



Keeping our promises

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Tauranga City Council
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...or...

*the confessional
session.*



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1. Self-help site – trustworthiness
2. The United Nations at 60
3. Evaluating the Native American Health Care System
4. The Argentine crisis and Argentine democracy
5. The plight of highly-qualified immigrants in menial jobs
6. A music video
7. Self-help book – resolving violated expectations
8. Geopolitical realities confronting Israelis and Palestinians
9. A South African Indian movie
10. Fraud by small business health insurers





Honesty
Deceit

Reliability

Integrity

Sincerity

Shattered ideals

Betrayal

Honour

Hurt

Treachery

Healing

Violated

Fraud

Festering wounds

“Honouring promises is high on my list of requirements for a person of integrity.”



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The local government version

- Over-riding principle number one:

A local authority should conduct its business in an open, transparent and democratically accountable manner

- Section 14(1)(a)(i) LGA 2002

- **There is no carpet**



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Newton's third law of motion

*Every action has an
equal and opposite
reaction.*



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Boase's first law of local
government

*Every Council action (or
inaction) risks a
disproportionate
community reaction.*



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How local government makes promises

- Strategies
- Plans
- Policies
- Mayoral pronouncements
- Electioneering (not always confined to election time)



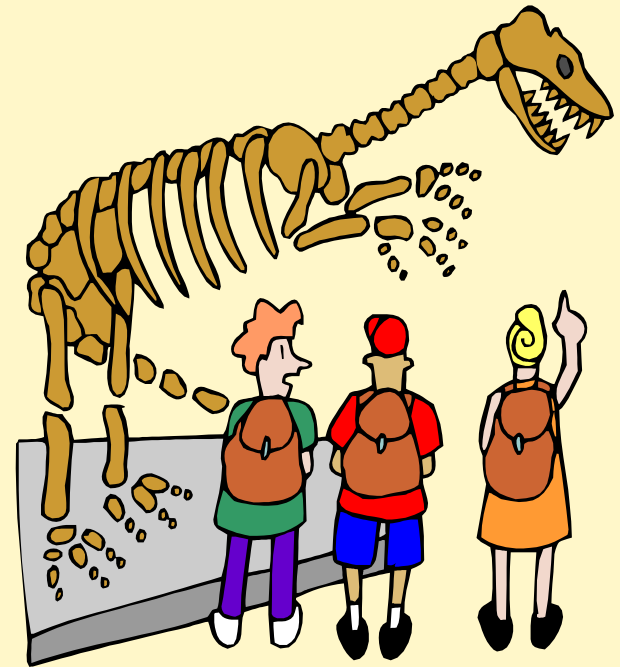
Some promises that got broken

- The museum
- The extreme sports park
- The rowing facility
- The alcohol strategy
- The serial submitter's pet project
- The outcome-based policy



The museum

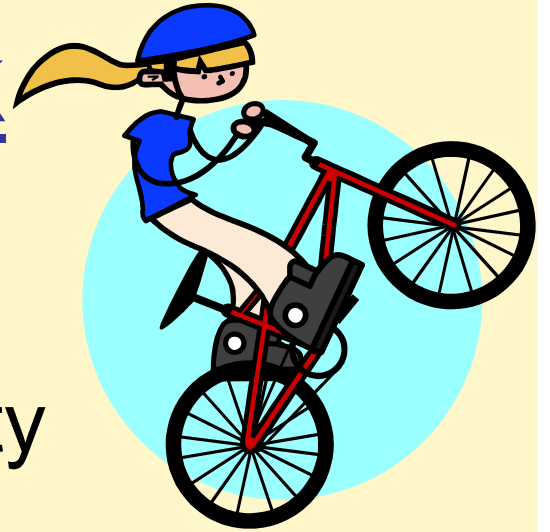
- Years of pre-planning
- In Ten Year Plan
- Election issue
- Gone by lunch-time
- Amendment
- 100s of supporting submissions
- Gone by dinner-time, but ...



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The extreme sports park

- Strategy adopted 2002
- Develop outdoor city-wide facility
- No costs, no timeframes
- No real political support
- 2006 TYP – “evaluate sites”
- Slowly dropping off radar



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The rowing facility

- Mayoral flavour of month
 - Drain MOM land
 - “Undertake consultation” per 2005 strategy
- Strategy author left
- Pipe-dream project
- Strategy consultation lost in TYP
- Dying a quiet death



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The alcohol strategy

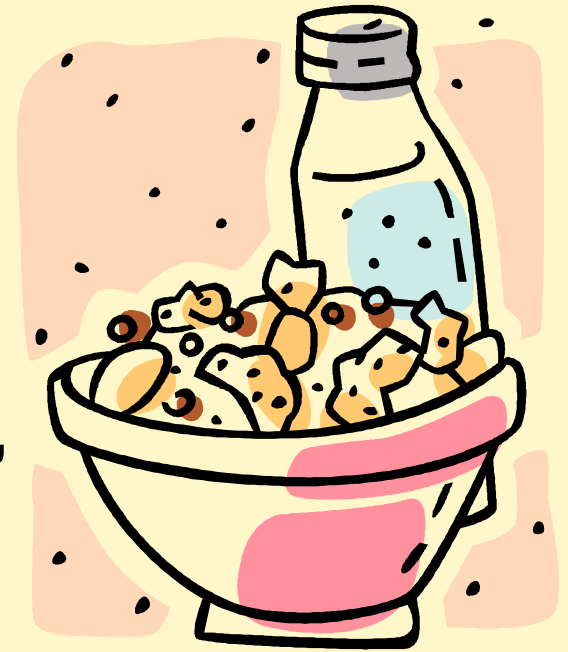
- Initiative from 2004
- Great strategy, but...
- Costs “within budgets” or “to be determined”
- Timeframes “on-going”
- Developed by A for implementation by B
- No (dis)incentives for bars to act
- *May be rescued with \$\$ in 2009*



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The serial submitter

- Responding to submission
- “CBA of ecological protection”
- \$5,000 budget, low priority
- Reality – just a tick-box exercise for \$5k
- Dropped from programme
- Submitter dissatisfied; now submitting on why nothing happened



The outcome-based policy

- Seal extensions – high interest
- Prioritisation process
- Assessment can change from year to year
- “When will my road be sealed?”
- Last year’s answer used out of context
- Resident frustration up
- Council reputation down





Key lessons

- Instant recall
 - Appeasing submitters with empty promises
 - Committing to fixed dates
 - Strategy writers and strategy implementers
 - Mayoral fancies
-
- *When is a decision not a decision?*
When it was made by the previous Council



The local government paradox

Meeting community demands

Which community?
Which demands?



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The official advert

Piecing it together (SOLGM – Oct 2007)

- Strategy stock-take
 - Identify relevant strategies
 - Identify linkages
 - Review strategies against a template
 - Workshop the results with elected members



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Piecing it together – the review process

- What are the objectives?
- Is the strategy still current?
- What actions have been completed?
- What actions remain undone?
- What are the links to levels of service?
- What costings are in there (or should be)?
- What are the links to the Rev & Fin Policy?





Why we did what we did

- Context setting for the Ten Year Plan
- Gut feeling that no-dollar actions might be slipping off the radar
- Staff education
- New council with low ownership of anything pre-election



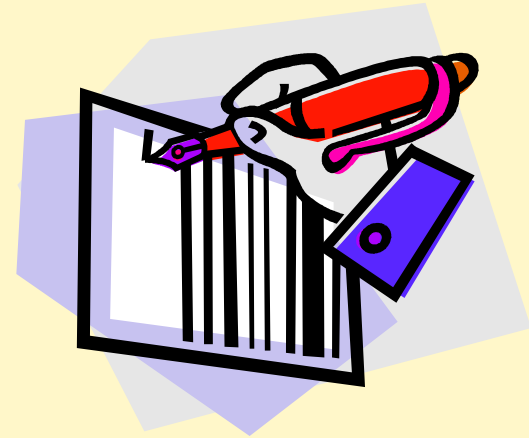


What we did

- Identify all strategies, joint strategies, and plans (including RMPs) – 38
- Record all actions – 3,000+
 - LIPS
- Get managers to identify progress
 - Codes, not full narrative (a stock-take, not a full reporting process)
 - No-blame culture critical



Coding



- Done
- Ongoing
- Not started but scheduled in TYP
- Not started and not scheduled
- Not going to happen (and why)

- Split dollar actions vs no dollar



Effort



- Lots
- Huge coordinating effort
- Action managers
- Strategy managers
- Executive Team review
- Agenda preparation



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What happened next

- Executive Team reviewed the whole lot
- Presented key ones to councillors
 - Note progress to date
 - Support the general direction and themes?
 - Provide direction on specific big-ticket items not yet commenced





What we found

- A lot of stuff isn't going to happen
- Some big stuff has been quietly shelved
- Staff didn't value the no-dollar actions as much as the spending actions
- The elected members don't know much about some strategies



What we are going to do now

- Let the elected members decide on what's in and what's not (it's their plan after all)
- But...try to be open, transparent and accountable



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The link to the Ten Year Plan

- Standard thinking
 - The Ten Year Plan is about all the things the Council plans to do over the next ten years
- Revised thinking
 - The Ten Year Plan also needs to recognise all the things that Council does not plan to do over the next ten years (within reason of course)





What's not in the draft plan

- “Projects considered but not included”
- “Strategy actions not being implemented”?
 - Including the “why not”
- Part of major focus section
- Key items – financial, political
- Prompt community debate
- Politically sensitive – be careful





Down the track

- Amend strategies?
- Re-write plans?
- Try not to make the same mistakes again
 - Everything in ten years, usually in first three
 - Lack of understanding of context



The whole shebang in one slide

- Work out what you have promised
- Work out what hasn't be done
- Ask the elected members their thoughts
- Tell the public those thoughts
- Change the strategy or plan

