

Guidelines for the Public Visibility Working Group of Canterbury Regional Council

As resolved by the Council on 16 April 2020

Purpose

The purpose of the Public Visibility Working Group (the Working Group) is to make recommendations to Council on public visibility of Council business, including community engagement, democratic processes, and community participation in democratic decision making.

Background

Environment Canterbury structures its work and activities into six portfolios. This allows the Council and its staff to focus on achieving progress in areas of relevance and importance to the community. The Local Government Act 2002 requires Councils to group activities for the purpose of developing and reporting on a Long-Term Plan. Environment Canterbury uses the portfolio structure to meet this requirement.

While the portfolio structure effectively provides a framework to engage with communities and stakeholders and to align related activities and policies for maximum effectiveness, there are some projects and/or issues which either do not fit neatly into an existing portfolio, or span across several or all portfolios. These projects and issues may be of a short-term or long-term nature. A working group structure and process is best placed to address these issues.

Scope

The Public Visibility Working Group's consideration will include:

- Understanding existing and planned public engagement and public visibility activities currently undertaken by Council
- Identifying any gaps and opportunities where increased public engagement and visibility could increase participation of the community in democratic processes across both the urban and rural regions of Canterbury
- Consider innovative solutions to address these gaps and opportunities
- Make recommendations to full Council for signoff, to initiate a work programme to implement solutions.

Duration

The Public Visibility Working Group will meet until such time as it is able to bring a recommendation to full Council.

It is anticipated that this will align with the development of the Long-Term Plan 2021-31, concluding on or before the approval of the draft Long-Term Plan 2021-31 in early 2021.

Membership and operation of the Working Group

The Working Group is chaired by a Councillor appointed by the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council.

Chair Hughey is ex-officio on the working group. Other members include five appointed Councillors: Marshall (Chair), Hands, Southworth, Apanui, Clearwater; the Director, Communications and Engagement and the Director, Strategy and Planning or their delegates and key staff from across the Council.

The Working Group may co-opt external advisors, or members of the community to 'test' ideas and solutions. Reasonable costs of attendance at working group sessions for these external members will be agreed in advance and met by Council.

The Working Group will meet at least monthly.

The Chair of the Working Group will report monthly to full Council at Council meetings.

Notes and actions of the Working Group will be made public.

Support for the Working Group will be provided by the staff of the Council's Governance team.

Decision Making

The Working Group has no decision-making authority. It will bring recommendations to Council for Council consideration. Expenditure undertaken by the Working Group over and above normal Council business must be agreed by Council.

Changes to the Guidelines

The Working Group may recommend changes to these Guidelines to the Council for consideration and agreement.