

Taupō District Council

Notes of Council Workshop

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| Group | Council |
| Date | Thursday 21 March 2024, 2pm-3pm |
| Venue | Council Chamber |
| Topic | Working with media |
| Facilitated by | Communications Manager (L McMichael) and Team Leader Communications (D Beck) |
| Elected Members present | Mayor David Trewavas (in the Chair), Cr Duncan Campbell, Cr Karam Fletcher (via MS Teams), Cr Sandra Greenslade, Cr Anna Park, Cr Rachel Shepherd, Cr Kevin Taylor, Cr Yvonne Westerman |
| Officers present | Chief Executive (J Gardyne), General Manager People and Community Partnerships (L O'Brien), Acting General Manager Operations and Delivery (T Hale), Communications Manager (L McMichael), Executive Manager Mayors Office (J Later), Team Leader Communications (D Beck), Governance Quality Manager (S James), Committee Advisor (N Turnbull) |
| Public / media present | No public or media present |
| Documents either pre-circulated or tabled | Working with media PowerPoint presentation (A3529602) – presented at the workshop |
| Public or closed¹ | Public |

Notes²

The purpose of the workshop was to provide Elected Members with a refresh about media and how the communications team can help them. The communications team structure was shown and explained.

Working with media

The importance of working with media was explained, their role was to hold both national and local government to account. Media have obligations to ensure they are writing with accuracy, balance, and fairness. Media typically give Taupō District Council (TDC) an opportunity to provide a reply when there is a negative article about TDC. Local media such as newspapers and radio would often share TDC's media releases. Different opinions were healthy however it was important that they are based on the same facts as confusing conflicting information can be problematic.

Elected members were advised that if they received a call from a member of the media, they did not need to panic, they could make the decision if they wanted to talk or not. It was possible to also ask

¹ Workshops are public (and are always advertised whether public or closed), unless there is a good reason(s) for information to be withheld and there is no overriding public interest in holding the workshop in public. Withholding grounds set out in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) are a guide. If closed, cite relevant LGOIMA section.

² Workshops are not decision-making forums, therefore this document contains notes of key points discussed only, not decisions.

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them questions such as what they wanted to know and when they needed to know it by and advise that they would call the journalist back. The TDC communication's team was happy to help reassure elected members and could provide the correct facts and key messages. It was also acceptable to tell the journalist that they did not know the answers and to refer them to the communications team.

Social Media

Social media can often be very black and white however Council work is often grey, and people often lack the context of the discussions made before assumptions are made. A coffee or conversation with someone could provide them with more context.

Social media tips and tricks provided included:

- If issues were raised on a community page, it was recommended to encourage members of the community to contact TDC via one of the several channels to raise a service request.
- Elected Members encouraged that if they would like to, they could defend their decision-making if a decision was being debated online.
- Elected Members were asked to identify themselves as an Elected Member when commenting on official TDC channels.
- If Elected Members see misinformation on community pages, then they can put a short comment explaining this is incorrect and direct community members to Council's official channels.

Taupō District Councils communications team

The objective of the communications team was to help the community understand what council does and why. The team focuses on providing clear and consistent comms to the community and providing the right message to the right people at the right time. The communications team uses as many channels as possible to inform the public such as Facebook, Antenno app, in person, email etc. Elected Members were advised that they could reach out to the communications teams with any questions.