

14. Community Outcomes

Introduction

This is a new section and deals with the disclosures relating to the community outcomes process that go into the LTCCP.

The discussion in this Guide does not go into the actual process of identifying community outcomes and monitoring progress against community outcomes. Both are covered in detail in the upcoming *Guide to the Community Outcomes Process*, and the linkages between monitoring of community outcomes and performance management frameworks is covered in *Performance Management Frameworks: Your Side of the Deal*.

The disclosure of outcomes information shows how your activities are contributing to well-being (in other words *integrated decision-making*).

Why is information on community outcomes so important?

The community outcomes process is effectively a conversation that your local authority has with the community regarding wellbeing (in other words what the community needs to “make life better” and how each of the key players contribute. The outcomes information that goes into an LTCCP represents your local authority’s opportunity to explain how it intends to work towards this objective (through the statement of the council’s role in promoting outcomes) and how progress will be demonstrated. Community outcomes are also the starting point for linking your decisions and actions to the powers conferred on you by section 12 of the Act.

How do community outcomes relate to the legislation?

Clause 1, Schedule 10, requires disclosure of the following information in the LTCCP:

- a description of the community outcomes
- an explanation of how the outcomes were identified
- a description of how your local authority will contribute to furthering community outcomes
- a description of how the community outcomes relate to other key strategic planning documents or processes
- describe how your local authority will work with other local authorities, Maori, central government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector
- a statement what measures will be used to assess progress towards community outcomes, and
- describe the other monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Local authorities are also required to disclose, at group of activities level, the community outcomes the group primarily contributes, which is also mirrored in the required disclosures in the annual report. This requirement raises some interesting practical and presentational issues:

- is there merit in using the expected contribution to community outcomes as one of the bases for developing groups of activities
- alternatively, given that when activities are grouped the outcomes they all contribute to will not necessarily align, does this point to a lower level of aggregation into groups, and
- if there is an expectation that the promotion of community outcomes will form a key part of rationale for service delivery then it may well be necessary to have the outcomes process substantially completed before the bulk of LTCCP work begins.

Who should prepare the information on community outcomes?

Ideally those local authority staff involved in the community outcomes process would prepare this information.

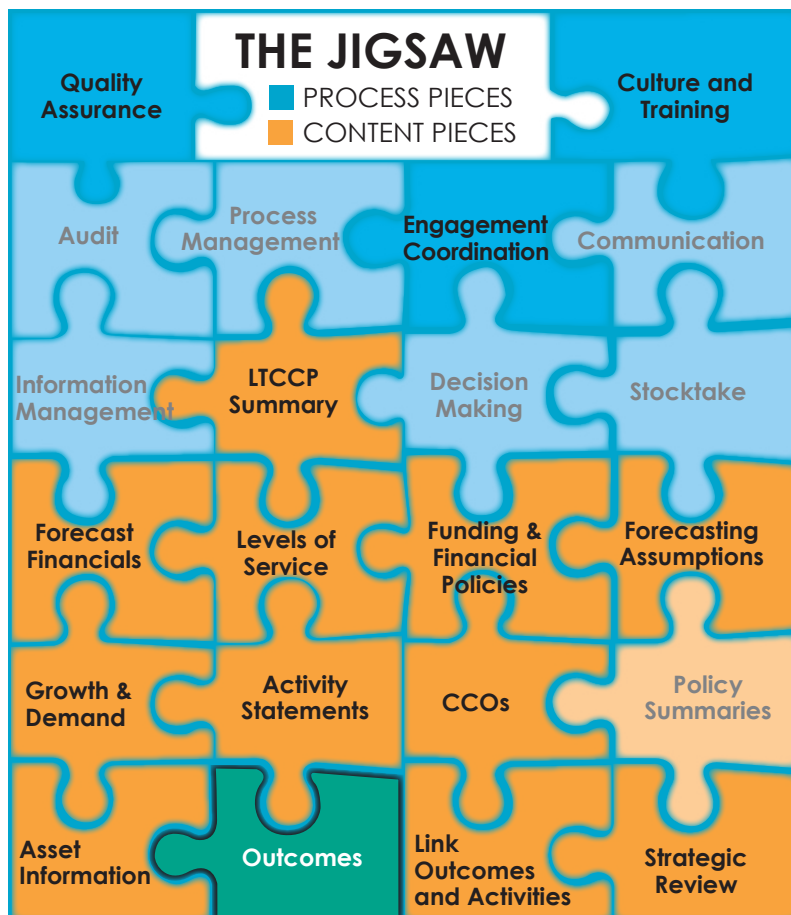
When should the information on outcomes be prepared?

The LTCCP disclosures should be merely a recording of information that already exists within the local authority. To that extent the specific disclosures can be prepared at any time *but the actual outcomes and details of the monitoring arrangements should be available to those involved in preparing the LTCCP at the start of the LTCCP process.*

Where should this information appear in the LTCCP?

This information should appear reasonably near the front of the LTCCP alongside the other key strategic/big picture material. Note that the linkages between groups of activities and the community outcomes could be shown in some form of graphic (see examples below), and must be disclosed alongside other group of activity information.

What other processes are linked with outcomes information?



What were the weaknesses with community outcomes information in the 2006 LTCCPs?

Many outcomes processes started at a time too late to be of use in setting community outcomes before the LTCCP preparation began thus there was some degree of forcing outcomes into the rationale for service delivery.

Approximately 30 percent of LTCCPs did not provide complete information on the monitoring of progress towards community outcomes.

On occasion other disclosures were missing – in particular we understand that there was no linkage between community outcomes and the local authorities strategy in around 10 percent of local authorities. In effect there was no information reconciling the local authority's strategy with the communities.

Some statements around the council's role in promoting community outcomes were very broad (e.g. the council will work with other agencies to promote community outcomes) and either ran the risk of creating community expectation or lacked clarity to help with the preparation of rationale for service delivery.

What good practice information is available?

McKinlay Douglas on behalf of Local Government New Zealand, (2004), *Getting the Most from the Community Outcomes Process*.

Local Government New Zealand et al, (2003), *The Local Government Knowhow Guide to Decision-Making*

SOLGM/NAMS, (2007), *Performance Management Frameworks: Your Side of the Deal*.

SOLGM, (2008), *The SOLGM Guide to the Community Outcomes Process* (due for release in February 2008).