

Chairperson and Committee Members
OPERATIONS & FINANCE COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2017

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Information

**EMERGENCY AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report seeks to update the Committee on education and communications activities aimed at increasing awareness of and preparedness for civil defence emergencies in Kāpiti.

DELEGATION

- 2 The Committee is delegated to consider civil defence and emergency management matters.

BACKGROUND

- 3 The Council has delivered a range of emergency awareness and preparedness communications and education activities following the 14 November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake.
- 4 An initial communications campaign through local print, radio and digital media and the Council's own communications channels in November and December 2016 had a strong focus on tsunami risk and awareness. This was in response to the confusion and concerns of some residents on the night of that earthquake and the days following.
- 5 Once this initial campaign was completed it was clear there was more the Council could do to help Kāpiti residents understand the risk of and prepare for a tsunami – a risk that had increased following the Kaikoura earthquake – and emergencies more generally.
- 6 The following objectives were identified for the next stage of communications:
 - more people who regularly spend time in Kāpiti tsunami zones know they are in a tsunami zone; what to do, where to go, and how to be prepared;
 - more Kāpiti residents who regularly commute/travel to other parts of Wellington are well prepared for an emergency that sees them unable to return home to Kāpiti immediately;
 - more older or vulnerable residents of Kāpiti have plans in place for adequate support from family, friends, and neighbours in the event of an emergency;
 - more community preparedness and participation in Council and WREMO-lead community resilience work programmes in Kāpiti;

- enhanced trust and confidence in the work of Council, our Emergency Operations Centre and WREMO in preparing for and responding to emergency situations affecting Kāpiti; and
 - more local civil defence volunteers.
- 7 It was determined that for Council to be confident it had done all it could to inform and educate those most at risk, Kāpiti-specific information should be provided directly to the more than 8000 residential households within the district's tsunami evacuation zones.
- 8 This door-knocking programme became the most significant part of the next stage of communications. The approach and messaging was informed by market research that tested awareness and preparedness in February 2017.
- 9 With the door-knocking programme completed it is appropriate to consider the impact of the programme and the appropriate next steps.

ISSUES

- 10 Between late May and late August, more than 8000 properties received a visit from the 'tsunami army' – a group of Council staff, Red Cross and other community volunteers who went door-to-door within the Kāpiti Coast tsunami evacuation zones to provide information on tsunami risk, awareness and preparedness. People received a brochure, fridge magnet and flyer promoting community drop in sessions. Information was left in the letterbox when people weren't home.
- 11 This significant, visible and repeated on-the-ground presence within communities was a departure from Council's usual engagement methods and required a high degree of planning and co-ordination. Staff took more time in the planning stage than originally anticipated to ensure effective implementation. This included seeking the advice of other organisations who had undertaken door-knocking exercises within Kāpiti, particularly Statistics New Zealand in relation to their census programme.
- 12 The door-knocking efforts were followed by community drop-in sessions in each neighbourhood. The sessions were also promoted as an opportunity to have a conversation with the Council about the absence of sirens – following through on a commitment made to the community after the 14 November earthquake. The community's interest in evacuation route signage and blue lines highlighting the edge of tsunami zones was also tested.

Campaign delivery

- 13 Door-knocking took place on 10 Sundays over a 14-week period (21 May to 27 August).
- 14 Across the 10 shifts, 213 volunteers averaging four hours out on the pavement per day completed the door-knocking in approximately 852 hours.

- 15 There were conversations with residents at roughly half of all properties visited:

Zone	Letterbox	To Person	No letterbox / pinpad gate / map not up-to-date / resident refused info.
Waikanae - Peka Peka	48%	48%	4%
Raumati	51%	45%	4%
Te Horo	56%	38%	6%
Ōtaki	41%	53%	6%
Paekākāriki	47%	48%	5%
Paraparaumu (wk 1)	48%	51%	1%
Paraparaumu (wk 2)	51%	45%	4%
Paraparaumu (wk 3)	41%	58%	1%
Paraparaumu (wk 4)	48%	51%	1%
Average across district	47%	49%	4%

- 16 Only one Sunday of 10 was postponed due to bad weather.
- 17 Existing council staff accounted for approximately 17% (37 of 213) of the people door-knocking and manning the HQ venue.
- 18 Red Cross volunteers (Kāpiti-Mana, Hawkes Bay, and Wairarapa branches) accounted for approximately 19% (40 of 213). The Kapiti College Year 12 Council, Volunteer Kapiti, locals with civil defence training through WREMO, Otaki Timebank, and Glennette Marching Club members made up the remainder of the volunteer workforce.
- 19 The Council also recruited eight community engagement officers to provide consistency across the latter part of the programme when the largest neighbourhoods were door-knocked.
- 20 An evening drop-in session was held in each zone approximately 7-10 days after the completion of door-knocking in collaboration with WREMO, Red Cross and Neighbourhood Support.
- 21 Sessions were hosted as an informal discussion with a range of different areas and topics that people could move through – large scale tsunami evacuation zone maps, emergency water storage, grab bags, warning systems including blue lines and pointer signage, and general preparedness and education information.

- 22 The lowest turnouts were at Ōtaki (very poor weather) and Paekākāriki (small population of already engaged residents) and the largest turnouts were at Waikanae and Paraparaumu.
- 23 The door-knocking and drop in sessions were promoted through radio and print advertising and Council's own digital and print communications channels.
- 24 The door-knocking programme and drop in sessions had direct costs of approximately \$43,000 +GST. This is less than the budget estimate of \$50-53,000. It equates to just over \$5.00 per household in the evacuation zones, or just over \$2.00 for each of the estimated 20,000 people who live within the zones.
- 25 Following the completion of the door-knocking of residential properties, information has also been provided directly to other groups of people who regularly spend time within the tsunami evacuation zones – businesses, non-resident owners of residential properties and clubs and groups who regularly use parks and other council facilities within the zones.
- 26 Work between now and the end of the calendar year will be directed towards the more vulnerable audiences identified in our plan and commuters.

Feedback from residents

- 27 The community engagement officers felt that out of the almost 50% of residents who came to the door when visited the response on the whole was:
- positive about the visit or initiative – 30-35%;
 - happy to receive information but largely neutral about the initiative – 60-65%;
 - negative response to the visit – no greater than 5% (with most of the group saying 1-3%).
- 28 They summarised the key themes of conversations with residents as:
- *Mobility*: some stressed the fact that they were physically unable to walk the distance required to clear the yellow zone.
 - *Vulnerability*: some stressed the fact they lived alone or with a vulnerable dependant, e.g. a son in a wheelchair, and had no local support and in some occasions did not know their neighbours.
 - *Zone maps*: some questioned the accuracy of the zone mapping and argued the need to go so far inland, speaking of nearby high ground as their destination.
 - *Evacuation routes*: some questioned taking the route to the safe zone, as their house was already at a higher elevation than some of the suggested route.
- 29 Staff involved in the community drop in sessions believed the key themes of the conversation to be:
- in Ōtaki and north Waikanae, many residents were concerned that they had few or poor road access choices for evacuation and suggested Council might be able to help with conversations with private landowners regarding access;

- elderly residents expressed concern that they would be unable to walk to safety due to limited mobility;
- few attendees actively sought a conversation about sirens and in most cases their concerns around the lack of sirens were resolved following a discussion on the limited time for official warnings in the case of a local source tsunami;
- blue lines and tsunami evacuation route signage got positive feedback from residents, with many commenting that blue lines would be a good visual reminder and also helpful for visitors to the area; and
- some attendees at each session arrived expecting a formal presentation.

Campaign impact

- 30 There is formal and informal evidence that the door-knocking programme and other elements of the campaign have had a positive impact on awareness and preparedness.
- 31 As noted above members of the 'tsunami army' largely reported a warm reaction from residents they visited. Several of the posts about the programme on the Council Facebook were met with comments thanking the Council for its efforts.
- 32 The Council received only one complaint about the programme.
- 33 WREMO and Neighbourhood Support both report increased interest in their local programmes.
- 34 In February 126 residents were interviewed about how prepared they were for a disaster and how they use information to support their preparedness. 71% lived within tsunami evacuation zones, and 29% outside the zones.
- 35 This research was repeated in September 2017 to test the impact of the door-knocking campaign. 177 residents were surveyed, with 65% living within the tsunami evacuation zones and 35% living outside it.
- 36 The survey showed high levels of campaign recall and action attributed to the campaign:
- 76% of respondents living within a tsunami evacuation zone recalled a visit from door-knockers or a brochure in their letterbox;
 - 95% of respondents who received a brochure said they were familiar with it; and
 - 67% of respondents who received a brochure felt their preparedness had improved as a result.
- 37 Of the respondents who indicated their preparedness had improved as a result of the brochure:
- 52% said they had spoken to family, friends or neighbours about tsunami risk;
 - 43% had reassessed water or other preparedness materials;
 - 27% had developed or redeveloped an emergency evacuation plan;

- 24% had checked with neighbours to see if they needed help during an emergency;
 - 19% had looked for more information about emergency preparedness;
 - 18% had registered for training i.e. WREMO/Civil defence training or a first aid course; and
 - 9% got involved with neighbourhood support or their local emergency hub
- 38 Residents' uncertainty around whether they live in the tsunami zone has reduced since the last survey in February:
- in February 16% of respondents living in a tsunami zone were not sure if they did. This was halved to 8% in September;
 - in February 56% of respondents living outside of the tsunami zone thought they lived within it. This reduced to 21% in September. Those who were not sure reduced from 30% in February to 15% in September; and
 - there remains a small number of respondents living within the tsunami evacuation zones who believe they live outside it - 3% in February and 7% in September.
- 39 Residents appear more likely to seek information about tsunami risk from credible sources, particularly radio, which was promoted in the material delivered to households:
- in February the most common response (63%) to a question about how people would stay informed about tsunami risk was "look for information after feeling an earthquake." In September "listen to the radio" was the most common response (51%); and
 - in February a common response (28%) to questions about where information would be sought after an earthquake was "facebook – friends posts". This was not a common answer in the September survey.
- 40 The encouragement that people who are physically able to should evacuate on foot or bicycle has influenced the method of evacuation.
- 52% of respondents living within the tsunami evacuation zones would evacuate by car, down from 70% in February.

Updated tsunami evacuation zones

- 41 GNS and Greater Wellington have this year been working to update the science that determines the tsunami evacuation zones within the Wellington region.
- 42 The current indication is new Kāpiti maps will be available by the end of the year and that any change to the zone boundaries will be minor.
- 43 How best to communicate these changes will need careful consideration once the scale of the change is confirmed.

Warning systems, evacuation route signage and blue lines

- 44 The concern showed on social media about the absence of sirens directly after the Kaikoura earthquake was not mirrored at the community drop in sessions. They were widely promoted across the district as an opportunity to have a conversation with the Council about warning systems, including sirens.
- 45 The sessions demonstrated a good level of interest in improved signage and blue lines.
- 46 The remaining, albeit low, levels of uncertainty and misunderstanding about the location of the evacuation zones evident in our most recent research suggests there is value in these permanent, visible markers of the evacuation zones.
- 47 Implementing evacuation signage and blue lines in Kāpiti will be considered as part of the 2018-21 Long Term Plan development.
- 48 Developing a network of tsunami sirens is not encouraged nationally and is not a regional priority for WREMO. The current focus is supporting the introduction of national warning system. No further investigation of sirens for Kāpiti is planned at this time.
- 49 Research shows there is still a small number of residents who believe sirens will be used to warn of tsunamis. The Council will remain proactive in correcting this misperception.

Ongoing need for public information

- 50 As a coastal district in a geologically active region the risk of a tsunami or major earthquake affecting Kāpiti endures will remain.
- 51 Property turnover, complacency and the ability for life to get in the way are just some of the factors that will undermine the longevity of the positive impacts of the campaign. This is highlighted by results of questions about specific measures of preparedness in the Council's most recent market research, the results of which suggested preparedness was generally less of a priority than it was in February.
- 52 The potential to work Kāpiti-specific emergency preparedness information into the Council's annual communications programme will be explored, in collaboration with WREMO which also has responsibilities in this area. Small talks and expert lectures may form part of this, in recognition of the interest in a formal presentation expressed at the community drop in sessions held this year.

CONSIDERATIONS

Policy considerations

- 53 There are no policy considerations

Legal considerations

- 54 There are no legal considerations.

Financial considerations

- 55 Funding for future signage and blue line projects will be considered through the development of the 2018-21 Long Term Plan.
- 56 The remaining communications activities within the current campaign will be funded from within existing operational budgets.

Tāngata whenua considerations

- 57 There are no tāngata whenua considerations.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Significance policy

- 58 This matter has a low level of significance under Council policy.

Consultation already undertaken

- 59 No consultation is required.

Engagement planning

- 60 Further engagement with community and social groups supporting audiences identified as more vulnerable will be carried out over the next few months.

Publicity

- 61 The outcome of the door-knocking campaign, next steps around signage and blue lines and any future changes to tsunami evacuation zone boundaries will be communicated to the community through the Council's own communications channels and local media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 62 That the Operations and Finance Committee notes that the tsunami door-knocking programme and other emergency management communications appear to have had a positive impact on awareness and preparedness.
- 63 That the Operations and Finance Committee notes the feedback received from the community throughout the door-knocking programme.
- 64 That the Operations and Finance Committee notes evacuation route signage and blue lines for tsunami evacuation zones will be considered during the development of the 2018-21 Long Term Plan.

Report prepared by

Approved for submission

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