Communications and Engagement Strategy

Introduction:

The Communications and Engagement Strategy helps to define and direct Nelson City Council's communication and engagement with the public, iwi, partners and stakeholders. It outlines the steps to achieve set goals, while focusing on articulating Nelson's vision as **the Smart Little City.**

The Strategy is driven by the Council's mission to "…***leverage our resources to shape an exceptional place to live, work and play".*** Its purpose is to inform decision making; to better understand community needs; to raise awareness of services or issues; to build/strengthen relationships; to develop acceptance of proposed change and to increase trust and confidence in what Council does.

This strategy helps to define the pathway so that the communications and engagement from Council can be measured and reported on, so that it can be accountable for activities undertaken in this area.

Principles:

The principles that Council will adopt in all of its communications and engagement are:

- Transparency
- Responsiveness
- Consistency
- Collaborative approach
- Respect the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- Reflect our community's diversity
- Set appropriate expectations
- Encourage a respectful dialogue

Outcomes:

Key outcomes of the Strategy are:

- Enhanced community input into Council decision making and planning
- Improved trust, confidence and awareness with identified iwi partners, stakeholders and the public
- A community well informed about Council activities and services
- Proactive approach, with communications and engagement plans developed at project initiation
- Staff provided with tools necessary for effective engagement

- Clear metrics to report back to governance to show success

Goal:

Our communication and engagement activity will support and enhance Nelson City Council's relationship with the community

Key words for our goal are: support, enhance, relationship

The Communication and Engagement Strategy needs to support Nelson City Council to:

- project a credible voice (building trust through consistency)
- ensure all channels are targeted and provide clarity, timeliness, responsiveness
- allow a wide range of voices to be captured and heard
- give confidence that Nelson is the Smart Little City
- ensure the expectations of customers and stakeholders (including iwi and partners) are understood and considered

What would success look like for this goal?

- Residents, partners and stakeholders report improved communication from Council

- The Nelson community is confident its views are understood and considered

- Nelson City residents proudly adopt recognition of their "Smart Little City"

- Elected members have increased confidence in organisation communication and engagement service delivery

- More residents are engaging with Council more often

Objectives

1. Council communication and engagement with specified groups will be recognised as clear, consistent and credible, and will meet their needs

This objective focuses on the systems and processes to ensure all communication and engagement channels are delivering information that gives confidence: it will be credible, consistent and have clarity of purpose.

Actions

- Identify and classify target groups
- Review the channels being used – are they the right investment/format to meet the needs of our audiences?
- Create policies around communication and engagement practice (e.g. media/social media policy, engagement toolbox, branding guidelines etc.)

2. All engagement activity will demonstrate best practice

This objective is owned by the entire Council. The Communications team assist to ensure best practice guidelines are in place.

Actions

- Develop policies around engagement to define "best practice"
- Create engagement templates
- Assist teams to achieve best practice

3. That Nelson City residents [and elected members] report increased confidence and awareness that Nelson is the Smart Little City

Actions

- Establishing agreed key messages for (a) Nelson - the Smart Little City, (b) the organisation, (c) significant projects, (d) community assets and services
- Ensuring staff are confident communicators of Council's value proposition through internal communications being incorporated into Communications and Engagement Plans
- Creation of a photo database that can be drawn on for any communication output – associated and linked to agreed key messages

4. Appropriate metrics will be collected to allow monitoring of the communications and engagement activity and its effectiveness

Actions

- Identify ways that "effectiveness" will be measured
- Identify metrics that will be used to determine "reach" for channels

Appendix 1

Local Government Context:

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) is the primary act that drives engagement and communications from Council to its residents and ratepayers. The LGA sets out the general powers of councils, the community outcomes process, and planning and accountability requirements.

Part 6 – 76AA Significance and Engagement Policy
Part 6 – 78 Community Views in Relation to Decisions
Part 6 – 82 Principles of Consultation

Section Part 6 - 76AA specifically outlines significance and engagement, which is covered by NCC's Significance and Engagement Policy *(A1766622).*

Also very relevant to local government is the engagement/consultation required as part of the Resource Management Act and the Reserves Act. Note: the Resource Management Act has specific requirements around the consultation of iwi which must be considered.

Summary of other legislation that relates to Local Government activities can be found at http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lgip.nsf/wpg_url/Policy-Local-Government-Legislation-Other-legislation