

**Mayor and Councillors
COUNCIL**

12 DECEMBER 2013

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

SUPPORT FOR #GIGATOWNKAPITI**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 Further to the briefing of 28 November 2013, the purpose of this report is to seek a decision on the level of support Council will provide for the Kāpiti Gigatown Campaign.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy.

BACKGROUND

- 3 On 28 October 2013, Chorus launched its Gigatown competition for one town to win access to 1 Gigabit of Ultrafast Broadband (UFB) for three years at the basic broadband price. This is one hundred times the speed of the UFB that will be on offer for the rest of country.
- 4 The prize also includes a \$200,000 development fund to support local entrepreneurs and innovators to develop services that utilise Gigabit broadband from a successful trial or prototype stage through to commercial launch.
- 5 The competition is being judged on the weighted¹ volume of social media traffic (Facebook, You tube, Twitter, Instagram) that a community can generate. The competition is in two stages. The first stage runs from now until September 2014, at which time only the towns with the top five scores will continue. In stage two the scores of the top five towns will be reset to zero and the town that can generate the most traffic from then onwards will become the winner.
- 6 Within Kāpiti District, the urban areas of Paekakariki, Ruamati, Paraparaumu and Waikanae are all UFB areas. These towns can individually or collectively enter the competition. Otaki is part of the Government's Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) and is not a UFB area. Arrangements are currently being made to meet with the Minister of Communication and Information Technology to discuss this.
7. In UFB areas outside of the district, many other local authorities, e.g. Porirua City, Napier City, Waitaki District, Queenstown Lakes District, are supporting and promoting the community lead campaigns to varying levels. A community lead campaign is currently evolving for all of Kāpiti.

CONSIDERATIONS

¹ Traffic weighted by the population of the town.

Opportunity Presented by the Competition

8. Kapiti residents have always been early adopters of technology. 75% of all households² currently have access to the internet. The rollout of both UFB and RBI provides additional capacity and speed.
9. Having access to higher speed broadband infrastructure is becoming an essential foundation for economic prosperity with the transition to the digital world.
10. Access to the skills which are required to use the technology is equally important. Without these skills there may be an increasing digital divide between those who have grown up with the technology and those who have not.
11. While the Gigatown competition is first and foremost a marketing campaign by Chorus to drive the uptake of UFB, the winning Gigatown would have economic benefits for the district. The town that becomes “Gigatown” has the potential to attract global attention, to become a world class digital innovation hub, and to attract global technology companies.
12. In simple terms, winning Gigatown provides the Kāpiti District with the opportunity to create local high earning jobs and provide future employment opportunities to attract and retain people in the district. Within New Zealand this would provide Kāpiti with a significant comparative advantage over other towns.
13. The competition is being run on-line so participating in the competition is also a catalyst which provides the community the opportunity to:
 - learn new digital skills to connect with each other;
 - understand some of the benefits that all parts of the community can get from connecting using technology as well as traditional channels;
 - demonstrate to the rest of the country what a great community Kāpiti is; and
 - tell the rest of the country that it is the skills of any Kāpiti residents that already provide the technology hub for the Capital.
14. As a community leader, Kāpiti Coast District Council has the opportunity to support and enable the #gigatownkapiti campaign.

How Council can do this

Option 1 : Support and raise awareness of the community campaign

15. A straightforward way for Council to provide support is to help kick start awareness of the campaign to the wider community using Council’s existing communications tools including Classic Torque and Kāpiti Update. This would include:
 - explaining the benefits of taking part in and winning the competition;
 - explaining how people can take part, who to contact, what is already happening in the community;
 - letting people know the easiest way they can support the campaign is by signing Kāpiti on the Chorus gigatown.co.nz web site for 10 competition

² 2013 Census

points. If 40% of the Kapiti population registered this alone would kick start the Kapiti campaign by approx 200,000 points;

- putting the #gigatownkapiti and information about Facebook and websites that have already been set up by the community and on relevant council communications for the duration of the competition;
- putting initial messages of support on those social media sites;
- providing information to the Youth Council and Older Persons Council to communicate key messages to support the campaign and suggesting ways their networks could take part.

16. This approach would be similar to how Council supports other community activities and initiatives and could be done within the existing resources of Council.

17. It is also similar to the approach that is being taken by some of the smaller Councils who are supporting their local campaigns.

Option 2: Build on Option 1 by investing additional resources and taking on a more active role.

18. More support than is outlined in Option 1 above, would require the diversion of staff and resources from other activities because there is no dedicated budget or resources for this initiative. At best estimate, the likely staff and promotional costs to provide a more meaningful level of active support would range from \$50-80,000 for the period until the short listing in September 2014.

19. This would provide for actively monitoring of social media sites to find out what the community is doing and how Council can support it, providing support for competitions to build enthusiasm for the campaign, additional promotion messages and advertising and provision of dedicated staff time.

Other

20. Several local authorities that are supporting local Gigatown campaigns had already embraced the use Twitter and Facebook to engage with the community prior to the competition commencing. They are now using these platforms as the active tool to support their local campaigns.

21. Council is only in the early stages of developing its strategy for connecting with local community through social media. While the option for Council to use this platform may arise during the course of the Gigatown competition it is not one that is currently available. A draft social media strategy is currently being developed and will be presented to Council next year.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

22. As outlined above, a basic level of support can be accommodated within existing resources and budgets. (Option1)

23. For a more actively level of support, additional funding of at least \$50-8,000 would be required for the period between now and September 2014. (Option2)

24. If Kāpiti becomes one of the top five towns in the campaign in September 2014, additional resources are likely to be required from that point forward. It is too early in the competition to ascertain what support and additional resources

Council and the community may consider appropriate should that occur. The issue would need consideration at that stage.

DELEGATIONS

25. Council has the authority to make this decision.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

26. Council's policy for Supporting Economic Development actively seeks to position the district for the future and increase the number of high skills local jobs. If Kāpiti won Gigatown, it would give the district a comparative advantage for innovation and economic growth.

PUBLICITY CONSIDERATIONS

27. Communication to support and raise awareness of the community campaign as outlined in Option 1 is being developed and could be released early next week.

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. That Council approves for the period from now until September 2014 supporting and raising awareness of the Community Gigatown Campaign as outlined in Option 1 of SP-13-1030.

Report prepared by:

Jane Hewitt

**Senior Advisor
Strategic Projects**

Approved for submission by:

Stephen McArthur

**Group Manager
Strategy & Partnerships**