



Crux – Draft 1 - Five pillars of (the new) community news.

1. Creating **social cohesion** through truth, perspective, data, differing points of view – celebrating success and analysing failures. Explaining big issues to produce informed feedback, preparing for natural disasters like storms/earthquakes, providing local/regional commentary and information on relevant central Government issues, sharing events, meetings, debates, entertainment – even funerals and obituaries. Providing details on support for all physical and mental disabilities and health issues, supporting schools and giving students a meaningful voice.
2. Facilitating **improved economic productivity** through business forums, start-ups, innovation and projects. Working with employers to improve wages and conditions, calling out bad employers, promoting training and re-training. Advertising jobs to locals, encouraging collaboration with local businesses to avoid duplication and waste. Sharing Government employment and training initiatives.
3. Providing **local councils with a vital community interface**. This interface or platform needs to be at arm's length from the council itself to have independence, engagement and credibility, but needs to give councils a clear voice for their multiple community notices and requests for feedback. It should not include council staff opinion – but can give exposure to elected members opinions and views with proper balance and fairness. The improved engagement via independent status means that council polls, feedback and even votes/referenda can achieve much higher engagement and much higher numbers of responses. Arguably council's attempts to create their own media channels have not worked because they are not trusted as independent and have been perceived as reflecting the preferences of senior council staff.
4. Sharing **valuable, relevant local advertising**. Local advertising, managed well, should and can be informative, interesting and a vital tool to promote business vitality and local customer support. What advertising must not be is an economic tool for advertisers to exercise often hidden and subtle pressure on the news platform. Simple rules and a code of conduct can be developed to protect against this. Rates must be transparent and fair. The local council will have its own large section on the platform and arguably will not be able to take out separate advertising, except as allowed by the advertising code. Advertising can and should be a valuable source of revenue – but not dictate the survival or failure of the platform.
5. A way for **central Government to engage with the regions**. This is a complex area that needs to be handled carefully, but with remote working and the increasing enablement of the regions through migration from big urban areas the regions are taking on more importance – politically, economically and socially. This need may be addressed as with local councils, through a dedicated section of the platform, but it will still need to be moderated and interesting to read – not ignored. The most important coverage will be via independent local journalism – potentially including one or more specialised local-focussed journalists working out of Parliament in Wellington.