

STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman & Members, Corporate Services Committee

FROM: David Ward

DATE: 15 July 2005

SUBJECT: Corporate Services Manager's Report – July 2005

1. Golden Bay Rural Property Identification Project

We are pleased to report that this project is progressing well. The contractor has, at the time of writing, identified over 500 of the anticipated 1,800 properties within the Golden Bay Ward. It is expected that the project will be completed in September 2005. Council acknowledges the assistance of emergency services groups in the feasibility of this project which will provide significant benefit to the residents of our Golden Bay Ward.

Following the completion of this project, Council's working group of Cr Bryant, Corporate Services Manager and Corporate Information Administrator will consider issues and impacts of the rural property identification project in Golden Bay and will make appropriate recommendations to Council for the commencement of this project in the Lakes/Murchison Ward during the early part of the 2006 calendar year.

2. Rates Rebate Scheme

Attached to the agenda is a copy of a Department of Internal Affairs memorandum dated 5 July 2005, entitled "Rates Rebate Scheme Update". This memorandum provides background to the proposed changes to the Rates Rebate Scheme recently announced by the Government, albeit that we acknowledge the changes do not come into effect until 1 July 2006. There has been some confusion amongst a number of our ratepayers over this commencement date.

In the current financial year, less than 5 ratepayers received benefit under the existing Rates Rebate Scheme. We consider it timely that the scheme was reviewed. The number of ratepayers within Tasman District that may benefit under the proposal will only be determined upon application from those ratepayers. We will continue to keep Council informed of appropriate numbers.

3. 2005/2006 Funding Impact Statement

The first rate notices for the 2005/2006 financial year will be distributed to the District's ratepayers during the last weekend of July 2005. All of those charges identified in the Funding Impact Statement will be levied, with the exception of the Wai-iti Valley Community Dam and Waimea Fireblight Control – both of which will be levied when the respective projects have been completed.

Those new rates levied for the 2005/2006 year will include Mapua Rehabilitation Rate, Refuse/Recycling Rate and Rural Address Property Identification Numbering Rate.

I noted above that it is proposed that the Lakes/Murchison property identification scheme will commence early in the 2006 calendar year. If this proves to be the case, the \$30 rate per property within that Ward will not be levied until 1 August 2006.

4. Publicity Workshop

Council's Information and Publicity Subcommittee held a workshop on 12 July 2005, followed by a scheduled meeting of the Subcommittee on 20 July 2005.

At today's meeting, Cr Henry, in her capacity as Chairperson of that Subcommittee will report a number of aspects from the workshop, including proposed variations to publication of Newsline – The Mag and delegation for community consultation grants.

By way of background to the latter, Council has for several years allocated a sum of \$20,000 that may be granted to the District's ratepayer associations or community councils. Council considers applications for funding assistance from organisations who:

- Are formally constituted as an incorporated society
- Operate in wards where there are no community boards
- Are publicly elected and hold regular advertised meetings
- Have Council-related matters as their primary function
- Carry out liaison and advocacy with Council

Last year 11 organisations received funding under this scheme, totalling \$16,800.

The allocation of funds from the community consultation grant were formally made by a subcommittee with specific responsibilities for this task. Currently there is no delegated authority for the allocation of community consultation grant funds. It is the suggestion of the Information and Publicity Subcommittee that they assume delegated responsibility for this task on the basis that funding is primarily for secretarial, administrative and newsletter publication. We note there is increasing liaison between the respective funded groups and Council's Information and Publicity activities.

Recommendation

That the Information and Publicity Subcommittee be given delegated responsibility to allocate community consultation grants for the 2005/2006 financial year.

5. 2005/2006 Annual Plan

At the date of writing this report, staff are still working to a schedule which sees all submissions to the 2005/2006 draft Annual Plan responded to by 29 July 2005. The final Annual Plan document will also be available on this date. It has been suggested to managers that the significant number of issues raised by our two community boards be responded to directly at subsequent board meetings. The Service Centres Manager has been requested to schedule appropriate dates and presentations on future community board agendas.

6. Website Unveiling

During the course of today's meeting, our Information Services Manager, Peter Darlington, will be giving Committee members a demonstration of our new website. This site has been developed over a number of months and we acknowledge the input of a wide range of enthusiastic Council staff whose assistance in this project has been invaluable.

In May 2005, Council had 29,000 hits on its website, this number increased to 32,000 for June 2005.

There are a large number of new features incorporated within the site which are aimed to broaden Council information that web browsers will have access to. There will be a section for comments on Council-related issues or levels of service performance. We also propose to include all consultation documents on the site and encourage the web as a source of submitting views to Council.

Our website maintenance programme will ensure that contents of the site are continually updated and we acknowledge that additions or variations to web pages may be made from time to time to meet responses to users or to highlight issues and challenges that Council may be facing.

At the conclusion of today's meeting we have invited the public to a demonstration of the new website. We look forward to seeing as many Councillors as are able to attend the demonstration.

David Ward
Corporate Services Manager