



SOLGM's Planning Working Party Newsletter

SOLGM's Planning Working Party (PWP) met on 15 May.

In this edition:

- 2015 Community Plan Conference
- Service Delivery Reviews
- Coming Soon: The LTP Debriefing Survey
- Volunteers Wanted: Review of Financial and Infrastructure Strategies
- How are you planning to capture the lessons from 2015?
- BERL under review

2015 Community Plan Conference

This event (Christchurch, 17/18 August) is fast approaching. Registration will go live in the first week of June.

Topics on the agenda include:

- LTP engagement online
- section 17A reviews
- the spatial plan five years on
- where to now with significance and engagement?
- some good (non-LTP related) engagement ideas (featuring the winner of this year's Excellence Award for Council Community Engagement – Gisborne District Council)
- is the exceptions based annual plan a reality
- future engagement skills
- and of course, your opportunity to learn from the experiences of others in the 2015 LTP.

As an extra 'treat', part of the event will be given over to a workshop by NZTA at which they'll be discussing a piece of work they are doing that looks to align funding decisions with LTP timeframes. More information on this as it comes to hand.

This will be the first time this event has been held in the South Island for five years - we expect to see a good attendance from the "Mainlanders".

Service Delivery Reviews

The Working Party has started work on the guidance on section 17A reviews. This is one of the priorities for the SOLGM's sector improvement team in the next few months.

We weren't inundated with volunteers to write case studies on those reviews that have been done to date. These will help our thinking, as well as providing real life examples.

If you are interested in helping out with a case study, or just have a policy or practice you want to share please contact Raymond raymond.horan@dia.govt.nz

Coming Soon: The LTP Debriefing Survey

After each LTP, SOLGM surveys the sector on its experiences with the LTP and what guidance and support the sector wants in advance of the next LTP. These help us meet your LTP guidance needs, and also help us identify any legislative impediments to councils preparing a good. With so much that was new or different about the LTP this time, the survey is particularly important.

PWP has signed off on a pair of questionnaires. One is designed for the LTP project manager and covers the full gamut of LTP matters, asks for your views on the existing SOLGM guidance and what future guidance might be necessary. The second is for the Chief Executive and surveys their perceptions of the finished product, and what of the legislation works and doesn't work. Both will be sent out in the last week of June.

Volunteers Wanted: Review of Financial and Infrastructure Strategies

We will be reviewing a sample of 24 financial and infrastructure strategies. The purpose of the review will be to help us identify good practice, and to help us improve our guidance in these areas.

The sample will be representative of the different sizes and types of local authorities. As one of the things we'll be looking for is evidence of joined up thinking between the two – the sample of 24 will be consistent for each of the financial and infrastructure strategies. We will make our findings known, but will not identify any individual council without its agreement.

If anyone would like to volunteer their financial and infrastructure strategies please contact Raymond

How are you planning to capture the lessons from 2015?

LTP 2015 is coming to an end (there's only 43 days before midnight on June 30) and most of us will be reflecting on what we learned in the process. Capturing these lessons is an important part of planning for LTP 2018.

The Working Party is interested in seeing any templates, questionnaires, meeting plans or any other approaches that people are planning to take. We're sure that others out there would be too. If you have anything you want to share feel free to hit 'reply to all' this email.

BERL Under Review

SOLGM has commissioned a review of the so-called "BERL" adjustors and Local Government Cost Index. These are based on the expenditure patterns of 2010, which may be dated. The process is similar to the five yearly review of the CPI. Revised adjustors and a new index will

be released in October. The review does not encompass the timing of release, this is driven by the release of economic data from Statistics New Zealand.

We will also be releasing a fact sheet that explains how the adjustors are constructed and (most importantly) why they, and not the CPI, reflect movements in the costs councils face.