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# Deep Dive – Communication and Engagement

## Recommendation

That the Board:

- i. Receive the report.

## Executive summary

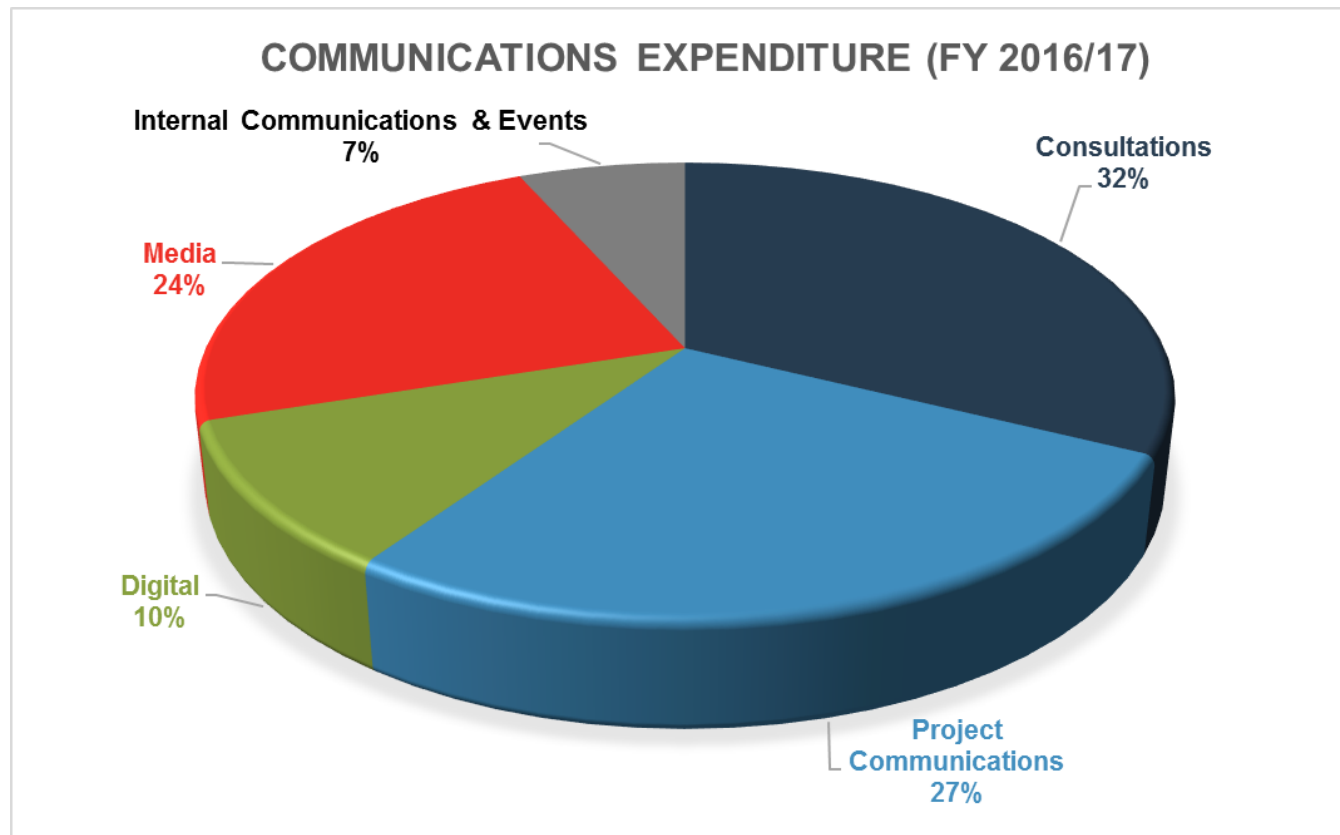
1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a deeper understanding of AT's communications and engagement activities, and how they align to organisational (and wider Council) goals and objectives.
2. This is particularly relevant in light of the Section 17 (a) Review of communications and engagement functions across the Council group, initiated by the Mayor's office.

## Overview

3. AT's Communications Strategy sets the direction for all activities. It provides a strategic framework, and outlines clear objectives, themes and principles for communication (open, timely, consistent, relevant, aligned, customer focussed).
4. Communication and engagement is delivered at both strategic and tactical levels of divisions across the organisation and for key stakeholders, in particular elected members.
5. The Strategy considers a high performing communications function as one which:
  - Has good understanding of its customers and their expectations
  - Engages effectively with mana whenua, its stakeholders (such as NZ Transport Agency), other target audiences, and the community at large
  - Proactively disseminates timely information on the entity and its performance through targeted channels, including media.
  - Provides timely responses to enquiries from the likes of media and stakeholders
  - Utilises digital (social media) channels to a high degree

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6. In doing this enjoys the trust and confidence of stakeholders.
7. Core functions to be covered by this report:
  - General communications (including media and project comms)
  - Consultation
  - Elected Member and iwi engagement



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## Delivery Model

8. The delivery model for AT's communications and engagement is to use in-house resource by default. In doing this, organisational knowledge is utilised, staff work across a number of projects at once, we are adaptive and flexible, and it is supportive of AT's model of an integrated communications team, working closely with operations functions.
9. Project work may be contracted out when the team is running at over-capacity. The area most likely to need this external resource is Infrastructure, where work programmes ebb and flow through the life cycle of the project. Contractors may also be used to fill gaps when recruiting.
10. Some communications, consultation and stakeholder management is delivered out of specific project areas (i.e. decentralised), these being CRL (six FTE), Mass Transit/Light Rail (1 FTE) and the New Network team within AT Metro (4 FTE).
11. There is close collaboration with AC and other CCOs to ensure AT communicate and engage in a cohesive manner and operate as efficiently as possible. A key focus is on consistent messaging and brand attribution for AC as outlined in group-wide Brand Guidelines (reinforced in the SOI) - notwithstanding that recognition must also be given to Government and/or NZ Transport Agency as a funding partner.
12. Other mechanisms which ensure alignment with AC include a daily media call (involving all media managers and the Mayor's office), weekly senior comms meeting with representatives from across the wider group, a bi-monthly Strategic Communications Forum (for tiers 2 and 3) and a bi-monthly marketing forum. In addition, AT contributes to a weekly "issues and opportunities" report, co-ordinated by AC and circulated to elected members

## Communications

13. Key areas within this department:

### Infrastructure (Project Communications)

14. This team is currently managing 95 projects. It comprises communications advisers (7 FTE) working with stakeholder engagement managers (3 FTE) to proactively communicate progress and manage any issues that arise in relation to capital development work. These can involve a wide range of transport corridor and community interest groups, as well as local businesses in areas impacted by construction activities.
15. An important component of their role is to identify risks and benefits of the works and signal these to the wider internal teams, including the media team.
16. Issues in the months before, during and occasionally after construction may include delays or disruption, road closures, loss of parking, impacts on private property and loss of business revenue.

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17. Stakeholder managers are very much “on the ground” working directly with these groups and in turn liaising with contractors and project managers to make improvements where possible.
18. The team manages projects on a geographical basis so they can build on-going relationships and have a close understanding of the communities in which they are working.

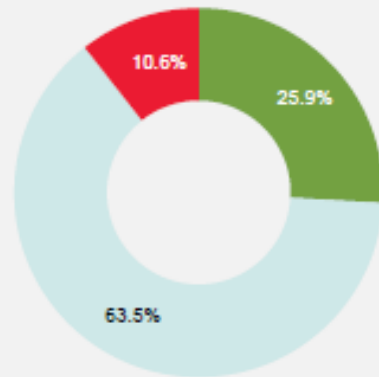
**Media**

19. This relatively small team (3 FTE) is the primary interface with mainstream media on behalf of AT. The role of this team is to proactively communicate AT’s messages and initiatives whilst also responding to incoming inquiry. The team works with almost every part of the organisation as well as external stakeholders (e.g. ATEED, the Mayor, Minister, and other elected members/politicians).
20. Media engagement around events such as the recent Adele concert and “March Madness” are recent examples of how proactive messages were used to change customer behaviour and ensure minimal disruption.
21. In any given month the team initiates or deals with more than 200 media interactions.
22. A recent focus has been on the production of video content for AT channels (e.g. Facebook and YouTube), which is supplied to mainstream media. This has resulted in extensive coverage of activities across a number of media platforms. For example, the likes of TVNZ, TV3 and Radio NZ carrying the live-feed of the beginning of CRL construction work.
23. Monthly media analysis is conducted by an independent insights group, which tracks issues and messages. The favourability index as seen below utilises variables such as the placement of reports (e.g. front page or lead items), the positioning of AT (e.g. headline, prominent mention, passing mention, images and general tone of content).

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### Favourability Breakdown

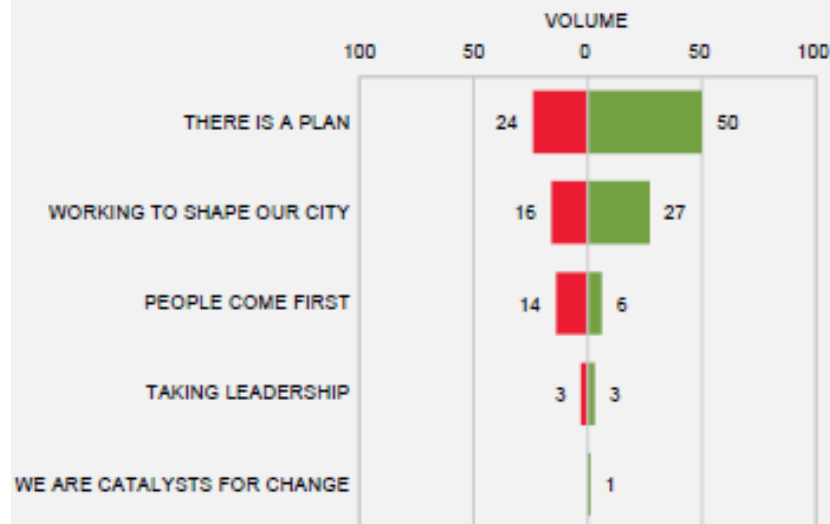
█ Favourable  
█ Neutral  
█ Unfavourable



KEY METRICS		MAR 2017	APR 2017	TREND	
TOTAL VOLUME	OVERALL	346	274	▼	20.8%
	PRESS	151	97	▼	35.8%
	BROADCAST	60	46	▼	23.3%
AVERAGE FAVOURABILITY	OVERALL	51.2	51.6	▲	0.8%
	PRESS	50.0	51.8	▲	3.6%
	BROADCAST	52.9	51.7	▼	2.3%
	INTERNET	51.8	51.4	▼	0.8%

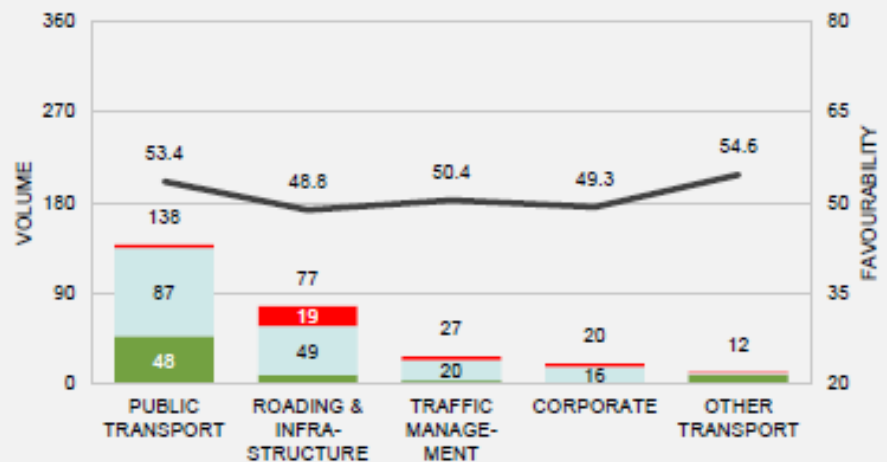
### Message Themes

█ Favourable █ Unfavourable



### Leading Story Focus

█ Favourable █ Neutral █ Unfavourable  
— Average Favourability



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## Digital Services

24. AT's Digital /Social Media Strategy defines how the organisation will grow and continually improve the delivery of social media communications to increasingly diverse audiences. Its stated aim is:

*To formalise a structured approach that will ensure AT consistently delivers high quality digital information and services on social media that our customers want, in the way they want them. This promotes trust, engagement and a continual improvement of the customer experience and support's AT's overarching vision of becoming more open and putting customers at the heart of everything we do."*

25. The digital services team (7.5 FTE) manages the AT website ([at.govt.nz](http://at.govt.nz)) and social media channels. In the last 12 months more than 4.3 million users accessed the AT website site. The website is by far the organisation's biggest customer service portal with 69% of interactions coming via this channel. Some 57% of visitors to the site used a mobile device.

26. Continued development of the website aims to provide information that timely and useful, with people able to do more tasks online – register for an event or a permit, pay a parking fine, top up their AT HOP card, etc.

27. The digital services team also manage social media platforms:

- Twitter – Some 60,000 followers
- Facebook – more than 20,000 followers
- LinkedIn – More than 9,000 followers
- Instagram – More than 2,000 followers
- YouTube – More than 3,700 subscribers

28. An in depth overview of social media activity was presented to the June meeting of the Customer Focus Committee, where social media's increasing role in the management of disruption or incidents on the network was noted.

29. Social media at AT also plays an important customer care role. Our 60,000 twitter followers receive real time information on road closures and public transport and the number of inbound customer messages received each month is growing (approximately 3,000 in May).

30. Digital services also supports the consultation and campaigns teams with web and social media components to leverage their activity, and works closely with Business Technology on various projects such as app development.


31. A key initiative, in late 2016 a new template was designed for [at.govt.nz](http://at.govt.nz) to enable the wide variety of creative approaches used for campaigns to be faithfully reproduced and published under our own website. Doing this has removed the need for short lived microsites for over 50 campaigns and realised an estimated saving of over \$250,000.

32. A refreshed social media policy for staff is under development.

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## Consultation

33. This team (8 FTE) is responsible for developing and/or delivering external consultations. Good public consultation is crucial to the success of infrastructure projects and better informed decision making. It provides invaluable local knowledge, understanding of how residents use various spaces and what amenities they would like or find useful. Garnering this knowledge from the public and key stakeholders can be used to improve projects and helps stakeholders understand the project.
34. Consultation with stakeholders and the public at large is also, often, a statutory requirement.
35. The time taken to genuinely consult with increasingly diverse customer groups cannot be under-estimated.
36. The team is currently managing 37 programmes including capital projects, proposed parking changes and strategy documents such as the Roads and Streets Framework. The team also has a role in feeding back the results of consultation and final decisions to those that have contributed. External consultation is required on almost all projects for a number of reasons including legislative requirements under the Local Government Act, Land Transport Management Act and the Resource Management Act.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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**37. Case study– Supporting Auckland’s Growth** (previously known as TFUG)

- The programme evolved after initial consultation with mana whenua, key stakeholders, Local Boards and general communities identified preferred transport networks for each area
- In 2016 over 30,000 households were contacted, 23 public events were held where the team met more than 1170 people and received over 1300 submissions
- In addition, stakeholder workshops, individual meetings, business sector presentations and business sector surveys were conducted with Local Boards; KiwiRail; Transpower; Watercare; Panuku Development Auckland; Ministry of Education; Waikato and Northland District Councils; Bike Auckland; major developers; NZ Defence Force; Automobile Association; Auckland Business Forum; and the Property Council NZ.
- AT and NZ Transport Agency website updates
- AT and the Transport Agency video creation for each of the three regions in the north (including Warkworth), south and northwest of Auckland
- A brochure developed and distributed in December 2016 informing all our partners, stakeholders and communities of the progress made to date
- Briefings to Local Boards – February and March 2017
- Mana whenua briefings – north, central and south – March and April 2017

**38. Case Study 2: A local project (Karangahape Road)**

- This complex project, in partnership with Auckland Council, is an example of effective stakeholder and public engagement. It has included multiple phases and early consultation with a wide variety of interested parties. The project has, as a result, garnered wide support as the designs retain the unique character of the area while achieving the project partners’ strategic objectives.
- Building on the work from the Waitemata Local Board’s Karangahape Rd Road Plan (2014-2044) the joint AT/AC project team conducted a two stage public consultation exercise. There will be further engagement with the local community before the designs are finalised.
- The first phase was for the project team to ask the local community and interested parties what considered important elements of any upgrade for this iconic road. A Community Reference Group was established to assist in the design of early concepts. Four meetings with this group were held- representatives included members of business community, local residents, artists, Bike Auckland and Gen Zero.
- The project team also attended community events such as White Night, First Thursday and AT’s Open Streets (attended by 30,000 people) to engage with local people and to promote awareness of the project. At these events, the public were asked to write on post-it notes to articulate what was important to them about Karangahape Road.



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- They were also shown a 3D virtual image of what Karangahape Road could look like and asked to vote on some proposed cross sections.
- A survey filled out by 600 people and business representatives was used to better understand how people travelled to Karangahape Road and why.
- The consultation has also included an extensive iwi engagement process which has led to an artist being engaged to integrate artwork into the final design that will reflect the importance of the area to mana whenua.
- The second phase included a wide ranging public consultation on a proposed design. This included distribution of more than 27,000 brochures, newspaper ads, a social media campaign, open days at St Kevin's arcade and an online feedback process.
- AT received over 500 submissions from the public with around 60% in support of the project.

Note: Michael Richardson from Karangahape Road Business Association has commented: *"Despite a wide variety of views on the project, the engagement team have been responsive, communicative and demonstrated a willingness to listen and try to understand the culture of K' Road. Having a responsive and collaborative AT team is as relevant as the outcome of the project itself given it is so important to the people of K' Road and the people of Auckland."*

## Other Activities

39. In addition, the division has 1 FTE responsible for internal communications (maintaining content on the intranet -known as the Engine Room - organising and running staff forums and supporting all internal messaging).
40. Two core areas form the key objectives of the Engine Room – staff engagement (via news articles, social media feeds and blogs) and enabling prompt completion of tasks to enable staff to get their job done (application forms, locating a policy, etc.). The Engine Room (intranet) supports some 80,000 sessions per month for employees.
41. There is also 1 FTE with accountability for organising civic and public events such as major project sod turnings, blessings and openings.

## Elected Members

42. The elected member relationships team is the primary interface for day to day operational dealings with Councillors, Local Board members and local MPs. AT is the only CCO which provides this level of service to elected members. The team of 11 FTE is responsible for:
  - Providing comprehensive monthly reports to each of the 21 Local Boards – example at Attachment 1.
  - Coordinating formal exchanges (such as reports and presentations) with the Governing Body and Council committees



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- Arranging one on one briefings or updates for elected members on issues of interest
  - Coordinating briefings for Members of Parliament across all parties for AT. Note, with a General election next year there is expected to be an increase in requirements in this area.
43. AT is currently actively involved in the Governance Framework Review initiated by Council which, among other things, is looking at greater delegations to Local Boards.
44. Local Board members are surveyed (by AC) and asked for their views on issues such as the quality and timeliness of information provided by AT. Council's 2016 survey showed that almost all local board members had engaged with AT at some point (93%) with around 70% having worked directly with other substantive CCOs.
45. Satisfaction with AT's dedicated relationship staff was high (78%).
46. However, satisfaction fell to 40% when asked about AT's consultation with local boards and their ability to influence outcomes. A number of initiatives including earlier engagement with local boards on capital projects and improved monthly reports are among the initiatives introduced to improve this level of service.
47. The target set in the 2017/18 SOI is 60%. As previously advised, this will be a challenging target to reach.



**Iwi Engagement**

48. Māori outcomes and “transformational shifts” have been identified by Auckland Council based on engagement and consultation with iwi/mana whenua. Most of AT's current work revolves around mana whenua (the traditional tribes of the region) and their relationship with our capital programme.
49. The Maori Engagement team (4 FTE) co-ordinates mana whenua and mataawaka engagement and is seen as an exemplar for other CCOs.
50. At a strategic level the team co-ordinates mana whenua engagement on key policies and plans such as the ITP and RLTP.
51. Quarterly reports on these and other project related activities are provided to the Governing Body and the Independent Maori Statutory Board-see Attachment 2.
52. There is also a focus on internal upskilling of staff-covering the principles of engagement, protocol advice etc. In December 2011 Māori Engagement guidelines were released in association with the Project Management Office which identify how best to work with mana whenua on with major capital development projects. [Click here to view AT's Project Manager's Guide to Māori Engagement \(December 2015\).](#)

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## Cost Drivers

53. The current work load of the communications, campaigns and design teams are driven by the amount of activity from the business itself. The communications team need to inform customers and stakeholders of changes, developments, future plans and better services. In-house expertise allows the communications team to advise and lead communications and engagement across the business as a complete communications function.

## Benchmarks

54. Treasury's Administration and Support Services report which benchmarks the administration and support services costs across 26 Government agencies considers a function to provide good value for money if activities are carried out to a high standard, at least cost. "Least cost" is described as neutral of headcount and decisions to in or out-source. The current resource utilisation/ cost for Communications and Engagement within AT is as follows:

Metric	AT Communications	AT Communications (incl. Key Partners)	Highest	Lowest
Cost of Communications process as a % of overall running costs	0.42%	1.81%	1.82% <sup>1</sup>	0.03% <sup>2</sup>

55. It should be noted that Government agencies tend to communicate mainly with stakeholders in a policy context unless they are running behaviour change campaigns. Their communications often focus on statutory documents. They do not run events or make extensive use of YouTube to promote their activities.

Metric	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Ministry for Culture and Heritage	Ministry for the Environment	NZ Tourism Board	State Services Commission	Te Puni Kokiri	The Treasury	Department of Conservation	Department of Internal Affairs
Cost of the "Communications and external relations (excluding the publications function)" process as a percentage of ORC	1.13%	0.99%	1.19%	0.65%	1.59%	1.82%	0.31%	0.74%	0.40%

<sup>1</sup> Te Puni Kokiri

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health

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Metric	Land Information NZ	Ministry for Primary Industries	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Ministry of Health	NZ Customs Service	NZ Transport Agency	NZ Trade and Enterprise	Statistics NZ	Department of Corrections	IRD
Cost of the "Communications and external relations (excluding the publications function)" process as a percentage of ORC	1.27%	0.76%	0.57%	0.03%	0.58%	0.44%	0.89%	0.73%	0.23%	0.42%

56. The nature of AT's business and services means the organisation has a much more direct relationship with customers- in fact tens of thousands of customers on a daily basis. This ranges from day to day information on public transport to the impact of infrastructure projects. Also our range of customers is broad and covers all age, socio-economic and ethnic groups.

57. Notwithstanding, AT's cost for communications as a percentage of overall running costs demonstrates good value for money.

## Attachments

Attachment Number	Description
1	Local Board Monthly Report
2	Quarterly Report

## Document ownership

Submitted and Recommended by	Wally Thomas <b>Chief Stakeholder Relationships Officer</b>	
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Approved for submission	David Warburton <b>Chief Executive</b>	