

BOARD PAPER

Paper no: 15/04/0910

Meeting date: 2 April 2015

Prepared by: John Deal, Communications Lead NLTP

Recommended by: Dave Brash, Group Manager, Planning and Investment
Jenny Chetwynd, Group Manager, Strategy, Communications and Performance

Board function: Setting sector and organisational direction

Subject: **2015-2018 NLTP – engagement and communications approach for public launch**



PURPOSE

1. This paper presents for your consideration and feedback the approach to engaging and communicating with stakeholders once the NLTP is approved by the Board in June 2015.



SUMMARY

2. This paper provides an overview of our proposed approach to managing the public launch and associated communication activities for the 2015-18 NLTP once the Board has considered and approved it in June 2015. It covers the main principles that form the basis of our strategy and how we are building on work already underway to ensure the next NLTP gets off to the best possible start. It also takes a high-level look at tactics and covers off risk and how we will evaluate the effectiveness of our approach.
3. Communication of the 2015-18 NLTP will focus on achieving specific outcomes, including:
 - positioning the Transport Agency as a smart co-investor in transport solutions for a thriving New Zealand
 - positioning the NLTP itself to reflect a whole-of-transport system approach that recognises the links between road, rail, public transport, cycling and walking
 - showing how regional NLTP investment is part of the long-term programme to shape New Zealand's overall land transport network
 - ensuring that local government politicians understand their role in developing the NLTP and that they have confidence in the investment decision-making process.

4. The key principles and tactics for communicating the 2015-18 NLTP will build on the successful communications approach to the 2012-15 NLTP and will continue to maintain our 'no surprises' approach with our stakeholders.



RECOMMENDATION

5. That the New Zealand Transport Agency Board **notes** the proposed approach to engaging and communicating with our stakeholders once the NLTP is approved by the Board in June 2015.



BACKGROUND

6. Our approach to engaging and communicating with key stakeholders in the period leading up to the launch of the 2015-18 NLTP has been based on growing local government and stakeholder understanding of the RLTP/NLTP investment process and their role in it. This was to ensure the RLTPs were developed to the best possible standard, incorporating our investment signals, in order to enable an effective NLTP, and to enhance stakeholder confidence in the process by ensuring it is clear and transparent. In the case of local councils in particular, the emphasis has been to position them firmly as co-investors in land transport network solutions that contribute to a thriving New Zealand.
7. Our approach to engaging with Maori specifically in the RLTP/NLTP development was to first define our understanding of the desired outcomes we would expect to see in Maori involvement in developing RLTPs. Subsequently we have put our energy and focus into those regions where

Maori engagement has needed greater support, and how to foster the development of Maori capacity to participate and add greater value to the NLTF and NLTP processes.

8. Board members noted these approaches in August 2014 (14/08/0845 and 14/08/0841).
9. In respect of engaging with Maori in the development of the NLTP, Board members will receive a fit-for-purpose assurance of our activities when they consider the NLTP for approval in June 2015.



SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION OF THE 2015-18 NLTP - KEY OUTCOMES

10. Successful communication of the 2015-18 NLTP, once approved, will deliver the following outcomes:
 - The Transport Agency's role as a smart co-investor in transport solutions for a thriving New Zealand is evident. Our role and objectives in allocating the National Land Transport Fund (delivering value for money and contributing to the Government's priorities of economic growth, productivity and safety) are clear.
 - The 2015-18 NLTP is viewed as reflecting a whole-of-transport system approach, recognising the links between road, rail, public transport, cycling and walking.
 - The national and inter-regional contexts of local investments will be clear. Regional investment will be seen as part of a long-term programme to shape New Zealand's overall land transport network.

- Our focus on outcomes is reinforced, and stakeholders will understand how ‘their network will look’ over a 10-year period.
- The full transport solution story will be told at the same time, including our access and use story where relevant.
- Councillors and Members of Parliament understand the reasons behind investment decisions in their areas, particularly when considered as part of national and inter-regional imperatives.
- Local government politicians better understand their role in developing the NLTP and are supportive through their knowledge of, and resulting confidence in, the decision-making process. We will be seeking to position them squarely as co-investors in a transport system with a long-term outlook and whose benefits extend beyond community representatives’ local boundaries.



KEY PRINCIPLES OF OUR APPROACH

11. To achieve our outcomes, outlined below are the key principles that will guide the engagement and communication approach and tactical delivery.
12. **Build on the successful communications approach to the 2012-15 NLTP:** We will build on the largely successful approach we adopted in 2012. We are working on a ‘no surprises’ basis. At the appropriate time, regional directors and staff will manage any difficult local conversations around potentially contentious investment decisions, supported by core national messaging and other relevant information.

13. **Tell whole-of-system stories and articulate the Transport Agency's long-term view of the land transport network:** We aim to tell an investment story focusing on the whole-of-system approach and the benefits to be realised – the 'why' as opposed to simply the 'what'. This story will be framed in the context of our long-term view of the next 30 years.
14. **Have a focus on all transport modes:** This is about reinforcing that the Transport Agency is not just about roads. We are looking to highlight examples of integration success.
15. **Enable direct face-to-face communication at governance and management levels:** We are including Board members in the process of fronting up to the investment decisions with our stakeholders and helping you play an active role in the annual stakeholder meetings that will be held after the launch of the 2015-18 NLTP.
16. **Recognise the Minister's role – and support him in it:** We have approached the Minister's office to discuss his involvement and await feedback on his availability for a public launch in late June following final Board approval of the NLTP. Early indications are the venue for the public launch will likely be Parliament.
17. **Position local government as our partners and co-investors in the development of the land transport network:** This is about supporting elected members and senior staff from councils in understanding their own investment story. This is consistent with our lead-in approach, where we have striven to ensure local government has a solid understanding of the RLTP process. We will also be using the remaining lead-up time to embed with local councils and other AOs (approved organisations) the principle of co-branding. This will ensure appropriate attribution for the Transport Agency around its co-investment role in shaping the network.

TACTICS

18. We will communicate to councils at the earliest opportunity the approved indicative investment levels for programme activities, including public transport, road safety promotion and state highway and local road maintenance. This is in line with our 'no surprises' approach and, complemented by the local engagement between AOs and Transport Agency regional staff, mitigates risk for the public launch of the full NLTP.
19. Other key stakeholders include NZ Police, the Road Transport Forum and the AA. We have been building their understanding of the RLTP process and how it connects with the NLTP. We also recognise that each of these organisations has a national and regional arm. Senior Leadership Team relationship owners will continue to be the main contact points for these and other stakeholders and this national engagement will be complemented by regional Transport Agency staff contact with their local AO counterparts.
20. For the Ministry of Transport, the focus has been on increasing their understanding of the process and the outcomes being sought. We have been keen to build the ministry's confidence in the approach by being clear and transparent.
21. RLTPS are due to be submitted to the Transport Agency by 30 April. Once we can see how the NLTP is forming, we will review any emerging communications risks and challenges and advise the Board on how we plan to manage such issues.
22. The Transport Agency's annual stakeholder meetings, earmarked for the first two weeks of July, provide a forum to communicate the NLTP at a governance and management level. We are planning on the basis that Board members will want to have an active role in these events. We are also formulating plans to have Regional Transport Committee chairs participating to reinforce the partnership and co-investment ethos which helps create an effective NLTP.

23. Regional staff will provide their local touch to the communications material as they are best placed to know their audiences. Again, they will be supported by the core national material and messaging. A working group developing content has strong regional representation. This was a key lesson from our 2012-15 NLTP experience.
24. By using thematic, outcomes-focused stories that will resonate with our non-technically focused audiences, we can show how we are supporting the Government's priorities for GPS delivery of economic growth and productivity, value for money and road safety.
25. We will also cover off issues including urban network capacity, transport choices, freight, RoNS, cycling, integrated solutions and how we ensure investment is maximising returns for New Zealand. Wherever possible, we will provide human case study examples which illustrate the outcomes and benefits of what we do.
26. We are continuing to use the Transport Agency website as the main resource for public information. We will take advantage of the website's current revamp to review how NLTP-related information is presented and accessed online. We will collect data on website traffic.
27. We are developing audience-appropriate, hard copy information material to support discussions with stakeholders and communities. This will provide 'at a glance' ease of understanding, with infographics a key component.
28. Staff will have core PowerPoint slides and other support material to both aid their own understanding of the NLTP and to assist them in discussions with suppliers, stakeholders, customers and communities.



EVALUATION

29. We will monitor the effectiveness of our engagement and communications activities to assess how the NLTP is being received by stakeholders. This will enable us to amend our approach, if required. Evaluation techniques will include media analysis, social and media monitoring, surveys of NLTP stakeholders, feedback and visitor statistics on the Transport Agency's website.



RISKS

30. The key risk around the launch of the NLTP is potential criticism of local funding decisions along with unfavourable comparisons with previous NLTP allocations.
31. The mitigation is that communications collateral will include an overview of the planning, investment, decision-making and prioritisation processes and the link between national priorities and local outcomes.
32. Regional Transport Committee chairs will be briefed by regional directors on critical local project and programme decisions in line with the 'no surprises' approach. Proactive briefings with local media are also planned.



ATTACHMENTS

33. There are no attachments.