

Asset management, consultation, and accountability

Learning from local government
consultation documents 2021-31

2023



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Executive summary

Audit New Zealand reviewed local government long-term planning for the period from 2021 to 2031.¹ To support long-term planning, we reviewed local authority consultation documents. We considered how well assets and infrastructure were covered. We gathered lots of information and saw many examples of engaging consultation.

We thought it would be helpful to share some examples of what good **engaging consultation on infrastructure issues** looks like, alongside a few thoughts and reflections of our own. We hope this report provides a resource for anyone managing assets and interested in examples of how others have engaged with stakeholders.

Long-term planning brings a long-term focus to what, in the case of infrastructural assets, are long-term issues. It helps local authorities be accountable to their communities and facilitates engagement with local stakeholders about plans and choices.

Good quality consultation stimulates the “right debate” and listens to feedback. Good asset management planning supports effective consultation. To ensure that choices are well informed and balance the needs, wants, and expectations of stakeholders, it is important for consultation to be effective.

Audit New Zealand audited the consultation documents of 62 local authorities. Consultation documents varied widely in their length, format, and issues covered. Of the 62 consultation documents we reviewed, 55% or 34 specifically included consultation issues directly related to infrastructure, reflecting its significance, the critical choices about maintaining and investing in it, and the vital services it supports.

All local authority consultation documents allowed readers to provide feedback on infrastructure generally, even if it was not a specific consultation issue.

Effective consultation needs to cover the key issues faced by the local authority and the local area. It has to express them clearly in a way that can be understood and that generates interest. To be engaging, it needs to pose questions and provide enough information to stimulate useful answers.

Our audits indicate that effective consultation shares certain characteristics. This report is based on interesting and notable examples gathered from our audit work.

It poses 10 questions you could ask about your own approach to consultation:

1. What are our legislative requirements?
2. What do we need to know?
3. Are we outward focused?
4. Are we fairly representing the issues?
5. Is our information presented in a way that can be readily understood?
6. Does our information inform discussion?
7. Are we telling an integrated story?
8. Are the issues we present consistent with our underlying information?
9. Are we genuine in seeking feedback?
10. Are we using appropriate and accessible means to communicate?

¹ Audit New Zealand audited 62 local authorities. The remaining local authorities audited by other audit service providers are outside the scope of this report.

Background

In 2021, Audit New Zealand reviewed local authorities’ long-term planning. This was part of long-term plans for 2021 to 2031 being adopted across the country. To support long-term planning, we reviewed local authority consultation documents.

In doing so, we gathered lots of information and saw many cases of engaging consultation. We thought it would be helpful to share some examples of “what good looks like”, alongside a few thoughts and reflections of our own.

We hope this report provides a resource for anyone managing assets and interested in examples of how others have engaged with stakeholders.

Local authority assets, planning and the law

The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) is the primary legislation covering local authorities’ long-term planning. Its purpose is “to provide for democratic and effective local government”. It does this by making clear the purpose of local government, providing a framework and powers, promoting accountability to communities, and providing “for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach”.

Section 93 of the Act requires local authorities to have a long-term plan (LTP). Section 94 of the Act requires an LTP to contain a report from the Auditor-General on:

- whether the plan gives effect to the purpose of long-term planning; and
- the quality of the information and assumptions underlying the plan.

That is why we audited local authorities’ long-term planning across the country.

Section 14 sets out key principles for local authorities to follow. These include ensuring “prudent stewardship and the efficient and effective use of its resources in the interests of its district or region, including by planning effectively for the future management of its assets” (section 14(1)(g)).

The Act is not specific about how the future management of assets should be planned but does include specific requirements for an infrastructure strategy (section 101B). The Act tells us that:

- ...the purpose of the infrastructure strategy is to —*
- (a) identify significant infrastructure issues for the local authority over the period covered by the strategy; and*
 - (b) identify the principal options for managing those issues and the implications of those options.*

Other public sector organisations have their own legislation governing what they do and how they do it. Although most legislation is not as specific as the Local Government Act, for organisations that rely on assets to support service delivery, good quality strategic and operational asset management planning is a prudent part of a robust service and financial planning system.

Standards and guidance

Within the context provided by legislation, standards and guidance provide a strong and clear framework for what good asset management planning should comprise. As a result, it is reasonably clear what good planning might look like. The ISO55000 suite of standards provides an overview of asset management, its principles and terminology, and the expected benefits from adopting asset management.² The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) provides *NAMS+ A toolkit for asset management planning*.³

Audit reports

When we audit long-term planning, we issue two audit reports: one on the consultation document required by section 93C(4) of the Act and one on the LTP.

The consultation document and LTP have different purposes. The consultation document should provide an effective basis for public participation (section 93B). It is a means for local authorities to engage with stakeholders on services as they are experienced by

local people. It can mean having to communicate some complex engineering issues and judgements in a way that is understandable, so that people are able to make an informed contribution.

For local authorities, service delivery relies heavily on physical assets – roads, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, buildings, and open spaces. Other parts of the public sector are similarly asset intensive. From ports and airports, schools, and universities to hospitals and state housing, good public services rely on good management of assets.

Good quality asset management planning needs to be well informed, not least by service users and other stakeholders that rely on public sector infrastructure.

About this report

This report shares examples of what we think good looks like. It discusses what makes consultation good and shares some examples of local authorities having the right debate about infrastructure in different ways with their communities.

2 See www.standards.govt.nz/shop/iso-550002014/.

3 See www.ipwea.org/resourcesnew/namsplus.

What does good consultation look like?

Long-term planning brings a long-term focus to what, in the case of infrastructural assets, are long-term issues. It helps local authorities be accountable to their communities and facilitates engagement with local stakeholders about plans and choices.

Good quality consultation stimulates the “right debate”. Effective engagement means listening to feedback. Good asset management planning supports effective consultation.

In this chapter, we discuss the characteristics of good consultation and the extent to which asset management planning supports these characteristics.

Local Government Act 2002: Principles of consultation

Section 82 of the Act sets out the principles that apply to consultation:

- 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 have access to a clear record or description of relevant decisions made by the local authority and explanatory material relating to the decisions, which may include, for example, reports relating to the matter that were considered before the decisions were made.⁴*

Local Government Act 2002: Purpose of a consultation document

Section 93B of the Act explains the purpose of the consultation document, which is to provide an effective basis for public participation in local authority decision-making processes, by:

- a) *providing a fair representation of the matters that are proposed for inclusion in the long-term plan, and presenting these in a way that —*
 - *explains the overall objectives of the proposals, and how rates, debt, and levels of service might be affected; and*
 - *can be readily understood by interested or affected people; and*

⁴ See Local Government Act 2002 No 84 (as at 15 November 2021), Public Act 82 Principles of consultation – New Zealand Legislation.

- b) identifying and explaining to the people of the district or region, significant and other important issues and choices facing the local authority and district or region, and the consequences of those choices; and
- c) informing discussions between the local authority and its communities...⁵

The legislation goes on to define the content of a consultation document, its form, and its manner.

A note about underlying information

Section 93G of the Act states that a local authority must adopt the information that the consultation document relies on, that is necessary for the auditor, and that provides the basis for the LTP.

Guidance from Taituarā — Local Government Professionals Aotearoa suggests what should be adopted (among other plans, documents, and information), including:

- the plan for the activities that the council proposes to be involved in – for asset intensive services such as roading and the three waters, this will likely include asset management plans; and
- the full financial strategy and infrastructure strategy.

The point here is that consultation needs to be accompanied by more detailed information that supports the rationale for the consultation, the possible options where appropriate, and the discussion that the local authority needs to have with its community.

What are auditors looking for?

When auditors review a consultation document, we are assessing whether it provides an effective basis for public participation in decision-making – what is sometimes referred to as the “right debate” with the community.

Long-term planning is a process as well as a document, so the “right debate” can take place over months and years.

Auditors want to see consistency – between the issues a local authority is consulting on and what the underlying information says. We also want to be sure that the consultation issues are the right ones and that the underlying information does not suggest that there are other, potentially more important matters to be discussed with the community.

What are the characteristics of good consultation?

In New Zealand, the public sector benefits from a range of good quality guidance to help guide and inform effective approaches to consultation.

In October 2019, Taituarā published *Telling our stories 2021: Producing an effective LTP consultation document*.⁶

It focuses on the long-term plan consultation document (CD). The CD is the statutory information source for supporting engagement with the community on a long-term plan (LTP). The CD presents the key issues and major matters that your council is proposing to include in the LTP in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Taituarā provided guidance on presenting information to the community. Something similar is planned for long-term planning in 2024. Taituarā’s approach was based around the following six “ground rules” to a LTP:

- 1. Long-term planning needs an outward focus.**
- 2. Long-term planning means long term.**
- 3. Long-term planning strikes a balance.**
- 4. Long-term planning tells one integrated story.**
- 5. Long-term planning is grounded in the present.**
- 6. Long-term planning requires project management disciplines.**

The guidance states that principles 1, 3, and 4 (our emphasis above) are particularly relevant to consultation.

The Department of Internal Affairs has **created a range of guidance materials** to help the public sector engage effectively with the public to increase transparency and support participatory government.⁷

5 See [Local Government Act 2002 No 84 \(as at 15 November 2021\)](#), Public Act 93B Purpose of consultation document for long-term plan – New Zealand Legislation.

6 See <https://taituara.org.nz/lg-sectorgood-toolkit>.

7 See www.dia.govt.nz/Engagement-and-consultation.

They include:

- *Digital Public Service’s Online engagement guidance is a principles-based, good practice guideline on how to plan online engagement, select the right tools and engage with people online. Its aim is to encourage public sector agencies to undertake meaningful and responsive engagement with New Zealanders to build trust and confidence in government’s ability to deliver to people’s needs.*
- *The Kia Tūtahi Relationship Accord Engagement Guide provides practical information on how to build strong relationships, plan and undertake engagement processes. This includes effectively engaging with Māori and Pacific people, ethnic communities, [and] people with disabilities.*
- *Good Practice Participate is a set of documents that guides public servants on how to involve community, voluntary, iwi and Māori organisations in decisions that affect them and the people and communities they serve.*

Allen + Clarke have published a *Quick guide to effective public consultation available to the public sector*.⁸ It sets out questions to ask when planning consultation. It also suggests the attributes of good public consultation:

- The method and level of consultation are appropriate to the policy proposal and audience.
- The views of the public/stakeholders are genuinely sought.
- Parties are provided with sufficient information to make informed submissions.
- There is adequate time for parties to make their submissions.
- Feedback is carefully recorded and summarised objectively.
- While you may begin consultation with a preferred option, submissions should be considered with an open mind before any final decision is made.

Treasury have published a guidance note, *Effective consultation for impact analysis* (December 2019).⁹ It “provides guidance on how to conduct consultation and tips for producing meaningful, clear discussion documents”. Among other things, it suggests that consultation should be effective and efficient. It

defines features of efficient and effective consultation, stating that it should be:

- continuous;
- timely – with realistic time to respond;
- targeted – to relevant groups, including Māori;
- appropriate and accessible – tailored to people’s information needs and preferences;
- transparent – allowing people to understand the issues and how feedback will be considered;
- clear – scope and objectives; and
- co-ordinated.

Our summary of the characteristics of good consultation

In putting this report together, we summarised all the frameworks and guidance that we discuss above into eight key characteristics.

Eight characteristics of good consultation	
1	Outward focused
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided
4	Informs discussion
5	Tells an integrated story
6	Consistent with underlying information
7	Seeks genuine feedback
8	Uses appropriate and accessible means

In the following section, we reflect on the extent to which all eight characteristics were present in the way infrastructure was addressed in the consultation documents for the 2021-31 LTPs. We highlight some examples of what we thought good looked like at that time.

8 See www.allenandclarke.co.nz/.

9 See www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guide/effective-consultation-impact-analysis.

Having the right debate through consultation

To ensure that choices are well informed and balance the needs, wants, and expectations of stakeholders, it is important for consultation to be effective. This means local authorities having the right debate with their communities.

In this chapter, we consider how widespread specific consultation on infrastructure-related issues was and some of the approaches that different councils took.

How widespread was infrastructure among the specific consultation issues?

A local authority's infrastructure network is made up of the following asset groups:

- water supply;
- wastewater;
- stormwater;
- roading/transportation; and
- flood protection (regional/unitary councils)

In addition to core infrastructure, local authorities own and operate a wide range of other types of assets, including corporate properties, community facilities (such as community halls, libraries, museums), and recreation facilities (such as swimming pools, recreation centres, sports fields).

Audit New Zealand reviewed the consultation documents of 62 local authorities as part of our audits of the 2021-31 LTPs. Consultation documents varied widely in their length, format, and issues covered:

- The 62 consultation documents we audited averaged just over 44 pages, but this ranged from 16 pages to over 140.
- The average number of specific consultation issues was just over four, but again this ranged widely from councils asking one question to those raising 10 or more issues.
- Fifty-five percent or 34 of the 62 consultation documents we reviewed specifically consulted on infrastructure-related issues.

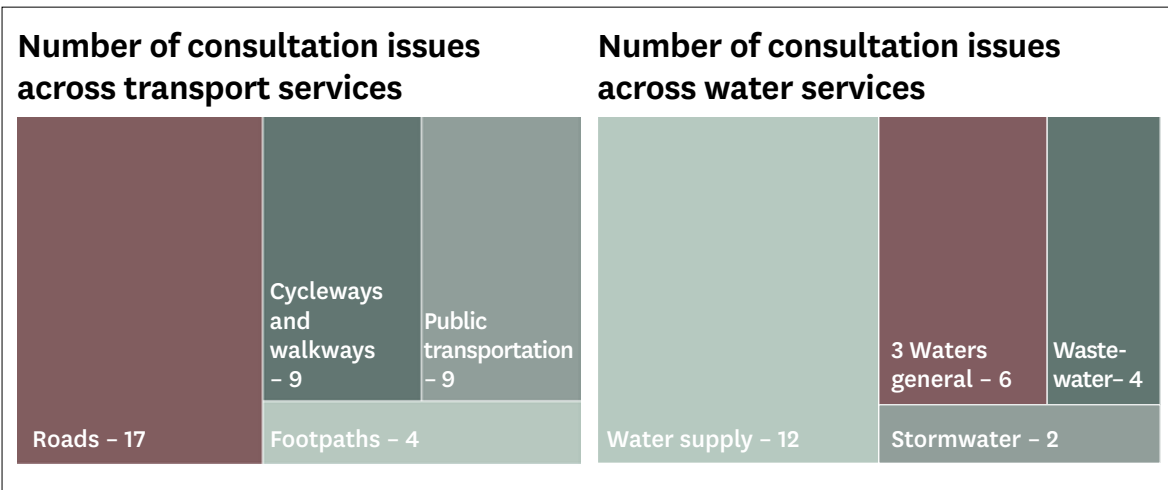
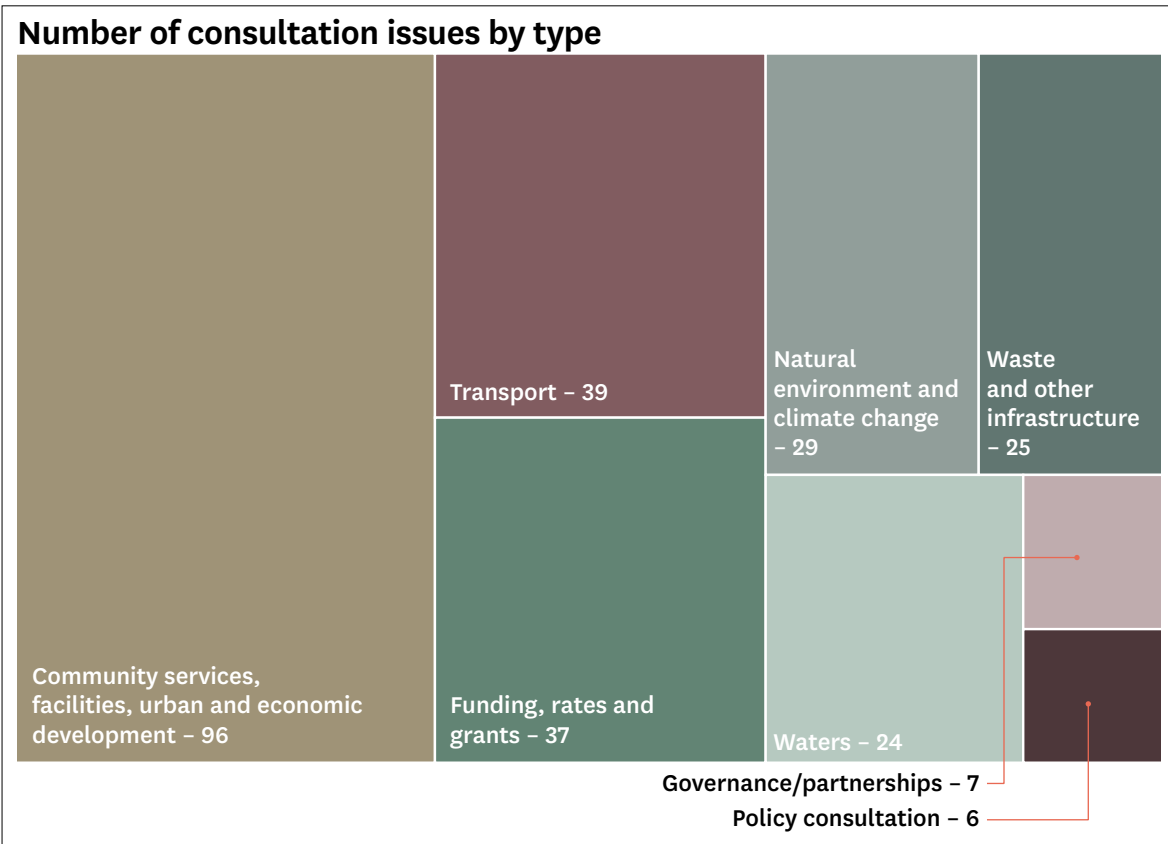
From our analysis, local authorities fell into three groups:

- those identifying infrastructure generally, particular infrastructure types (say roading), or individual infrastructure projects as specific consultation issues;
- those who emphasised infrastructure and were clear that investing in it is vital but chose not to highlight it as a specific consultation issue; and
- those who did not emphasise infrastructure, albeit their consultation documents still allowed for the community to provide feedback on infrastructural issues in response to the infrastructure strategy, forecasts of capital expenditure, and other information.

We grouped and categorised consultation issues across the 62 local authorities we audited and assessed the frequency with which issues were specifically raised.

Consultation about core infrastructure represented the second (transport) and sixth (water services) most commonly raised issues:

- The most frequently raised consultation issues were on community services and facilities – raised 96 times across the 62 local authorities, with some consultation documents raising more than one community services issue.
- The second most frequently raised issues were about transport infrastructure, which was raised in 39 consultation issues across the 62 local authorities.
- Water infrastructure was the sixth most common consultation issue, being raised only 24 times across 62 local authorities.



Among those local authorities consulting specifically on transport, roading was the most frequently raised issue. Among local authorities consulting on water services, potable water supply was the issue most

frequently raised. Some issues were raised less frequently than others. Only two local authorities specifically consulted on stormwater issues and only four on footpaths.

Case studies

The table below provides some interesting examples of how infrastructural issues were highlighted in consultation by local authorities who specifically raised infrastructural issues for consultation.

Approach to consultation	Examples of interesting practice
<p>Infrastructure in general</p>	<p>Auckland Council had investment in core services and infrastructure as its number one consultation issue. We liked the Council’s clear approach to communication through design and the way it set out the implications of not increasing funding. We felt this helped encourage the right debate.</p> <p>Hutt City Council had “investing in infrastructure” as its first consultation issue. We liked the way the document prioritised and highlighted the importance of “investing in infrastructure”. Its entire consultation document was called <i>Getting the basics right</i>, which is a focus we felt was appropriate. It identified challenges, including “demand and pressure on infrastructure”, and issues, including “ageing infrastructure and investment in renewals”. There were clear options for funding three waters investment, with the preferred option being a significant increase.</p> <p>Whakatāne District Council effectively consulted on all its core infrastructure, with the first two of its “five big things we need to talk about” being “Tahi: Improving our water supply, wastewater, and stormwater services” and “Rua: Responding to community demand for active transport and road sealing”. The Council was upfront about the scale of the task. It said it is a “must do” and posed the question of how the cost was to be met. We liked the way this framed the right debate for Whakatāne locals.</p>
<p>Specific infrastructure types</p>	<p>Greater Wellington Regional Council consulted on “ramping up our restoration of regional parks to fight climate change”. We found the way the Council framed its consultation issues in terms of climate change – “our biggest challenge” – helpful and engaging. It was a good example of linking infrastructure spend to the declared climate emergency and the Council’s resulting commitment to being carbon neutral. Engaging graphics made clear the preferred option with cost and impact understandable.</p> <p>Kawerau District Council consulted on “drinking water pipe replacement”. Kawerau’s document put infrastructure plans in the context of what has happened in the last three years, demonstrating that asset management is an ongoing process. A one pager presented options for water pipe renewal and set out a clear move from replacing pipes as they break or reach theoretical end of life to a more proactive approach. The Council explained a clear rationale for why it wanted to change.</p> <p>New Plymouth District Council consulted on a similar issue, dubbing it “fixing our plumbing”, which put the issue in terms that the reader could readily associate with. The document reflected what the community had already told the Council, including views on water meters. It was honest about the key drivers of its challenges, which include “historic underinvestment in our existing assets”. We liked this frank assessment of the decisions the Council wanted help to make.</p> <p>Southland District Council consulted on key issues: “our roads”, “our bridges”, and “the impact on rates”. We liked the way the Council integrated its consultation on core infrastructure. It provided a description of the need to increase investment in roads and bridges with a clear rationale, nicely illustrated, of the likely consequences on rates, debt, and levels of service. We felt this made all the right connections so that readers would be well informed when providing feedback.</p>

Approach to consultation	Examples of interesting practice
<p>Specific projects</p>	<p>Selwyn District Council, as well as consulting on wide-ranging infrastructural issues, also asked for feedback on some specific projects. We liked the way individual projects were presented in a way that the community could relate to and engage with. The “big decisions”, as the Council called them, included “keeping our drinking water safe”, “how we pay for drinking water supply”, and “planning for future roading and transportation projects”. However, it also sought feedback on more detailed aspects of asset management, such as “maintaining our roads”, as well as specific projects such as “developing a new wastewater system in Darfield and Kirwee” and the “future of the Leeston Library and Community Centre”.</p>

Does underlying information support a fair representation?

We expect consultation documents to fairly represent the issues stakeholders are asked to provide a view on. Judging this required us to understand the detailed planning that sits behind the consultation and the information that it is based on. Information underlying good consultation not only means the infrastructure strategy and asset management plans but also asset data, such as its age, materials, condition, performance, and rate of deterioration.

Does underlying information help complex issues to be readily understood?

Asset management planning is a complex topic that involves technical specialists – civil engineers, spatial planners, accountants, strategic planners, etc – coming together to balance competing pressures. They need to identify the optimal strategy to support service delivery today and into the future:

Good asset management maintains an understanding of the cost, risk, and performance trade-offs in the short, medium, and long-term, when making decisions regarding community owned infrastructure assets.

Asset management is about ensuring the delivery of services that the community values today – whilst delivering certainty for the generations of tomorrow.¹⁰

For local people to have informed opinions on planning, asset managers need to make complex issues readily understood.

Are significant issues and choices well explained?

For engagement on options to be effective, it needs to offer genuine, open-minded alternatives. In our view, presenting a foregone conclusion against an unpalatable or impractical option does not represent genuine consultation on options.

In our view, ineffective or inappropriate options might include:

- options that fail to tackle known issues;
- do nothing options where there is a clear case for change;
- options that do not meet standards or comply with legislation or regulations; and
- options that are practically, logistically, or politically near impossible to imagine being pursued.

¹⁰ IPWEA, *What is asset management?*, at www.ipwea.org.



Learning from others: Interesting and engaging case studies of consultation about infrastructure

Effective consultation needs to cover the key issues, express them clearly in a way that can be understood, and generate interest. It needs to pose questions and provide enough information to stimulate useful answers.

In this chapter, we highlight examples of how local authorities set out consultation issues related to infrastructure.

Consulting on infrastructure in general

Auckland Council: Clear communication through design

In our view, Auckland Council’s consultation document was a good example of clear communication through design, setting out the implications of not increasing funding for key infrastructure.

OUR RECOVERY BUDGET – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSED INVESTMENT PACKAGE – TRANSPORT

Ngā tikanga kawē Transport

We help Aucklanders move around the city with well-planned transport networks, good quality local roads and convenient, frequent public transport that more people use. We deliver a comprehensive programme of safety improvements to reduce harm across the transport network.

The transport programme for the 2021-31 period is subject to the decisions taken as part of the Auckland Transport Alignment Project Update and the Regional Land Transport Plan. Auckland Transport will undertake a separate consultation on their Regional Land Transport Plan.

\$3,695m
CAPEX OVER
3 YEARS

With no additional funding we would be able to:

- continue investment in the City Rail Link
- renew assets in line with the asset management plans
- continue road safety programmes, but not at the same pace
- undertake committed work on projects such as the Eastern Busway, Rosedale Bus Station, Matakana Link, and Wolverton Culverts
- make substantial progress on the Urban Cycleway programme
- expand the electric trains fleet in time for the City Rail Link opening
- complete Northwestern Interim Bus Improvements (funded by Crown Infrastructure Partners).

However there would be a \$400 million reduction in transport capital investment over the next three years compared to pre-COVID projections. This would mean:

- minimal investment in projects in local board areas, further extensions, and Park and Ride facilities.
- no investment in roading projects such as Glenvar, Lincoln and Lake roads
- no further investment in the ongoing walking and cycling programme
- minimal investment in supporting growth
- missing out on up to \$200 million of Waka Kotahi subsidies (because the council and Waka Kotahi co-fund transport investment, if our funding reduces then so does theirs).

\$4,245m
CAPEX OVER
3 YEARS

With proposed additional funding of \$550m we could also:

- increase investment in projects in local board areas
- Complete the Urban Cycleways programme faster
- improve road safety and Papaāinga/Marae programmes being delivered earlier and evenly phased
- accelerate investment to support growth areas
- accelerate investment in bus priority, safety and cycling improvements as part of the Connected Communities programme
- accelerate the Wellesley Street component of the city centre bus improvements to better align with the City Rail Link opening
- progress Lincoln Road, Lake/Esmonde Road and Mātātia Park'n'ride.
- Deliver Glenvar Road Improvements and Ōrākei shared path
- protect the airport to Botany route
- invest up to \$6 million each year in seal extensions.

An extract from Auckland Council’s consultation document *AK have your say*, setting out two contrasting scenarios for public transport in the city.

The document set out the implications by comparing a scenario with no additional funding against one with additional funding proposed for each area of infrastructure. Attractive and clear illustrations supporting each of the investments sought to make the document engaging, with each service given prominence through a dedicated page of the document. We felt that, provided with consistent information on each service area, the reader would have been stimulated to reflect on trade-offs and relative priorities, as well as consider the funding dilemma.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation		
1	Outward focused	✓
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided	✓
5	Tells an integrated story	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓
8	Uses appropriate and accessible means	✓

OUR RECOVERY BUDGET – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
PROPOSED INVESTMENT PACKAGE – WATER



Te putunga wai, waipara me te wai āwhā

Water supply, wastewater and stormwater

Our water functions include:

- supplying safe drinking water
- treating wastewater to a high standard so that it can be safely discharged into the environment
- managing stormwater to minimise flooding and protect waterways
- providing infrastructure that keeps pace with the growth of Auckland. Auckland has recently suffered the worst drought in its history, stretching its water supply and requiring urgent investment of \$224 million to improve the resilience of its water supply. Climate change will further exacerbate the issues we are facing, with increasing risks and impacts from both drought and flooding.

Water supply and wastewater

With no additional funding we would be able to:

- undertake projects which are contractually committed or in-flight
- continue work on the Central Interceptor project
- undertake all required renewals of critical assets (key transmission assets and treatment plants)
- limit growth investment (around 60 per cent of the optimal growth programme)
- continue smart meters and new connections.

! The implications of no additional funding would expose us to more risk. This would mean:


- almost all planned local network pipe renewals would be deferred, increasing the risk of asset failures and water lost through leaks
- water infrastructure does not keep up with new residential growth areas
- water supply resilience would be reduced
- energy neutrality initiatives would be delayed, impacting on the council group's implementation of Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan.

\$2,168m
CAPEX OVER
3 YEARS

With proposed additional funding of \$145m we could also:

- increase 50 per cent of planned local network pipe renewals with a focus on central Auckland. See page 29 for more information on our proposed plan to transition to a new approach for managing these non-critical assets to improve the reliability and performance of our pipe networks.
- increase growth investment (around 80 per cent of the optimal growth programme)
- continue leak detection
- design work on the Hula water treatment plant.

\$2,313m
CAPEX OVER
3 YEARS



An extract from Auckland City Council's consultation document *AK have your say*, using the same format and engaging graphics to put forward contrasting scenarios for water supply, wastewater, and stormwater. A consistent format across services would have helped readers compare relative priorities.

Hutt City Council: Clear options for funding investment in the three waters

We liked the way Hutt City Council called its consultation document *Getting the basics right*. In our view, getting the basics right is a fair representation of council priorities.

Hutt City Council was also open and transparent about a history of underinvestment and the forthcoming challenge of 60% of water infrastructure needing to be replaced in the next 30 years. Hutt City Council is facing an issue common to many urban areas across the country that were developed within a relatively short period and therefore have assets coming to the end of their useful life within a similarly short time frame. A spike in renewal needs such as this places real pressure on funding, project management, and market capacity.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation

1	Outward focused	✓
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided	✓
4	Informs discussion	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓
8	Uses appropriate and accessible means	✓

60% Of water infrastructure to be replaced
In the next **30 YEARS**

Demand and pressure on infrastructure

A considerable period of underinvestment in our basic infrastructure, particularly Three Waters, combined with our growing population, climate change and the need for additional housing supply, means that we need a major programme of infrastructure investment to service existing and future residents.

Sixty per cent of our water infrastructure needs to be replaced over the next three decades, and we need better transport connections, including active transport networks, to ensure our city is easy to move around and environmentally sustainable.

In our 10-year plan we are proposing to invest up to:

- \$582 million** In our Three Water infrastructure (p 18)
- \$353 million** In our transport infrastructure (p 24)
- \$68 million** To rebuild Naenae Pool (p 32)
- \$15-20 million** In Petone Wharf (p 38)

hutt.city/10yearplan 15

An extract from Hutt City Council's *E whakatika ana i ngā mea matua: Getting the basics right*, clearly illustrating the approach to dealing with a history of underinvestment.

Investing in infrastructure
Whanake i ngā Pou Tarāwaho o te Hapori

Identified issues and summary of response

Issue	Response Summary
Ageing infrastructure and investment in renewals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase our investment in understanding our ageing infrastructure assets2. Invest in a maintenance programme that supports the reliability, efficiency and effectiveness of the infrastructure networks

An extract from Hutt City Council's *E whakatika ana i ngā mea matua: Getting the basics right*, matching the issue with the planned response, fairly reflecting the need to increase investment.

We were impressed by the way Hutt City Council was prepared to acknowledge a history of underinvestment and make the case for increasing funding in future. We felt that was a fair representation of the local situation.

Whakatāne District Council: Linking key questions to its “five big things we need to talk about”

We liked the way Whakatāne District Council linked the first of its “five big things we need to talk about” to five challenges it has identified.

It knows that it needs to meet these challenges to deliver water supply, waste, and stormwater services in an efficient, effective, and sustainable way. Striking the optimal balance between them, however, requires some complex engineering judgements and political leadership.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation		
1	Outward focused	✓
4	Informs discussion	✓
5	Tells an integrated story	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓
8	Uses appropriate and accessible means	✓



An extract from Whakatāne District Council’s *The journey forward: Ka anga whakatamua*, outlining five key challenges to the first of its five big things: “improving our water supply, sewerage and stormwater services is a must”.

Although it is not practical and probably not necessary for a lot of detail to be put to stakeholders, Whakatāne District Council’s approach helped local people appreciate the complexity and the way the Council was weighing up competing factors to determine its options.



An extract from Whakatāne District Council's *The journey forward: Ka anga whakatamua*, illustrating how an engaging illustration and a call out in plain English supports the presentation of complex issues.

We liked Whakatāne District Council's use of graphics, images, and call outs to pose simple yet thought provoking questions. In our view, asking "spending on three waters is a must-do – we have no option, so how do we meet increased costs?" helps one of the most important complex issues facing our infrastructure to be readily understood.

Consulting on specific types of infrastructure

Greater Wellington Regional Council: Engaging graphics presenting the cost and impact of the preferred option

Greater Wellington Regional Council explained to its ratepayers that:

There are three big topics we'd really like your thoughts on. Two are focused on the need for urgent action to tackle climate change. The third is about the best way to support joint action to boost regional growth and development.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation

2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided	✓
8	Uses appropriate and accessible means	✓

Using simple presentation of complex issues, clearly articulated, we thought this was a good way to frame a complex debate. It made it manageable and easy to understand. People can relate to issues such as “pushing the go button on electrifying our bus and rail network” and “pumping up our restoration of regional parks to fight climate change”, even if they do not understand the complex engineering that would be required.



An extract from Greater Wellington Regional Council’s consultation document *Help us write the great Wellington regional story*, putting the consultation issues – public transport, regional parks, economic development – in the context of the big issue – climate change.

We liked the way Greater Wellington Regional Council framed the consultation issues in terms of climate change – “our biggest challenge”. Few would argue that climate change is not a significant issue, but many would perhaps be struggling to know what to do about it. Greater Wellington Regional Council is clear and positive about the areas it has decided to focus on and the choices it was putting forward.

We thought that investing in engaging graphics showed care and attention to detail that both reinforced the importance of the message and made for an engaging document. A reader needs to be engaged if there is any possibility of them making a meaningful contribution to the debate.



An extract from Greater Wellington Regional Council’s consultation document *Help us write the great Wellington regional story*, using classic story book style graphics to keep the reader engaged.

Kawerau District Council: Putting decisions in context

A fair representation means clearly explaining the judgments that the council’s engineering experts are making and why. Without understanding the context, local people are ill informed to provide feedback on funding levels and their likely rates impact.

Even though there is a lot of information presented by Kawerau District Council, a quick read makes it clear what judgements were made in the past and how this is proposed to change in future:

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation		
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
5	Tells an integrated story	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓

In the past:

The Council’s practice to date has been to replace water pipes when breakages occur or when the pipes are known to be at the end of their useful life. This practice avoided unnecessary costs resulting from pipes being replaced early.

Now:

Council is proposing to replace all old steel and asbestos cement pipes over the next six years due to:

- *Pipes deteriorating faster in some areas due to geothermal and water acidity.*

- *Overall, pipes in Kawerau deteriorate 24% faster than the national average.*
- *Nearly half of the water supply pipes consist of asbestos cement.*
- *On-going discoloured water issues due to the build-up of manganese and iron in existing pipes.*

We liked the way the Council explains the issue, why it is proposing to change its approach, and how this might impact rates. The inclusion of a map helps readers understand how their property is likely to be affected.

CONSULTATION TOPIC 1
DRINKING WATER PIPE REPLACEMENT

The Kawerau District has one water supply network that distributes potable (drinking) water to:

- 2751-plus households
- Five large industrial plants
- 175 (approx.) businesses

The network comprises springs, pumps, reservoirs and pipes. Most of Kawerau's water supply pipes were installed from 1956 through to 1989.

The three materials which the 77km water pipes consists of are steel (44%), asbestos cement (AC) (29%) and plastic (PVC) (19%).

Water pipes in the Newall, Galway and Domett streets areas were replaced in 2010 with PVC (plastic) pipes. The pipes in Te Ariu Place, Bied, Massey, Short, Kinomou and McKenzie Streets areas have just been replaced.

The Council's practice to date has been to replace water pipes when breakages occur or when the pipes are known to be at the end of their useful life. This practice avoided unnecessary costs resulting from pipes being replaced early.

However, Council is proposing to replace all old steel and asbestos cement pipes over the next six years due to:

- Pipes deteriorating faster in some areas due to geothermal and water acidity.
- Overall, pipes in Kawerau deteriorate 26% faster than the national average.
- Nearly half of the water supply pipes consist of asbestos cement.
- On-going discoloured water issues due to the build-up of manganese and iron in existing pipes.

The cost will be \$2.0 million each year for a total cost of \$12 million.

Council believes it is prudent with the current low interest rates to start this accelerated replacement programme now and fund it from loans from the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA).

The lifetime of the polyethylene pipes (PE) new generation PVC pipe is 100 years and loans would be taken out for a period of 90 years, which means current and future residents who benefit from the new asset, will contribute financially. The loan period will allow the best pipe replacement to be started and completed with the pipe's 100-year lifespan.

DRINKING WATER PIPE REPLACEMENT PLAN (OPTION 1)

Shaded areas for council owned infrastructure are replaceable only.
 *Newall turn - New piping is boundary.

Option 1 **Council's preferred option**

Replace 46km (which excludes the Riser and Gravity Mains) of old pipes in a planned and staged approach over the next six years with polyethylene pipes. Council will fund the replacement programme by loans of \$2 million per year for six years. The loan term would be for a period of 90 years. This is Council's preferred option and is included in the proposed budget.

Impact on level of service

- Reduces 'discoloured water' issues.
- Removes all asbestos cement pipes from the network.
- Future generations benefit and contribute by repaying loans.

Impact on rates

Total Rates for Water:

- 2021/22: \$1,361.6k
- 2022/23: \$1,460.1k
- 2023/24: \$1,551.3k

Loan interest payable to service the debt:

- 2021/22: \$25,000
- 2022/23: \$74,900
- 2023/24: \$124,840
- 2024-2031: \$174,280 to 294,920 each year

Impact on the average property is \$4.50 to \$53.00 per annum.

Impact on debt

- Requires borrowing and \$12m debt as there are insufficient depreciation reserves to fund this project.

Option 2

Continue to replace pipes as breaks and failures occur (status quo). This is estimated to cost \$4.8 million over the next 10 years. However, this will only replace approximately 40% of the old pipes.

Impact on level of service

- Reduces the need for debt and borrowing.
- Discoloured water issues may continue, even in areas with new pipes, as the water has to travel through old pipes.
- Potential for increasing number of water main failures as pipes deteriorate.

Impact on rates

Total Rates for Water:

- 2021/22: \$1,314.6k
- 2022/23: \$1,405.2k
- 2023/24: \$1,428.6k

Impact on debt

- Removes the need for borrowing and debt as this would be funded from depreciation reserves.

What do you think?

BORROWING TO FUND THE DRINKING WATER PIPES REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Council are currently replacing the water pipes as they fail or break. If we continue in this manner, it is expected to cost the district \$4.8 million for renewals of approximately 40% of the old pipes during the next 10 years.

However, our preferred option is to replace all the old water pipes during the next six years. This would mean renewing 8km to 9km annually at a cost of \$2.0 million each year.

To complete this project funding for those renewals will come from loans which will be repaid over 90 years. The pipes have a 100 year lifespan and loans would be structured so that the next pipe replacements could commence before the end of the lifespan.

Council has joined the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), which is a Council Controlled Organisation set up specifically for Council borrowing. Operating under the Local Government Act 2002, LGFA offers more efficient funding costs and terms to Councils than other traditional lenders.

THREE WATERS REFORM

Council has chosen the preferred option to accelerate the pipe replacement programme with consideration of the Government's Three Waters reform. Council has only committed to stage one of the reform which was the provision of information to the Government. Under stage one, Council received an \$800,000 Three Waters Stimulus Grant that is being used to upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Plant operating systems, for new microscreens and for land disposal improvements (\$480k) and water toby replacements (\$120k). The Three Waters Reform timeline shows it will be late 2021 before the government will start consulting about the proposed regional water authorities.

The key driver for continuing with the replacement programme is that the project needs doing. In addition, even if the district's Three Waters assets were to be managed by a regional authority, then any debt associated with those Three Waters assets would also be transferred.

An extract from Kawerau District Council's Long-term plan 2021-31 consultation document: Tell us what you think – a detailed one pager with clear options.

New Plymouth District Council: Being open and transparent about the big issues

New Plymouth District Council’s “big call 1” is “fixing our plumbing”. The Council explains:

We have a backlog of renewal work to do on our key infrastructure assets, particularly the three waters (drinking water wastewater/sewerage, stormwater). We are considering how much we should spend and how we should fund that expenditure. We are proposing to spend \$248m over 10 years, with an expectation we will catch-up on the backlog in 20 years and to fund that amount from a mixture of rates and debt for long life assets.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation		
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓

We commend the Council for being open and transparent about the issue and explaining it in a way that is easily understandable. We expect good consultation to be based on a fair representation of the issues. New Plymouth District Council did a good job of representing its current and desired future position. We particularly liked the way it explained its vision and challenges.

We believe that good quality asset information is the foundation of robust planning. It is even more important where there are big decisions to be made, a possible backlog of asset renewals, and risks that might result. Better information helps manage risk by reducing the level of uncertainty. New Plymouth District Council rightly recognises the value of investing more in understanding the condition of its assets. Its required level of funding will be more certain as a result.

Our vision and the challenges

A summary of the key points of the Infrastructure Strategy

The key drivers of our challenges	What it means	What we propose
Historic underinvestment in our existing assets	The condition of some of our assets is poor (particularly water and wastewater) or unknown (stormwater). While we have a reasonable level of certainty on the conditions of most of our assets, we acknowledge that we don't have a full picture on the current state of our stormwater assets condition. One of our actions is to improve our knowledge of this. This might mean that we find out we need to spend more, or less, on renewing stormwater assets. While we don't have good condition data, the Council does have good knowledge of the assets and we use age and performance as a proxy for condition in determining the level of renewals. This means that we are experiencing more asset failures (for example broken pipes or mechanical failures) and our ability to deliver services at current levels will deteriorate unless we invest in maintaining and renewing our existing assets.	We want to invest more in understanding the current condition of our assets, prioritise our funding to improving the condition and developing proactive maintenance schedules.

An extract from New Plymouth District Council’s LTP 2021-2031 consultation document: *Your home, your say: Tell us what you think about our draft 10-year plan*, highlighting the importance of good quality asset information in dealing with historic underinvestment.

Southland District Council: Making the right linkages

We liked the way Southland District Council focused on two aspects of its infrastructure – “our roads” and “our bridges” – and linked them to “the impact on rates”.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation

1	Outward focused	✓
2	Fair representation of the issues and objectives	✓
6	Consistent with underlying information	✓

KEY ISSUE 1
Our roads

COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL

We propose to increase our investment in road rehabilitations (repairs and restorations), which will enable us to rebuild a sustainable number of kilometres of road every year.

To keep rates increases low in recent years the budget for rebuilding roads has decreased in real dollars. It is now at the point where significant investment is due or we will have to make the decision to revert some sealed roads to gravel and accept a lower standard of service overall.

OPTION 1
Our preferred option

INVEST MORE IN OUR ROADING NETWORK

We propose increasing our spending on road rehabilitations by \$1 million in the first year of the long term plan, and an average of \$2.5 million a year over the next 10 years. The new total budget would start at \$4.2 million in year one (2021/2022), rising to \$18.9 million in year 10 (2030/2031).

We are continuing to budget on receiving a 52% subsidy from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) for our total roading programme.

For the first three years of the Long Term Plan 2021-2031, this would enable us to carry out, on average, an additional 7km of road rehabilitations each year, around 13km a year in total, and maintain current levels of service across the district's roading network, increasing to 28km in the last year of the plan.

LIKELY CONSEQUENCES

ON RATES
With NZTA funding 52% of the \$1 million of increased spending, our share in year one is \$458,000. This represents 0.92% of our preferred overall rates increase of 10.15%. Over the 10 years of the plan the annual increase in rates varies from \$225,000 to \$2,124,000, or 0.41% to 2.54%.

ON DEBT
None. As our roading expenditure generally increases year on year, we believe it is appropriate to rate fund the full annual roading programme, with debt used only for one-off significant events that cannot be met from within existing work programmes.

ON LEVELS OF SERVICE
This will see current levels of service maintained and will enable minimal additional maintenance costs to be incurred, as well as limiting the number of speed restrictions and closures that may occur.

However, it is important to note that even with this elevated level of investment, some changes to levels of service may still occur over the 10-year period of this long term plan as Council is required to make difficult funding decisions about the maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure.

An extract from *It's time Southland/Murihiku*, showing how options were linked to their likely consequences – on rates, on debt, and on levels of service.

Although many councils put their consultation issues in the context of the services that infrastructure supports, Southland District Council was one of the few that made the possible impact on the future level of service clear. In the example we have highlighted, the Council drew a contrast between “investing more in our roading network” and the “status quo”.

The stark description made real what might otherwise have been a relatively abstract decision. Real-world consequences that people would start to experience were explained so that people could understand the implications of their choices:

If we don't increase spending on rebuilding sections of road requiring rehabilitation, repairs will become more noticeable, and we will end up with rougher and slicker roads, to the point where more speed restrictions may be warranted to help address safety issues. As the condition of roads deteriorate, we will see an increased backlog of work. Some roads will revert to gravel as we focus our static maintenance budget on efforts to repair a smaller number of roads. Some roads may need to be closed.



The infographic features a background image of a road with a large pothole. A large circular graphic with the text 'OPTION 2' is overlaid on the image. To the right of the graphic, the text is organized into sections: 'STATUS QUO', 'LIKELY CONSEQUENCES', 'ON RATES', 'ON DEBT', and 'ON LEVELS OF SERVICE'.

OPTION 2

STATUS QUO

To continue to spend around \$3.2 million each year on road rehabilitations.

The implications are a lower level of service.

LIKELY CONSEQUENCES

ON RATES
A reduction to rates required of \$458,000, reducing the preferred rates percentage increase from 10.15% to 9.16%. Rates will reduce between \$636,000 in 2022/2023 and \$7.1 million in 2030/2031, or between 0.24% and 2.33%.

ON DEBT
No impact due to the roading programme being fully funded from rates.

ON LEVELS OF SERVICE
If we don't increase spending on rebuilding sections of road requiring rehabilitation repairs will become more noticeable, and we will end up with rougher and slicker roads, to the point where more speed restrictions may be warranted to help address safety issues.

As the condition of roads deteriorate we will see an increased backlog of work. Some roads will revert back to gravel as we focus our static maintenance budget on efforts to repair a smaller number of roads. Some roads may need to be closed.

Road users will experience longer travel times, and more wear and tear on their vehicles.

Customer dissatisfaction will increase, and Council will receive more requests for service.

An extract from *It's time Southland/Murikhu*, explaining in stark terms the real-world impact on service levels of continuing the current level of road maintenance funding.

Consulting on specific projects

Selwyn District Council: Choices explained well

We liked the way that Selwyn District Council used excellent structure and clear explanations of the issues and choices it was facing. It combined big picture thinking about long-term strategic issues with more detailed consultation on specific projects or facilities whose future was at a turning point. At the upper end of the range, the Council put forward eight issues for consultation feedback, but, rather than lacking focus, the way the Council structured and presented them kept the consultation sharp and coherent.

Why we liked this example against the eight characteristics of good consultation		
1	Outward focused	✓
3	Can be readily understood, with enough information provided	✓
4	Informs discussion	✓
5	Tells an integrated story	✓

Its “big decisions” were:

Water Services

- *Big decision 1: Keeping our drinking water safe*
- *Big decision 2: How we pay for drinking water supply*
- *Big decision 3: Developing a new wastewater system in Darfield and Kirwee*

Transportation Services

- *Big decision 4: Maintaining our roads*
- *Big decision 5: Planning for future roading and transportation projects*

Community Facilities

- *Big decision 6: Future of the new Prebbleton Community Centre*
- *Big decision 7: Future of the Leeston Library and Community Centre*
- *Big decision 8: Future of the Hororata Community Centre*

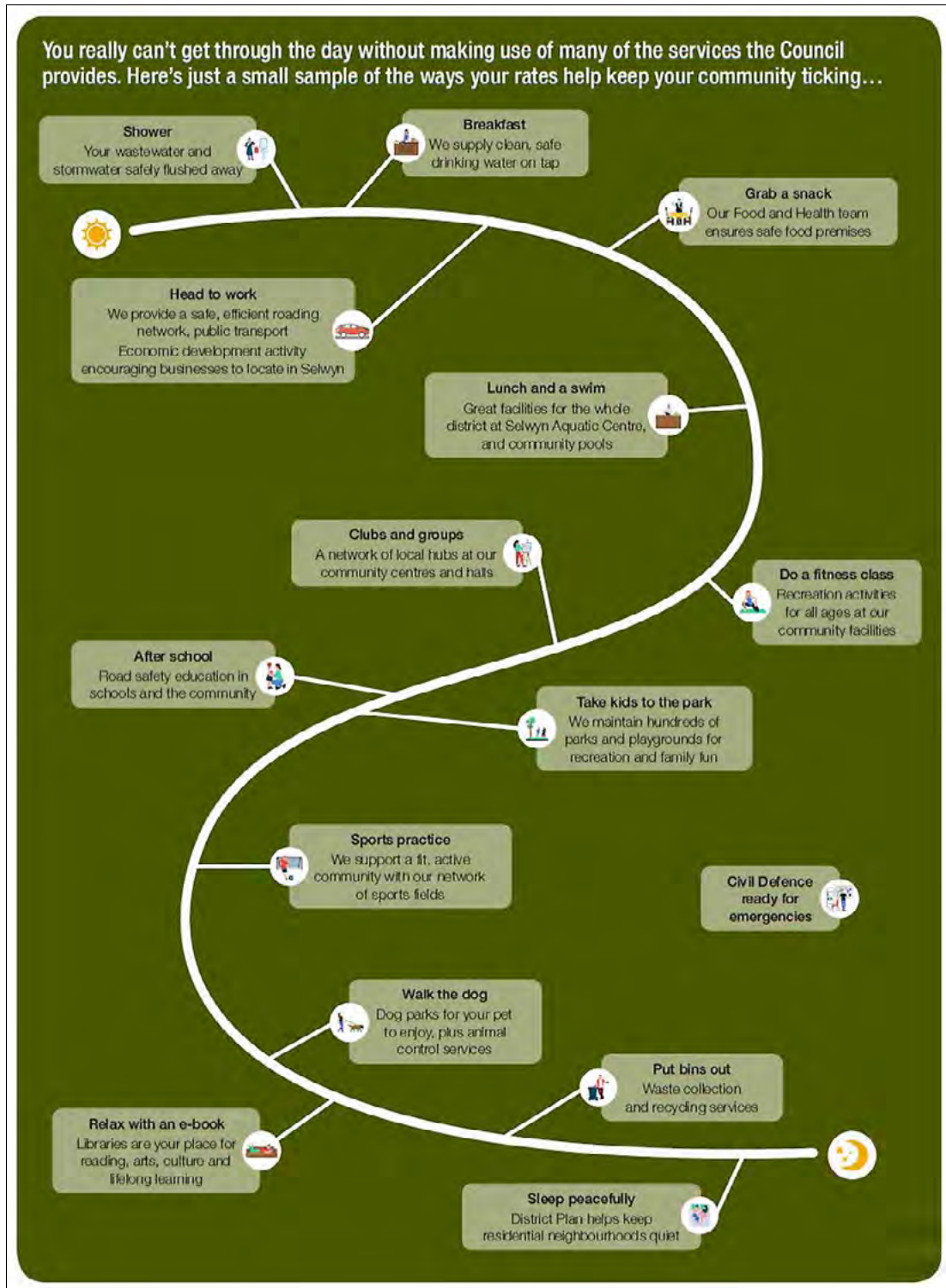
An extract from *This way ... our map for the next 10 years*, Selwyn District Council's consultation document framing the Council's big decisions.

Our big decisions

We're seeking input from the community on a range of proposed plans and projects over the next 10 years, but especially on the following eight big decisions. Check the 'Our big decisions' section for more information, and the options we're seeking your feedback on.

- 1** Keeping our drinking water safe – we're proposing to continue our current approach to maintaining safe water supplies, which meet community expectations, and comply with expected new regulations. For more information see p. 18.
- 2** Funding our drinking water supply – we're proposing to change the way we charge for the supply of drinking water, to meet increasing costs and to help manage our high water demand. This may be through options for increasing the volumetric (metered) water rate and the annual fixed rate. For more information see p. 20.
- 3** Wastewater system for Darfield and Kirwee – we're proposing to develop a reticulated wastewater system in these towns with a connection to the Pines wastewater treatment plant in Rolleston. The alternative is to retain the existing septic tank system. For more information see p. 22.
- 4** Maintaining our roading network – we're looking at how much we should invest in road maintenance, with the option of adding extra funding above what Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency supports, so we can carry out additional work. For more information see p. 28.
- 5** New roading and transport projects – we're proposing an extensive programme of roading upgrades and projects across the district, with the option of varying the programme by starting some projects earlier or later. For more information see p. 30.
- 6** New community centre for Prebbleton – we're proposing to build a new community centre, with the option to defer the project outside the 10-year plan. For more information see p. 34.
- 7** Future of Leeston library and new community centre – following consultation last year we're proposing to build a new combined library/service centre and community centre on Leeston Park, with the alternative of upgrading the existing building or deferring the project. For more information see p. 36.
- 8** Future of Hororata community centre – we're proposing to construct a new Hororata Community Centre on the domain, with the options of retaining or renovating the existing hall. For more information see p. 38.

We liked the way that Selwyn District Council used the concept of a day in the life of a local resident to illustrate all the ways in which council services support a good quality of life. We thought this helped illustrate the Council's challenge of trying to balance investment across services.



An extract from *This way ... our map for the next 10 years*, Selwyn District Council's consultation document, using the metaphor of a day in the life of a local to explain how council services underpin quality of life in all sorts of ways.

Does the system work to inform discussion?

Overall, we believe the examples that we saw in 2021 indicate that the system has potential to support genuine open consultation.

We have pointed to some of the interesting examples that resonated with us. There are many other local authorities that did a good job of engaging with their communities.

However, our audits lead us to ask:

- Are trade-offs clear?
- Are the implications of decisions drawn out – particularly in terms of real-world changes in the way local people will experience services?
- Are links between big strategic issues (such as climate change or economic development) and investment in specific projects (such as upgrading a particular plant or expanding an individual community centre) well made?
- Are consultation documents the best way to generate interest, understanding, and feedback?
- Is the importance of infrastructure consistently reflected in consultation?

The top 10 questions you could ask about your own approach to consultation

The top 10 questions we believe governors and senior managers could ask to improve accountability and consultation on infrastructural issues are:

	Question	Purpose
1	What are our legislative requirements?	Legislative requirements need to be met. However, governors need to consider whether meeting legislation is enough to ensure all that needs to be said, consulted on, and achieved is covered in planning.
2	What do we need to know?	The purpose of consultation should be clear. The information gathered should be directly relevant to a decision that the organisation needs to make.
3	Are we outward focused?	People are interested and engaged with issues that affect them. Being outward focused and considering issues from stakeholders' perspectives keeps consultation interesting and relevant.
4	Are we fairly representing the issues?	Many infrastructural issues involve difficult choices. Sometimes limited resources need to be prioritised. Often, there is a degree of uncertainty involved – for example, the actual condition of buried assets or the actual life that an asset will function for. Sometimes, asset management involves balancing competing risks or trading off conflicting priorities. Fairly representing the issues provides the best chance of getting meaningful feedback.
5	Is our information presented in a way that can be readily understood?	Many infrastructural issues are complex. Stakeholders cannot be expected to understand technical engineering details, but making these issues accessible will enable them to provide a user perspective.
6	Does our information inform discussion?	Engaging consultation can stimulate discussion, helping to make issues a topic for conversation. Discussions can stimulate thinking and help generate more thoughtful responses.
7	Are we telling an integrated story?	Infrastructural issues rarely sit in isolation. Most assets are part of a network. Work on one asset type can impact another. Co-ordinating repairs to underground pipes with road reseals is one example. Upgrading assets while renewing them is another, where a single project might involve addressing condition, performance, resilience, and growth.

	Question	Purpose
8	Are the issues we present consistent with our underlying information?	Consultation should be well informed and have a sound basis. Underlying information on asset age, condition, and performance, for example, should be consistent with the options put forward for consultation. Similarly, if underlying information points to a strategic issue subject to legislative requirements, it is likely a strong candidate for consultation. We don't expect minor issues to be consulted on while more major ones are not.
9	Are we genuine in seeking feedback?	Genuine engagement is a process that takes time. For important decisions, it probably starts well ahead of formal long-term planning. Positive engagement should actively seek input and be open to alternative ways forward. Formal consultation should inform, allow for feedback, and formalise the adoption of preferred options.
10	Are we using appropriate and accessible means to communicate?	Communication can take many forms. The internet and social media provide innovative ways to present issues and gather feedback. However, not all media suit all stakeholders. It is important to ensure that the means of communicating will reach all interested parties in a way that stimulates them to get involved.

Appendix 1: List of case studies

This document includes the following case studies.

Approach to consultation	Council	Case study
Infrastructure in general	Auckland Council	Investment in core services and infrastructure was its number one consultation issue. It used clear communication through design.
	Hutt City Council	Presented clear options for funding investment in the three waters. Investing in infrastructure was its first consultation issue.
	Whakatāne District Council	Consulted on all its core infrastructure with the first two of its “five big things we need to talk about”.
Specific infrastructure types	Greater Wellington Regional Council	Consulted on “ramping up our restoration of regional parks to fight climate change”. Beautiful graphics presenting the cost and impact of the preferred option helped engage readers.
	Kawerau District Council	Consulted on “drinking water pipe replacement”. Put decisions in context.
	New Plymouth District Council	Was open and transparent about the big issues. “Fixing our plumbing” put the issue in terms that the reader could readily associate with.
	Southland District Council	Consulted on key issues: “our roads”, “our bridges”, and “the impact on rates”. Made the right linkages.
Specific projects	Selwyn District Council	Explained choices well. Asked for feedback on some specific projects.

Inclusion of councils in this document does not imply that every aspect of their planning is perfect and that they do not face similar challenges to their peers. This report is a compilation of some examples that struck a chord with us or exemplified a good practice point that we thought others could reflect on and perhaps learn from.

Similarly, the absence of any council from this document does not imply that we had concerns with its practice. Ultimately, there were only so many examples we could include, and we applied editorial licence.

The examples in this guidance illustrate specific aspects of local government consultation material. The scope of our research did not include website content. However, given that consultation documents can be read online, we recommend that preparers consult the **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines** on how to ensure information on their websites meets accessibility requirements.

Appendix 2: Where to find out more

There is a range of information available to help asset managers. Much of the material can also support the governors of asset-intensive organisations to ask the right questions and make well-informed decisions. This section references established good practice as well as resources that share learning from other reviews of asset management planning and practices.

Note: Some of the guidance requires a subscription to the professional bodies and standard setters referenced.

The Auditor-General has published a report outlining *Matters arising from our audits of the 2021-31 long-term plans*. The report covers preparing LTPs, the financial strategies adopted by councils and their impact on rates and debt, infrastructure strategies, how councils manage their assets, how the Government’s proposed three waters reforms affected the LTPs, and climate change.

<https://oag.parliament.nz/2022/ltps>

The Auditor-General has also published *Consulting matters: Observations on the 2021-31 consultation documents*. This report provides observations on the 2021-31 LTP consultation documents. It says that “Effective consultation with communities is critical to ensuring that councils develop the right plan for their community. Councils need to provide their communities with reliable and clear information about the matters proposed for inclusion in the long-term plan so that their community can engage with and provide feedback on this.”

<https://oag.parliament.nz/2021/consultation-documents>

The Auditor-General has also published a range of other reports related to aspects of asset management or the management of specific assets by agencies. Many of these reports have more widely applicable learnings.

<https://oag.parliament.nz/reports/asset-management>

Audit New Zealand has published previous reports sharing the learning from our audits of asset management planning. *Asset management and long-term planning: Learning from audit findings 2015 to 2017* is a resource for public sector organisations that manage significant infrastructure networks and other asset categories.

www.auditnz.parliament.nz/resources/asset-management

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) is the peak association for infrastructure asset management and professionals who deliver public works and engineering services. IPWEA has developed the Asset Management Pathway, a structured training programme designed to build capability through practical learning. It is supported by IPWEA best practice publications such as the *International Infrastructure Management Manual* and the *International Infrastructure Financial Management Manual*. IPWEA also offers *NAMS+ A toolkit for asset management planning*.

www.ipwea.org/home

www.ipwea.org/educationandevents/ampathway

www.ipwea.org/resourcesnew/namsplus

ISO 55000 is the applicable international standard and is available from **Standards New Zealand: Te Mana Tautikanga o Aotearoa**.

ISO 55000 provides an overview of asset management, its principles and terminology, and the expected benefits from adopting asset management. ISO 55000 can be applied to all types of assets and by all types and sizes of organizations. ISO 55000 is supported by the further detail available in ISO 55001 and ISO 55002. ISO 55001 specifies requirements for an asset management system within the context of the organization. ISO 55002 gives guidelines for the application of an asset management system, in accordance with the requirements of ISO 55001.

www.standards.govt.nz/shop/iso-550002014/

www.standards.govt.nz/shop/iso-550012014/

www.standards.govt.nz/shop/iso-550022018/

Te Tari Taiwhenua: Internal Affairs provides a range of resources to support local councils.

www.localcouncils.govt.nz/

Taituarā — Local Government Professionals

Aotearoa is the national membership organisation for local government professionals. Its purpose is to promote and support professional management in local government. It provides the LGSectorGoodToolkit®, an online resource for the local government sector.

<https://taituara.org.nz/>

www.solgm.co.nz/welcome-to-the-lgsectorgoodtoolkit/

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance

and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides the Asset Management Information Stream. This is a guide to implementing effective asset management and capital investment planning in the public sector. It is aimed at practitioners involved in asset management across local authorities. Although developed in the UK, it is broadly applicable to the New Zealand context.

www.cipfa.org/tisonline/streams/financial-management/asset-management

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

(RICS) is the leading professional body for the built and natural environment. It has published *Strategic public sector property asset management*. This guide is aimed at those engaged in strategic property asset management in the public sector globally. It considers the changing nature of the role and expectation real estate plays and indicates how an organisation should use data to support organisational objectives and inform the strategic management of assets.

www.rics.org/oceania/

www.rics.org/oceania/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/real-estate/strategic-public-sector-property-asset-management-3rd-edition/