

Report 00.137
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Report to the Policy and Finance Committee
from Helen Wood, Corporate Policy Advisor and
John Allard, Corporate Policy Manager

Investing in the Future: The Ten Year LTFS and the Annual Plan 2000/2001: Report of Corporate Policy Manager

1. Purpose

For the Committee to consider the results of the pre-consultation process (the “Voice Your Choice” campaign), undertaken over the past month as an input to the long-term financial strategy.

2. Background

On 9 December 1999 (report 99.731), the Council decided on an indicative programme for the ten year plan, in order for officers to prepare detailed business plans for consideration by the Council early this year.

The Council resolved that a communications programme be instituted in parallel with other elements in the process, to make sure that people of the region understand what is being put forward and why and to allow them to indicate their response to it.

Accordingly, officers developed a programme of communications to raise public awareness of the Council’s investment plans and to seek responses from the community. The catchphrase for the campaign has been “Voice Your Choice”.

This communications programme was a pre-consultation opportunity for the regional community. As usual, the community will also be given the

opportunity to make formal submissions in April on the draft ten year plan document.

3. The “Voice Your Choice” Campaign

The “Voice Your Choice” campaign was launched on 2 February 2000. The month long campaign highlighted the council’s ten year plan and sought feedback on the proposed investments, through the mediums of billboards, radio, newspapers, fliers, an 0800 telephone line, the February issue of *Elements* and the Council’s website. In addition, Councillors met with groups in their local communities.

There has been a good response to the campaign, with a total of 96 respondents expressing opinions on the Council’s investment plans by phone, fax, email, forums on the Council’s website or sending in the response coupon in *Elements*. In addition, some people spoke directly with Councillors. This response rate compares favourably with the typical response rate of between 30 to 40 submissions on the Council’s annual plan.

The majority of respondents indicated that the Council’s investment plans “sounded about right”, although there was some concern raised about possible rates increases. The main priorities for expenditure that respondents mentioned were public transport and the environment.

A detailed analysis of the responses to the “Voice Your Choice” campaign is presented in **Attachment 1**. Note, the actual response forms will be available for perusal in a folder in the Councillors Lounge.

4. Flood Protection Funding

There was a limited response on the question of the speed of implementation of flood protection in the west of the Region. Accordingly, that question, and the funding should be left until after the formal consultation.

5. Recommendations

- (1) *That the Council takes into consideration the results of the pre-consultation process as detailed in **Attachment 1**, in its deliberations on the long term financial strategy.*

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Attachment 1: “Voice Your Choice” Campaign Responses

Attachment 1 to Report 00.137
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