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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy
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Investment in Democracy: Proposed Operating Plan 2003 - 2013

1. Purpose

To seek approval of the proposed Operating Plan for Investment in Democracy, including any amendments approved by the Committee.

2. Overview

The “Investment in Democracy” Operating Plan, which has been previously distributed as a separate document and will be tabled at the meeting, covers two main areas of activity:

- Elected Members’ Costs

These include:

- salaries, allowances, other remuneration and support for members
- statutory advertising such as notices of meetings, rates and special consultative procedure
- WRC triennial election costs
- Subscriptions, principally for *Local Government New Zealand*
- Other costs incurred by Councillors in representing and communicating with the regional community

The Plan assumes no change in the Council and its committee structure.

Provision is made for an adjustment to members’ remuneration in anticipation of the Council adopting a new remuneration framework in line with recommendations from the Higher Salaries Commission.

- Council Secretariat

It is assumed that the role and resources of the Secretariat that provides support services for Council, Committees and Members will not change materially.

3. Financial implications

Overall, the Investment in Democracy requirement reduces by \$121,000 (net) for the 2003/04 year over the amount projected for the 2003/04 year in last year's Long Term Financial Strategy. The change occurs through a combination of a reduction in the amount allocated for corporate communications (now allocated through corporate overheads), deletion of the provision for regional economic development in 2003/04, and an increased allocation for Councillors' remuneration in line with the proposals from the Higher Salaries Commission.

4. Changes to the proposed business plan recommended by officers

Officers recommend that the allocation of \$50,000 per year for regional advocacy and \$350,000 for economic development initiatives be removed from the Investment in Democracy Operating Plan 2003-2013.

5. Communications

Any communications opportunities will be dealt with as part of the overall Long Term Council Community Plan.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee recommend to Council that it:

- (1) receive the report and note its contents*
- (2) note that officers are recommending that the allocation of \$50,000 for regional advocacy and \$350,000 for economic development initiatives be deleted from the Investment in Democracy Operating Plan 2003-2013.*
- (3) approve the proposed Investment in Democracy Operating Plan (including any amendments approved by the Committee) for inclusion in the Council's proposed Long-term Council Community Plan 2003-2013 (incorporating the Council's 2003/04 Annual Plan).*

Report prepared by:

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