

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Interim Summary Report July 2017 – June 2018

Establishment phase

The Welcoming Communities establishment phase ran from July to December 2017, during which time the Councils, supported by Immigration New Zealand, undertook key actions including:



Development phase

The development phase ran from January to July 2018. During this time the Councils, supported by Immigration New Zealand, undertook key actions including:

Embedding governance and advisory arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councils and Coordinators successfully appointed members to their Advisory Groups and Governance Groups (note: not all programmes have separate governance arrangements).
Conducting the stocktake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinators led a stocktake of existing Council and community policies, programmes and activities, in particular those related to newcomers. The stocktake produced an inventory of existing areas of work, and successfully identified areas in which there were gaps or opportunities to deliver new or enhanced activities and services.
Drafting the Welcoming Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinators led the drafting of their Council's Welcoming Plans. The Plans were derived from the evidence gathered during the stocktake exercise, and ideas from the community. The Plan contains a comprehensive list of welcoming activities, which are pegged against the 8 elements of the Welcoming Communities Standard.
Arranging sign-off/endorsement for the Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinators have sought sign-off or endorsement by their respective Councils. Three of the Welcoming Plans have been launched to date, and formal launches for the remaining three plans are scheduled for later in 2018 or early 2019.
Implementing and monitoring Plan activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinators have benchmarked their activities against the Standard. As part of this process, the Coordinators are tracking and monitoring the progress of their activities and are reporting back to their Advisory Groups, Council staff, Councillors, and Mayors.
Engaging and liaising with Immigration New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinators continue to liaise with Immigration New Zealand as their Plans enter the implementation stage. A key aspect of this engagement is the co-design of the accreditation process - the basis of which are the outcomes attached to each element of the Standard.



INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY



Establishment phase

- Pilot sites have made considerable progress during the establishment phase.
- The pilot Councils contributed to the co-design of the Welcoming Communities Standard – the benchmark for a Welcoming Community.
- The pilot Councils successfully recruited high-calibre Coordinators to drive the implementation of the Welcoming Communities pilot programme.



Plan development phase

- Councils and Coordinators successfully appointed the members of their Advisory Boards, to provide subject-matter expertise, champion the programme, and assist with implementation.
- Coordinators completed a stocktake of existing Council and community policies, services, programmes and activities – in particular those relating to newcomers – including identifying gaps in service provision.
- Using the stocktake and suggestions from the community, the pilot Councils drafted Welcoming Plans containing activities designed to foster a welcoming community, and provide support to newcomers to their region.



Early outcomes

- Stronger links are forming within the communities piloting the programme.
- Local government Councils are more visible in the communities and are taking a leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion.
- There has been an explicit shift in the communities from expecting newcomers to 'fit in' to locals taking on a 'welcoming' role.
- There is an increase in community awareness of diversity and inclusion.



Initial programme lessons

- Engaging with the local community early in the pilot is vital.
- The role of the Coordinator is critical to driving the programme.
- Councils need early advice on the accreditation process.
- Councils need to begin funding conversations early – internal conversations about ongoing Council funding commitments, and external conversations with potential funders and partners.
- There is a need for a 'scoping phase' to assess Councils' readiness and commitment to join the programme.

