates many positive outcomes for those involved. When it doesn’t, it can have wide-reaching implications and undo much of the positive work that has been done before.

Quality communication plays a pivotal role in supporting Council’s vision of ‘One team supporting a stronger Waitaki’.

- Having an organisational culture that values and encourages two-way communication using channels that are fit for purpose, with processes and resources in place to support this, is fundamental to supporting ‘one team’.
- Communicating positively as ‘one voice’ with consistent messages, using agreed standards and channels, will foster a sense of confidence and pride in the organisation, which ultimately creates the ‘one team’ culture.

Current resourcing:
Council’s Policy Unit is currently responsible for managing, administering and supporting (to varying extents) Council’s external consultation and communication processes.

Prior to 2009, Council’s day-to-day external communications were co-ordinated by the Policy Advisor with assistance from the communications contractor (within the allocated budget). Other units also had access to the communications contractor for projects outside the scope of day-to-day communications as required and paid for through their own unit or project budgets.

In 2009, as part of a review of the Policy Unit, the role of Policy Advisor was disestablished and replaced with the role of Policy and Communication Support Officer. The key tasks for this role were outlined as:

People
- Maintain effective working relationships with people in the Policy Unit and internal and external stakeholders.

Policy
Co-ordination of communication, decision-making and community engagement processes necessary to support the preparation and delivery of statutory and non-statutory policies, plans and reports. (e.g. Community Plan consultation process, bylaw processes, Quarterly reporting etc).

Project management (including policy analysis) for smaller policy projects.

Oversee the maintenance of the Policy Register.

Communications

- Co-ordinate the development and delivery of the Council communications plan, including (but not limited to) day-to-day liaison with the Communications Contractor, publication of Waitaki Link, etc.
- Manage major consultation and communication projects – e.g. Summary Draft Waitaki Community Plan.

Advertising for the role said it would include a range of duties including the coordination of communications (print, television, radio and social media, external and internal communications), providing support for community engagement such as consultation on the Long Term Plan and Annual Plans, policies and bylaws, and managing smaller policy projects. The role is currently vacant and interim measures are in place until the review of the Communications Strategy is completed.

The job description for this role is comprehensive and wide-ranging. Of note, is KRA 5.1 as follows:

Ensure the development and on-going maintenance of an external communications plan:

- Plan addresses the external environment, Council’s communication objectives and performance, and identifies activities to maintain and improve communications outcomes.
- Communications plan presented to Executive/Managers meetings, and approved by Executive Team.

The Communications and Policy Support Officer job description encompasses a wide range of responsibilities for communication. Without clear strategic priorities and a supporting framework that further defines these responsibilities, service level expectations can easily become disproportionate to what the role can actually achieve.

The Policy Manager made a decision, supported by Council’s Executive Team, not to recruit for this position until a review was completed and a supporting strategic framework established. This decision also took into the high turnover of staff in the Policy Unit.

**Review methodology**

The review process broken down into 3 key stages:

1. **Identify and define** – to develop a clear understanding of what we do, issues, opportunities, stakeholder requirements and expectations, and local government practice (concluded end of July)

2. **Consolidate and scope** – to agree on the key issues and opportunities, key channels, strategic priorities and scope of the development of the communications framework (concluding end of August)

3. **Plan and implement** – design and implement a framework for communications that outlines: What, Why, How, Who, When (on-going from September onwards)

A key part of the review is the communications audit, which sits under stage 1.
The audit:
The audit was undertaken by the Policy Unit, in consultation with the Communications Focus Group (a group of officers representing different groups of Council). The process was reviewed by an independent communications consultant.

A communications audit is a systematic assessment, either formal or informal, of an organisation’s capacity for, or performance of, essential communications practices.

The communications audit essentially asked 2 key questions: How and what are we communicating? Are our communications effective?

The audit process included:

1. Identifying and evaluating Council’s current external communication tools and processes – such as media releases, newsletters, letters, consultation processes, website, radio, etc.
2. Analysing media coverage
3. Identifying what, as a local government organisation, we’re required to do as a minimum
4. Benchmarking with other councils
5. Querying our customers – feedback from, and forums with, external stakeholders, Council officers, elected members, media

We wanted the audit to tell us:

- How current communications are handled – what we do, how we do it and when we do it
- Target audiences – what they currently know about our organisation, what they need to know, what they want to know, and how they prefer to be reached
- Internal customers – their perceptions, ideas and service level expectations
- Strengths and weaknesses of our current communications
- Opportunities for enhancing current communication or developing new channels
- Whether or not our current tools, resourcing or structure are sufficient to meet needs/expectations
- What might work better if adjustments are made
Emergent strategic themes & priorities from review

Relationship to Council’s vision & values

‘One Team’ – stressing the importance of us all working together – staff, management and governance:
- Having an organisational culture that values and encourages two-way communication using agreed channels and processes to support this is fundamental to creating ‘one team’.
- Communicating positively as ‘one voice’ with clear, consistent messages, using agreed standards and channels, will foster a sense of confidence and pride in the organisation, which ultimately creates ‘one team’.

‘Supporting’ – much of what we do is supporting our community. For some of us, this is via core infrastructure. For others, it is through operating community assets and facilities, or providing an efficient regulatory and planning framework. For those in internally focussed units, it is about supporting decision makers and those externally focussed units:
- Communication is a key way of supporting the community and businesses to access the infrastructure, community assets, facilities and services Council provides.
- Communication enables community feedback into, and greater understanding of, Council’s decision-making processes.
- The quality of officer - elected member communication impacts on the quality of the decision-making process and ultimately the implementation of decisions which support the community.
- Effective communication will clearly demonstrate the ways in which Council is supporting the community through its infrastructure, community assets, facilities and services – ultimately adding value to what we do.

‘Stronger Waitaki’ – a stronger Waitaki will be resilient, better placed to support growth whenever and wherever it occurs. All of our activities – done well – contribute to a stronger community – be it more productive, more socially resilient, more culturally vibrant or more environmentally sustainable. A stronger community is one that then has the capacity to grow.
- Quality two-way communication with our community builds stronger ties and relationships between Council and the community - fostering trust, cooperation and more efficient use of resources. It enables us to be more responsive to the changing needs of the community and to new challenges or opportunities as they arise.

Emerging themes from review for consideration in the strategy

- Defining the problem (or opportunity) before the solution
- Purpose (1. What is our purpose is as an organisation? 2. What is the purpose of our communication?)
- It’s not about us (or - it’s not personal)
- It’s all about the customer
- Responding versus Reacting
- Stop. Think. Do. Reflect.

Key issues raised during review

- Lack of guidance, standards, policies and processes
- ‘Closing the loop’
- The need for monitoring and gatekeeping
- The need for sufficient resourcing
- Attitudes to communication (our communication culture)
- Enabling officers to be better communicators (education and on-going support)
- Including stakeholders in communication processes
- Integrating key elements of the current Communications Strategy (“A Conversation with our Community”)
## SWOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPFUL to achieving communication objectives</th>
<th>HARMFUL to achieving communication objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>WEAKNESSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High level of interest in, and an appetite for, improving our communication</td>
<td>• Lack of policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some clear communication ‘successes’ and many others we don’t hear about because they are successful</td>
<td>• Lack of standards and guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A range of different skills and talents within the organisation</td>
<td>• Limited resources (service-level expectations significantly higher than resources available to deliver on them)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness and enthusiasm to try new things – especially digital media</td>
<td>• Relatively less resourcing dedicated to communications than most other councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two previous strategies to work from</td>
<td>• Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good ideas generated from throughout the organisation</td>
<td>• Lack of defined scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good level of satisfaction with The Link recorded through Residents’ Survey</td>
<td>• No clear prioritisation (no limits) – could become unmanageable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing awareness across the organisation about the importance of communication – officers care about it more than they did previously</td>
<td>• Not necessarily matching our model of delivery to the outcomes we are trying to achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Progress has been made in some areas since the first communications strategy in 2007</td>
<td>• ‘Doing communication’ seen as one role within the organisation resulting in reliance on the talents, skills and/or preferences of one person rather than taking organisational/process-based approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For the limited resources dedicated to it, the website is a valuable communication channel</td>
<td>• Not clearly identifying the outcomes we are trying to achieve from using particular tools or the benefits/risks of using those tools (e.g. Facebook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPPORTUNITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>THREATS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilising new channels available more – e.g. digital</td>
<td>• Growing service level expectations in a way that outstrips available resources and is unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working more with the organisations and groups within the community who want to help with Council’s communication</td>
<td>• That the website will go backwards if nobody ‘owns’ it and resources aren’t dedicated to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using a range of independent contractors available to respond to changing demands and enable a flexible approach</td>
<td>• A growth is competition with the plethora of information going to the community from other sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaging with communities in the more remote areas of the District through their preferred mediums</td>
<td>• A large, diverse audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeting communications more effectively</td>
<td>• One “bad” experience with Council communication colouring view of all subsequent Council communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making more use of the quarterly rates invoices to distribute information</td>
<td>• Negative public perceptions of Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving the look and accessibility of website and increasing its functionality – e.g. online transactions</td>
<td>• Public perception of ‘Council propaganda’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing the Link &amp; distributing more widely</td>
<td>• Confusion around consultation vs communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL ORIGIN (attributes of the environment)</strong></td>
<td><strong>THREATS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Lack of interest in Council activities until it directly affects people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Officers undertaking communication processes without support or advice</td>
<td>• Unpredictability of social media – high risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key channels & focus

- **Website** – purpose, target audiences, ownership, resourcing, accessibility, functionality, consistency, currency

- **Waitaki Link** – purpose, target audiences (including communities), distribution, range of stories

- **Media releases** – purposed, maintaining the standard, reviewing/confirming current policy, guidelines

- **E-mails** – guidance for officers (tone, language, standards), signature, monitoring and review

- **Brochures & leaflets** – purpose, target audience, design, plain English, standards, consistency, resourcing, branding, consolidation, guidance, templates

- **Forms** – purpose, target audience, consistency, standards, user-friendliness, guidance, templates

- **Logos & Branding** – purpose, style guide (standards, rules, consistency, guidance)
Summary of Audit Outcomes

Current strategy, policies, procedures & guidelines

**Strategy**
Council first developed a Communications Plan in 2007. The Plan provided objectives, identified target groups and outlined the tools for communication (including budgets and the ‘who, when and why’ for these – including the role of the Communications Sub-Contractor). Although the plan is now outdated and does not take into account new forms of communications (e.g. social media), it provided clear guidance for the Policy Unit for the delivery of communication services. It was also accompanied by a guide for officers, which set out roles and responsibilities for communications. A basic Media Policy was also adopted in the same year, which outlined who is responsible for dealing with the media.

A Communications Strategy – “A Conversation with our Community” - was developed in 2010 through the Policy Unit (and in accordance with the job description Key Result Areas). The Strategy sets out 16 different strategic outcomes for Council’s communication. It does not identify priorities or how those outcomes will be achieved, who is responsible for achieving them and what resources/tools are required.

It is not clear whether the 2007 Plan continued to be implemented up until 2010 or how the 2010 Strategy was implemented. However, given the 0.5 FTE hours dedicated to fulfilling all of the communication functions outlined in the most recent job description, developing the required plans, policies and procedures to support the strategy would have been extremely challenging.

**Policy**
Council has a Media Policy, adopted in June 2007 by the Managers Group. It pertains to dealing with proactive media releases and requests by the media.

No other formal policies have been identified that deal specifically with communications – e.g. no social media policy.

**Procedures**
There are currently no formal written procedures in place for Council’s communication. Current practice is based on historic ways of doing things, adapting outdated procedures, Local Government Act requirements, and/or the preferences and views of current officers/elected members.

**General Guidance/Standards**

*Day to day activities* – In 2007 the Policy Unit produced a draft guidance document titled ‘Communications – What to do? This was informed by the Communications Plan that was produced in the same year. This was intended to provide officers throughout Council with high level guidance on what to do and who to see when it comes to basic communication matters, and where the funding would come from.

*Media* – ‘In Other Words Communications provided Council with a Media Relations guide in May 2006. This provides guidance around issues such as approaching the media and writing a media release. It is still relevant and useful in the current context.

*Social media* – there is current no Council-specific guidance around using social media.

*Branding/communication and style guides/standards* – a Document Layout Manual was produced in 2007. This sets out general information (such as definitions and tips for using Word), guidelines for letters, memos and reports, agendas, and minutes. However, there is no broader guidance or standards for communication generally – such as how to use the logo, standard colours, and information covering off the wider aspects of day-to-day and strategic communication. There is nothing to tell us what ‘one team’ looks like from a communications perspective.
Contact information for the media – produced for the media in 2007. Outlines Group Managers’ details (including what areas they’re responsible for, who their PA is etc.) and other contact information they can use for media enquiries.

Customer Feedback

Council Officers
The Policy Unit held forums with officers from each of Council’s four groups – Assets, Corporate, Strategy and Community Services. This was a chance for officers to discuss and feedback on:

- What the key communications channels and issues are for their groups or units
- What they saw the Policy Unit’s role was for each of these channels
- What they saw as the strategic issues

The top communications channels noted by officers were:

- The Website
- Media Releases
- E-mails (individual and ‘bulk’)
- The Waitaki Link
- Leaflets & brochures
- Forms
- Letters

Currently, a 0.5FTE is dedicated to Council communication. Officers see the Communications & Policy Support Officer as having a role in most of the external communications undertaken by Council – mainly in terms of setting standards, reviewing and advising. However, they also see the role taking full responsibility for a range of other communications (e.g. media releases, consultation material, the Link, the website).

The matters for strategic focus raised by officers were:

- The Website (needs to be ‘owned’ and improved)
- More standardisation and consistency across the organisation
- A need for communication policies, processes & guidelines – with support where required
- The need for on-going monitoring & review of communication

Community Boards

Ahuiriri:

- Website is key – suggested a number of ways it could be used more effectively to get some messages out.
- Use community newsletters – good reach, especially because they include crib owners.
- Urgent communications outside community newsletter deadlines – use e-mail lists as they are well used in the Valley.
- Lessen interface between officers and the community by making more use of the website.
- Waitaki Link – promote subscription to e-mail list.
- CRMs – perhaps not enough feedback provided to customers through the process.
- Make use of rates invoices – perhaps a newsletter could go out quarterly with the invoices addressing key issues and advertising e-mail subscription. Also distribute via e-mail/website.

Waihemo:

- Want to be able to communicate the small jobs the Community Board is doing – through the Link would be good – Council ‘holds’ the message.
- Liked the Link, but also raised issues around distribution, especially to the Waihemo community. The quarterly rates invoice would be a good a good channel for the Link. Rates invoices are a key time to put out communication.
The CEO’s report e-mailed out by Michael to staff, Councillors and CBs is well-received. Think a report/update from the CEO (similar) would be really good for the wider public. Discussed resurrecting the old e-mail newsletter that used to go out immediately after Council meetings as a chance to do this and they agreed this was a good idea.

Some sort of communication again about ‘here’s what you get for your rates’ would be good – suggested that perhaps this could be something for a quarterly Link edition.

Concerned about the use of ‘Council-speak’ in some communications coming from some areas of Council. Need to reinforce/educate officers about the use of plain English.

CRMs are a communication issue – there is a problem with feedback and ‘closing the loop’.

Discussed the possibility of a leaflet or similar going in with rates invoices or sent as a mail-out with information about how and when to contact Council and how to make a customer request. This would have contact details clearly highlighted.

Issue has since emerged around communication of conserve/boil water notices during the flooding event - needs to be highlighted as part of this review.

**Stakeholders**

Several stakeholder groups were approached for feedback on Council’s communication. These included:

- Federated Farmers
- All ratepayer groups – e.g. Waitaki Ratepayers & Concerned Citizens
- Waitaki Multicultural Council
- Literacy North Otago
- Te Runanga o Moeraki
- Water Supply Sub-Committees

Some responded via e-mail, while forums were held with others. All feedback was recorded and will inform the strategy. Some of the common themes which emerged were:

- The importance of the Website – some dissatisfaction with current website (around functionality and accessing information). But also positive comments made.
- The value of face-to-face and informal interaction
- Distribution of the Waitaki Link – support the Link itself, but not the current distribution method
- The Link could have more information
- Support for the idea of communication going out with rates invoices, where possible
- Council communication needs to be in plain English
- Simplify and streamline information going out wherever possible
- Social media not raised in any significant way (more focus on the Website)
- Importance of pre-consultation information going out (bringing stakeholders into the loop early on) before plans are too far down the track
- Working with stakeholders on tailoring communication to suit the needs to their communities
- An issue with not ‘closing the loop’ with some communication – especially CRMs

**Key publications & communication channels**

**Conversations**

- Although conversations were not considered to be within the scope of the Policy Unit’s role, they were highlighted as the key communication channel. Most Council officers engage with conversations with customers and stakeholders. The tone of those conversations and how they are conducted are critical to how Council is perceived overall – it sets the scene for all of the other channels used.
- It was agreed that this should be part of the Customer Relationship Strategy, although it must also be considered as part of any Communications Strategy and considered in terms of ‘culture around communications.’
Waitaki Link
- Overall there was support for the Link as a communication tool.
- The Residents’ Survey has indicated for the last two years running a good level of readership and satisfaction with the Link (between 70 and 80 per cent).
- Some general comments for improvement are around the use of plain English, issues that directly affect specific communities and getting some more substantial stories in there.
- The key issue consistently raised was around distribution – many considered the current publication did not reach a wide enough audience.
- Some suggested there could be focus on promoting the e-mailed and online edition of the Link.
- Some suggested it should be sent out with the rates invoices and other were supportive of this idea.
- There is currently no defined purpose or target audience for the Link and no goals in place.

Website
- The website was the focus of a lot of attention from officers, stakeholders and elected members.
- There were both positive and negative comments about it.
- The key issues raised were around accessibility, consistency and currency of information. Basically, people need to be able to find the information they need as easily as possible.
- The ‘look’ of the website was raised by officers and some elected members, although this did not appear to be of great concern to stakeholders who focused more on functionality from a user perspective.
- One of the key issues from an operational perspective is the lack of ownership around the website – it does not sit with any one unit. Each unit takes responsibility for updating their own content. There is no ‘gatekeeper’ or person responsible for ensuring overall content is current and consistent.

Media releases
- Feedback on these was positive overall.
- Media releases generated from Council are regularly and consistently picked up by local media, and often close to their original wording.

Leaflets & brochures
- Our logo and contact information are not always included and are used consistently.
- Generally, we don’t use a limited, consistent, easily recognisable palette of colours.
- There is no design consistency throughout (even though every piece doesn’t need to be identical).
- Not everything can be easily be recognised as coming from Council.
- There is no design consistency between our printed and digital communications.
- Our current visual identity does not reflect our vision of “one team working for a stronger Waitaki”.
- Much of what we produce does not look professional (although some stuff looks fantastic - but is not the material that necessarily needs to look fantastic).
- Most of our publications are reasonably user-friendly – i.e. they don’t look ‘cold and institutional’.
- Most are reasonably engaging for the reader, although there is a tendency to slip into technical language and sometimes the important information is lost in the middle of less important information.
- We are not conveying our main strategic messages throughout our communications mix because we haven’t decided what our strategic messages are (in terms of communication).
- Some of our publications have conflicting messages (e.g. roading fact sheets) and some of our publications are inconsistent with what’s on the website. By not including the logo on all publications (e.g. some of the community services publications, this send a conflicting message about being ‘one team’)
- There is not usually cross-referencing for audiences to all of our communication channels? e.g. links to Waitaki Link or Facebook.
- The web address is not front and centre in our written/printed materials.
- The quality of writing is in publications is somewhat variable. Our online writing is not always of a very good standard.
We generally don’t include other voices in our writing (it’s usually us talking about what we’re doing and why it’s important).

There is inconsistency about what we print publish and web publish – e.g. information for the Aquatic Centre

There is a lack of Council-specific leaflets/brochures for some activities – e.g. dogs

Brochures and application forms are almost always separate. There may be opportunities to combine these in some instances for ease of use.

There are no set templates/guidelines for adverts and public notices.

We don’t know if we are getting value for money from our publications and adverts or whether they are ‘fit-for-purpose’. We don’t record costs or customer uptake/feedback.

**Forms**

**CRMs**

**E-mails**

**Benchmarking**

**Other councils**

We benchmarked Council’s communication resourcing and function against several other councils. Some key findings include:

- Many other councils have reviewed or are in the process of reviewing their communications – many similar themes emerge – e.g. setting standards and guidelines, resourcing
- Communication managers/advisors report directly to the CEO in many councils
- In councils of a similar size, there is usually at least one FTE dedicated to communication (excluding website management and graphic design)
- Council newsletters are a key communication tool
- There are varying degrees of caution around the use of social media – the importance of having sufficient resourcing and policies in place to manage these channels is emphasised
- The importance of having processes and guidance (e.g. a ‘style guide’) was highlighted

**Local government context**

*Local Government Act 2002:*

**10 Purpose of local government**

- (1) The purpose of local government is—
  - (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
• (b) to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.

(2) In this Act, good-quality, in relation to local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions, means infrastructure, services, and performance that are—
• (a) efficient; and
• (b) effective; and
• (c) appropriate to present and anticipated future circumstances.

82 Principles of consultation

(1) Consultation that a local authority undertakes in relation to any decision or other matter must be undertaken, subject to subsections (3) to (5), in accordance with the following principles:

(a) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be provided by the local authority with reasonable access to relevant information in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons;

(b) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be encouraged by the local authority to present their views to the local authority;

(c) that persons who are invited or encouraged to present their views to the local authority should be given clear information by the local authority concerning the purpose of the consultation and the scope of the decisions to be taken following the consideration of views presented;

(d) that persons who wish to have their views on the decision or matter considered by the local authority should be provided by the local authority with a reasonable opportunity to present those views to the local authority in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons;

(e) that the views presented to the local authority should be received by the local authority with an open mind and should be given by the local authority, in making a decision, due consideration;

(f) that persons who present views to the local authority should be provided by the local authority with information concerning both the relevant decisions and the reasons for those decisions.

Good Practice for Managing Public Communications by Local Authorities – The Controller and Auditor-General

3.1 Corporate governance principles stress the different roles of the governing body and the management of an organisation. For local authorities, section 39 of the LGA reflects these principles.

3.2 Members (i.e. the governing body) and management of a Council share different elements of the communications function. In essence:

• Members are accountable to the community for the Council’s decisions and actions. What the Council says in its communications is, therefore, ultimately the Members’ responsibility.

• The mechanics of communications are operational activities, which form part of the everyday business of the Council. Moreover, effective communication often requires professional input. Most Councils employ (or engage on contract) professional advice and assistance for some or all of their communications activities. The chief executive is responsible for the effective and efficient management of those people and their activities.

• Communications is also an area of risk. Those who are authorised to communicate on behalf of a Council, and those who exercise editorial or quality control, need to have access to sources of professional advice when necessary (including legal and strategic communications advice). Obtaining that advice is also a management responsibility.
3.3 The communications function thus straddles the divide between governance and management in the Council organisation. Each Council should allocate the respective roles and responsibilities according to its own size and needs. For example, in a small Council the Mayor might be the primary spokesperson on all issues, whereas in a larger Council the role might be shared between the Mayor and a communications manager.

3.4 The governance/management divide also affects the crucial elements of policy development, quality control, and editorial supervision. We think these elements are best regarded as management functions, for which the chief executive is responsible.

3.5 The respective roles and responsibilities need to be well understood by all concerned and put into practice effectively. This is especially important when the Council employs professional communications staff – who could, for example, feel undermined by Members intervening in editorial decisions.

3.6 A useful approach is to regard the roles of Members and management as complementary, and to encourage everyone to work together in partnership for the good of the Council and the community.

**Principles:**

**Principle 1:**
A Council can lawfully, and should, spend money on communications to meet a community’s (or a section of a community’s) justifiable need for information about the Council’s role and activities.

**Principle 2:**
Communications should be consistent with the purpose of local government and in the collective interests of the communities the Council serves.

**Principle 3:**
Communications should comply with any applicable Council policies and guidelines as to process (including authorisation) and content.

**Principle 4:**
Communications on Council policies and decisions should reflect the collective position of the Council.

**Principle 5:**
Communications on Council business should always be clearly attributed to the Council as the publisher.

**Principle 6:**
Factual and explanatory information should be presented in a way that is accurate, complete, fairly expressed, and politically neutral.

**Principle 7:**
Communications about matters that are under consideration by the Council, or are otherwise a matter of public debate, should present the issues in an even-handed and non-partisan way.

**Principle 8:**
If engaging in public debate with an interest group or a section of the community, a Council should use the news media (rather than a Council funded publication) and designated spokespersons (rather than professional communications advisers) unless there is a particular justification for not doing so.

**Principle 9:**
If the Council’s Communications Policy permits them, communications by Members of their personal perspective, views or opinions (as opposed to communication of Council matters in an official capacity) should:
• be clearly identified as such; and
• be confined to matters that are relevant to the role of local authorities.

Principle 10:
Politically motivated criticism of another Member is unacceptable in any Council-funded communication by a Member.

Principle 11:
Care should be exercised in the use of Council resources for communications that are presented in such a way that they raise, or could have the effect of raising, a Member’s personal profile in the community (or a section of the community). In permitting the use of its resources for such communications, the Council should consider equitable treatment among all Members.

Principle 12:
A local authority must not promote, nor be perceived to promote, the re-election prospects of a sitting member. Therefore, the use of Council resources for re-election purposes is unacceptable and possibly unlawful.

Principle 13:
A Council’s communications policy should also recognise the risk that communications by or about Members, in their capacities as spokespersons for Council, during a pre-election period could result in the Member achieving electoral advantage at ratepayers’ expense. The chief executive officer (or his or her delegate) should actively manage the risk in accordance with the relevant electoral law.

Other best practice considerations
Alex Aiken - director of communications and strategy at Westminster city council

Your greatest asset is your reputation – your good name. Establishing and maintaining this builds the trust and confidence on which public services depend for their legitimacy. Local government at every level, from councils through to health and fire services, needs to rethink how it approaches communications and service delivery, to build a reputation in a world where people are faced with bewildering technological change and deeply worried about their jobs and incomes.

1. Councils need to be clear about what they want to be famous for. No organisation can communicate unless it has a clarity of purpose which can be expressed concisely in a way that passes a “pub test”. Can your staff or councillors to explain the purpose of the authority?

2. They need to understand how their reputation really stands in the community. Too many organisations believe that their corporate values are their brand; they are mistaken. Their reputation is the sum of opinions that people assess from their actions. Understanding this, through research and engagement, is critical to communications.

3. Great communications is established because the leadership team of the organisation is united in its belief in the purpose of the organisation, and because it has the skills to embody and articulate that mission. If in doubt, train your council’s leadership to test how well they communicate the organisation’s message.

4. Communications should run as part of a campaign with a purpose, preferably a fight against injustice – and certainly a call to action. Campaigns must have a beginning, a middle and an end. Campaign activity should be coherent and reinforce the core purpose. If it doesn’t, why is it taking
place? Each campaign should have a clear goal in terms of improved perceptions, increased understanding or changed behaviour.

5. Communications must be implemented consistently, proactively and be constantly reinforced. Saying things once, twice or three times doesn’t work. A message needs to reach the target group around 10 times before it makes an impact.

6. The communications toolbox has got bigger, but choose your tools carefully. Mass media still reaches large audiences. TV, radio and the daily newspapers have a powerful impact. Social media matters, but should act as a support to the main tools of communications.

7. Never assume that anything will go right. Too many initiatives fail with mistakes in the detail from inaccurate briefings, dodgy public address systems or late-running speakers ruining events. Communications requires evidence of competence to instil public confidence in the organisation.

8. Communication should build advocates. Identifying people who support your cause should be a primary goal of any communications campaign, and utilising them to support your drive to enhance reputation is essential. What is the point of celebrities unless they can be harnessed to promote the public good?

9. Mobilise every part of the organisation that communicates to work together. Communicators are usually and wrongly found across most offices separated into public relations, marketing, customer service, web and policy. They should work together – and sit together – in one place to develop integrated communications.

10. Evaluate your communications. Too much money is spent on leaflets, posters and websites, and too little on research and evaluation. Working out what works has to be integral to a good communication strategy. Westminster’s campaign research informs everything we do, and allows us to make incremental improvements that increase mail open rates, publications read and media hits – all improving the effectiveness of communications, and enhancing reputation.