Council and Schools Long Term Plan 2015-25 Consultation Project

Guide for Teachers and Students

Introduction

Thank you for being part of this exciting and important project. The Council and the Mayor have stated that our Districts' young people are an important part of our Community that don't often get to articulate their ideas through the normal democratic process. This project will enable participants to be heard at the Council table, while at the same time presenting a real opportunity to learn about the democratic process and the role of Local Government.

The end product of this project is for schools to make a submission to Council through the Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation process on an issue of their choice; that issue being something under the control of Council. The steps in the process can be listed as follows:

> ➢ Understand the role of Council and the environment it operates in
> ➢ Identify an issue to be the subject of your submission
> ➢ Research the background to the issue and gather information
> ➢ Identify the viable options within the broad guide provided
> ➢ Carry out a consultation on the options
> ➢ Evaluate data and identify a preferred option to deal with the issue
> ➢ Prepare and submit to Council on the issue, outlining your preferred option
> ➢ Present your submission to Council at a hearing to conclude the project

This guide document will aim to give you the tools necessary to get you started. It will give some context and background to the environment that the Council operates in, and then give some guidance about how to put together a comprehensive submission. The information contained is purely for assistance. How comprehensive you make your submission is entirely up to you but the end product will be one submission per school.

Role of Local Government

The Council manages over $700M worth of assets on behalf of the Community. This hefty responsibility is strictly guided by a number of parliamentary acts and policies; the most important of which is the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). The Act broadly describes the fundamental purpose and responsibilities of Council (known in the Act as a Local Authority). The Act can be found here:

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0084/latest/DLM170873.html?src=qs

Have a read of sections 10, 11A and 14 of the Act about the role and purpose of Local Government.

> *Tip* - The key phrases to take from these sections are "decision-making...on behalf of communities" "to meet current and future needs of communities" "cost effective" "good quality" "core services" "open, transparent, and democratically accountable" "aware of...the views of all its communities" "prudent stewardship" and "sustainable"

So the Council operates as a local authority, managing aspects of local government on behalf of the Community. It is strictly guided by legislation in how it performs that function. The key phrases in the sections of the Act quoted point to the fundamental rules, by which Council must operate. We can summarise by saying:

➢ As a democratically elected body the Council makes decisions on behalf of the Community.
➢ It must consider the current and future needs of the Community.
➢ It must offer quality services in a cost effective manner, particularly those core services.
➢ Council has an obligation to make decisions and operate in an open and transparent manner unless there is a good reason not to – for example privacy issues or commercial sensitivity.
➢ It must be aware of the view of all those in its Community, which requires engagement and meaningful communication with the Community.
➢ Council must demonstrate prudent stewardship (risk averse) and operate in a sustainable manner.
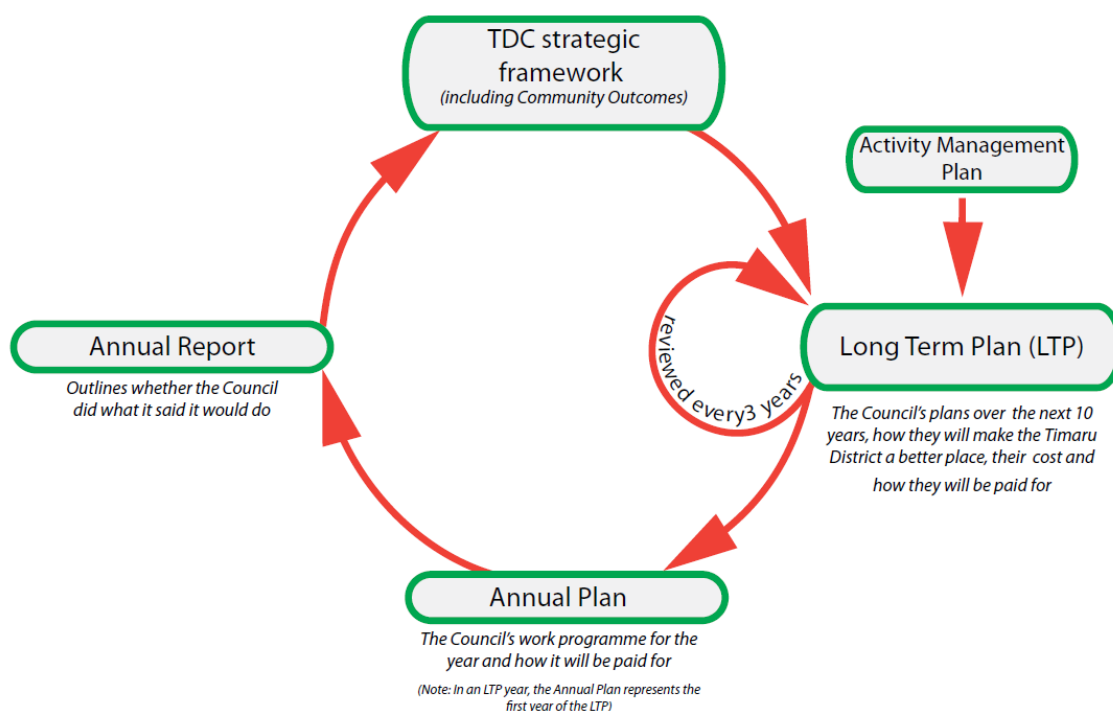
Council Activities

The core services Council provide include critical infrastructure such as the roading network, sewer, water supply and storm-water networks, as well as waste minimisation. It also performs a regulatory role in terms of District Planning, Health and Building Control. Other services also include catering for recreational and leisure needs. We often take these things for granted and tend to forget that there are hundreds of millions of dollars tied up in these assets and services. The Council activities are summarised in the graphic below:

GROUP OF ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES
Democracy	Governance & Leadership
Community Support	Airport Community Facilities (includes public toilets, cemeteries) Community Funding (includes community funding, subsidised labour) Economic Development & District Promotions Emergency Management Safer Communities Social Housing
District Planning & Regulatory Services	Building Control District Planning Environmental Health (includes environmental health, animal control, parking enforcement)
Recreation & Leisure	Cultural & Learning Facilities (Includes Art Gallery, Halls, Theatre Royal, Libraries, Museum) Parks, Recreation & Swimming Pools (Includes Caroline Bay Aquatic Centre, Fishing Huts, Motor Camps)
Roading & Footpaths	Roading & Footpaths (Includes parking facilities) Cycleways and walkways
Waste Minimisation	Compost, Recycling & Refuse
Sewer	Sewer
Stormwater	Stormwater
Water Supply	Water Supply

The Council plans for the future through the LTP and this provides the foundation for all its activities. The LTP is a ten year plan which is reviewed every three years. It shows where the Council intends to take the district and how it is spending the money, largely funded by the Community through rates, although Council does receive funding from other sources. There are several key information streams feeding into the development of the LTP.

For more information on Council activities and the LTP you can visit the TDC website at www.timaru.govt.nz. Keep an eye on the LTP updates and read the links to supporting information.

See the graphic below which shows what documents feed in to the LTP and how the planning and reporting cycle flows:

Tip - Council activities include a variety of services. When choosing your issue, consider it in light of the key phrases pointed out earlier. They will help you formulate what can and can't be achieved, and subsequently help you identify viable options.

Identify the Issue

Identifying the issue you want to address in your submission is a key step in the process. It must come under Council control and should have a significant impact on a person, group of people or portion of the Community.

A good place to start is the larger issues identified in the LTP Consultation Document. These issues are significant because they involve large sums of money or have significant impacts on either levels of service to the Community or funding, or the issue generates a lot of interest in the Community. You may choose any issue to submit on and it does not have to be one of those contained in the Consultation Document. Once you have determined what issue your submission is going to address, begin to build a strategy about what steps in the process you need to take to achieve the goal. Try

and make your issue, if not one of those outlined in the Consultation Document, a "Big Picture" issue.

Determining Significance and Decision Making

Good decision making is based on quality information, considers all the factors, is robust in terms of accountability and is sustainable. Be mindful at each stage of your decision making process of any personal biases creeping in to the analysis. Any gaps in logic might ultimately weaken your submission.

The graphic below shows the factors that contribute to how the Council makes sustainable decisions:
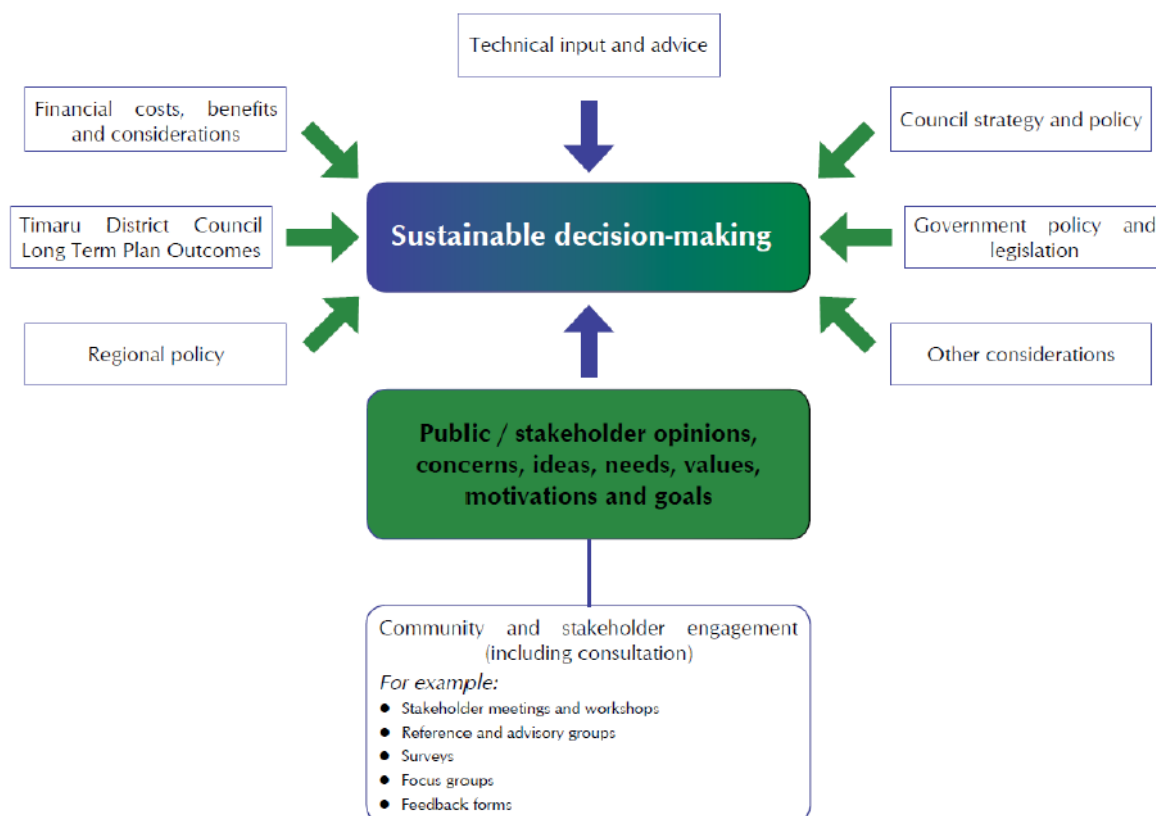
Determining what is significant to a single individual or whole Community can be a difficult process. The Council uses a policy to guide making this determination in relations to the decisions it makes, namely the Significance and Engagement Policy (SEP). The policy provides a framework for making the necessary assessment and will provide some guidance for your project if you choose mimic the process for your project. The SEP can be viewed on the Schools Project Section on the Council website. Insert link here

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Tip - Decision making is a process with many different facets, which starts by identifying your aim (your issue to address). A good way of arriving at the best outcome when making a decision is by using a tool, such as the Short Form Appreciation Process. It has four steps in which you identify AIM, FACTORS, COURSES OPEN and PLAN. Please refer to Appendix 1 if you wish to make use of the process. Using a decision making tool, such as this one, helps to keep your observations objective and ensures that you drill down on the detail. It effectively helps you identify your aim, consider all factors and question each, identify options and the pros and cons of each, and finally to choose a preferred option to execute as your plan.

Please read sections 76, 77 and 78 of the Act for further information about what the legislation says about decision making in local government.

Research

The research phase of the project is critical. This will provide the foundation for any conclusions you might draw with regard to a preferred option. When drawing conclusions about data, ensure there are no gaps in your line of thinking. Each inference you make in your line of thinking should be logical, incremental and the natural inference to draw from the former.

Use the links provided in this document and any others you might identify as being a reliable source of information (reference your sources in your work). Allocate roles within your group to research different aspects of the issue and the factors. If the population statistics or particular demographics within the population form part of your issue, consider using the publicly available information online at Statistics New Zealand. For accurate localised population information use Professor Natalie Jacksons' report. These links are available on the Schools Project Section on the Council website.

> *Tip - The research aspect of the project will enable you to identify all factors which may have an influence on the issue and on any potential options for resolving the issue. When you identify a factor, ask what does this mean? How does it influence the circumstances? Are there any other secondary factors arising out of that influence? Think critically about every factor and examine it. In this way you will ensure that you have a comprehensive understanding of all potential outcomes.*

We recommend that you access the supporting information for the 2015-25 LTP and have a look at the 2012-22 LTP online. Read the "Key Issues for the next 10 years" section for each activity in Section 2 for ideas. You may want to use climate change information, economic performance information or consider holding a poll amongst a particular group or Community to gauge public perception of the issue; the options for source data are many. Some useful links are provided below:

http://www.timaru.govt.nz/home

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/

http://www.timaru.govt.nz/council/publications/plans/long-term-plan

http://www.timaru.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/34673/898320-Timaru-District-Population-and-Household-Projections-2013-63-Final-Natalie-Jackson-September-2014.pdf

http://www.berl.co.nz/

http://www.stats.govt.nz/?gclid=CLLU96aajcQCFYEsvQodJkIAqQ

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1991/0069/latest/DLM230265.html?search=ts_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_resource+management+act+1991_resel_25_a&p=1

> *Tip - Think about the following: If using statistics to validate conclusions, do they reflect your opinion? Is there any other way of interpreting the same statistics? Imagine that you had a different view to the one you have, and look again at the data to make sure you've got it the right.*

Identify the Options

Once you have a solid foundation of research and understand all the factors affecting the issue, now and in the future, you can identify what options are available to tackle the issue. Legislative requirements, fiscal risks, sustainability etc. will all have been identified in your research phase as factors in your decision making.

Consider ALL options and record them. Some will be self-evident as not appropriate, others will be less clear as to their suitability, and one or two might stand out as workable solutions. Discuss and analyse the pros and cons of each option and decide on a preferred option.

Tip - Remember that if what you suggest has an increased level of service, i.e. it is something new, it will be at additional cost. Not only is there a new cost for the creation of the service or asset, but there will likely be new operational costs associated with running it and maintaining it. Can these costs be off-set by making the new service user pays? Have you considered where the money for the project is coming from? Think about the push/pull interaction between Council levels of service, increasing costs to the Community, and increasing Community expectations.

Consultation

An important part of Council decision making is consulting and engaging with the Community. The Act requires Council to consult on specific matters and on other matters Council uses the SEP to decide if an issue is significant and should be consulted on. For the purpose of your submission Council want you to carry out some form of consultation. It can be the wider Community or amongst a smaller group, such as school students, family and friends.

The purpose of the consultation is to make people aware of the issue, identify some principal options for dealing with the issue and to seek some feedback about the Community's preferred option. This may present you with an opportunity to consider other factors, previously not identified. When presenting your issue during a consultation it should fairly reflect the circumstances. It should not be worded in such a manner so as to illicit a particular response. If a questionnaire was to be used, and a bias in the manner in which the questions were asked became apparent, it would only serve to weaken any conclusions you might subsequently make.

Tip - People are time poor and respond differently, for a variety of reasons, to approaches requesting information. To maximise engagement, make the tool you use to gather feedback from the Community simple and engaging. Sell the importance of involvement and reassure them you won't take much of their time. Think about if you put a questionnaire out for consultation for example; are the questions a fair representation of the issue? Are you talking to the right demographic in the right way? If people choose not to fill out the questionnaire and as a result are not heard, does that really mean they don't care, or are we just hearing a very small unhappy minority? Give some thought to the mediums available for gathering feedback - face to face, online via your school website, email, Facebook, Twitter etc. Have a look at how the Council engages with the Community. Given the

Identify the Preferred Option

Once you have exhausted inquiry into all the available options and fully evaluated then, choose the preferred option to present to Council in your submission.

Prepare Submission

The suggested format for your submission is that of a comprehensive report. The report needs to clearly set out the issue to be addressed, the background to the issue and the findings of your research. It should outline the options that were considered but discarded, and why they were discarded. The report should then detail your proposed solution in full, including all the positive and negative factors associated with it and clearly articulating why your particular solution should be taken on-board by Council and given serious consideration. An example of a report format is attached as Appendix 3 to assist, but your headings within it might include:

- ➢ Objective
- ➢ Background
- ➢ Research and Consultation
- ➢ Options Not Used
- ➢ Preferred Option
- ➢ Other Matters
- ➢ Recommendation
- ➢ References
- ➢ Appendices

Ensure the submission is error free and "fit for purpose" before submitting it to Council. Please note that your submission is on behalf of your school, must be about an issue for which Council has some control over and must be clearly articulated.

Tip – The written submission must be submitted no later than 5 pm on Tuesday the 28 April 2015. You may wish to start thinking of a creative way to present your submission to Council at the subsequent LTP Public Hearing in May, such as a PowerPoint presentation.

Present Submission (Optional)

The final stage of the project is for a group of students to present the submission to Council during hearings held for public submissions on the LTP in May 2015. Each submitter has the opportunity to give a short presentation of approximately 10 minutes, and be available for Council to ask any questions if they need to.

This final step in the process is optional as the Council will have read your submission prior to the hearing, but it would be an appropriate way to bring the project to a close and give the Council an opportunity to thank you for your submission. More information will be provided about this step closer to the time of the hearing.

If you elect to speak to your submission, remember to inform the Council of your intention in the submission itself.

Council Support for Project Participants

Council fully supports participation in this project, however, time is a precious commodity at this particular time in the corporate planning cycle. Almost all the information required to complete the project is available to the public on the Council website and some of the other resource references included in this document. Any remaining questions relating to the project can be put to Paul Cooper, Corporate Planner or Mark Low, Corporate Planning Manager via your teacher. Contact details are provided below:

Paul Cooper
Corporate Planner
Timaru District Council
2 King George Place
Timaru
Email paul.cooper@timdc.govt.nz
Phone 03 6877430

Mark Low
Corporate Planning Manager
Timaru District Council
2 King George Place
Timaru
Email mark.low@timdc.govt.nz
Phone 03 6877200

If time permits, there could be additional support provided such as a staff visit to observe participants in action and to answer any questions directly.

Conclusion

The Council is excited at the prospect of working together with our districts' young people in the development of the LTP. It is hoped that by working through this project participants will not only get an opportunity to voice their opinion on an issue important to them at the Council table, but also get an insight in to democracy in action and the workings of local government. The complex and challenging environment the Council operates in is a rewarding career choice for problem solvers and thinkers, and it is hoped that some of those taking part will choose this career path in the near future.

The Council would like to thank you for taking part in the project and we look forward to seeing the fruits of your labour.

<u>Short Form Appreciation Process</u>

AIM

State your aim in clear and concise language in as few words as possible. Example:

To establish whether or not a dairy crossing can be permitted at 111 Beaconsfield Road

FACTORS

List all possible factors which could have influence on the decision, now and in the future. Example:

Local Government Act 2002	*ECan Policies*
Population in area	*Projected population in area*
Road usage	*Road surface*
Visibility and ground	*Bylaws*
Applicant	*Community interest*
Group Interest (e.g political/commercial)	
Fouling/hazards	*Timing constraints on decision*
Impact of timings on applicant	*Impact of timing on community*
Size of herd	*Regularity of use/proposed timing of use*
Impact on applicants business	*Impact on businesses in area*
Waterways/run off	*Fouling of community vehicles*
On school route or not	*Provision for monitoring*
Weather	*Funding implications etc. etc.*

COURSES OPEN

List all the courses of action open based on your analysis of all the influencing factors. Drill down into the positives/negatives and risks for each. Consider our obligations under legislation and any potential risks in relation to litigation. Consider the reasonableness of each. Apply the "So what?" "Therefore…" method in your thinking for each part. Example:

1. *Do nothing – to do nothing is an option available to the Council. The positive consequences of this option include no fouling, no increased road hazard in terms of safety, no monitoring costs for the Council, inconvenience to local residents and businesses, no risk of fouling waterways, no fouling of vehicles etc. The negative consequences are hindrance to a local business trying to grow, negative perception of council in farming community, given restriction on applicants planned expansion potential for litigation against Council decision (reasonableness) etc.*
2. *Defer decision and require more information from applicant - (e.g. water table expert re fouling – Positive/negative/risks…*
3. *Permit Crossing with restrictions – Positive/negative/risks*
4. *Permit Crossing as applied for – Positive/negatives/risks*
5. *Underpass Council assisted funding – Positive/negative/risks*
6. *Underpass no Council assisted funding etc. etc.*

PLAN

Choose the course of action, plan and execute. Report.

#923562

Title of Submission for LTP 2015-25

Prepared by: Timaru Council High School   Yr. 12 Geography Class

Date: 20 March 2015

LTP Hearing: Yes

Objective

Clearly state your objective, namely the issue you have identified and that the purpose of your submission is to provide a viable solution.

Background

Set the context for your proposal. Fully explain the historical circumstances of the issue you have identified, how we came to be in the current circumstances. Detail what (if anything) has been done to deal with the issue to date and the current state of affairs. Detail the impact the issue is having on the individual, group or Community concerned and outline the potential risks associated with not addressing the issue. Detail the estimated costs of doing nothing in terms of money, emotional harm to people, harm to the environment and to the Council and District's reputation. Make reference to any appendices or references used to establish the content of this section. Use this section to fully inform the Council of the extent of the issue.

Research and Consultation

The Research and Consultation heading should be used to convey to the Council in broad terms the foundation data you have sourced and analysed to identify all the factors influencing the issue. If you make conclusory statements based on the data, ensure that they are realistic and robust. Make reference to your sources of data - short reference in this section but in full at the bottom of the last page.

Options Not Used

During the process of identifying the preferred option for dealing with the issue, you would have identified several possible alternatives. Use this section to describe each option, its pros and cons and why you elected not to use it.

Preferred Option

Describe your preferred option in detail. Explain all facets of it and why in your opinion this option is the most viable and sustainable option for addressing the issue.

Other Matters

Use this section to describe any other matters that you think the Council should be made aware of.

Recommendation

Your recommendation to the Council should be written in this section. It should be clearly stated in a similar fashion to the objective. An example is given below:

- Timaru Council High School recommends that Timaru District Council build a grass basketball Court at Caroline Bay to address the lack of grass basketball facilities in Timaru.

References

List all your references in full in this section.

Appendices

Suggested appendices include a list of students who worked on the submission, the statistical data or other source material you may have used and any other material you deem to be appropriate and helpful in supporting your submission.