Report of the Sustainable Transport Committee on Better Metlink Fares consultation

1. Purpose
This report outlines the deliberations and resolutions of the Sustainable Transport Committee (Hearing Committee) on Better Metlink Fares arising from the consideration of written and oral submissions and other relevant information.

2. Background
The Hearing Committee met on 4 and 5 October 2017 to hear 26 oral submissions and consider all submissions and feedback on the Better Metlink Fares consultation document and supporting documentation (including a proposed variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan).

A total of 505 written submissions were received on the Better Metlink Fares proposals. In addition, 253 submissions were received by the Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association (VUWSA) on three aspects of the fares review.

VUWSA also requested that its 1769 submissions received in April 2017 by Greater Wellington Regional Council on its draft Annual Plan 2017/18, be considered as part of the consultation on Better Metlink Fares.

A summary of the written submissions was prepared for consideration by the Hearing Committee, along with comments and initial recommendations from officers (Report 17.373).

Following the hearing of submissions, the Hearing Committee deliberated and agreed recommendations to Council. Formal endorsement of the revised fares package and variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan is subject to a separate paper to Council (Report 17.413).
3. **Deliberations**

The Hearing Committee reviewed and considered all the written submissions and feedback, and the matters raised in oral submissions (including additional information provided).

The deliberation process followed the structure and format of the summary of submissions document (Attachment 1 to Report 17.382), based on:

- Key themes from consultation, these being
  - Transition to integrated fares
  - Bus/rail equity
  - Affordability of fares
  - Targeted concessions
  - 30-day bus passes
  - Fare structure (boundary adjustments)
- Proposed fare initiatives as set out in the *Better Metlink Fares* document
- Other matters, including out of scope feedback.

The Hearing Committee, in responding to the key issues raised in submissions and after considering officers advice, endorsed the fares package subject to the following changes:

- Retain a 30-day bus pass for high frequency bus customers in zones 1 to 3 of the Metlink network at $150.
- Retain a 30 day bus pass for Eastbourne with the conditions and pricing to be confirmed.
- Amend the proposal for a 25% discount for both blind and disabled customers to a 50% discount, with free travel for bona fide carers.
- Amend the proposals for free bus connections with the rail monthly pass to be available in zones 4-14.
- Retain return rail event tickets.

Retaining the 30-day pass for zones 1 to 3 and increasing the discount for blind and disabled customers to 50% is expected to cost an additional $300,000 per annum. As a result, the Hearing Committee recommended that the Council include a budget provision of $5.5m in the Long Term Plan, noting that this amount includes a subsidy component from the NZ Transport Agency and takes account of the proposed 3% fare increase.

The Hearing Committee, in considering submissions and issues on bus/rail equity, also noted officers’ advice that further work will be carried out on the pricing of bus and rail fares in the subsequent phase of transition to capping under integrated ticketing.

The Hearing Committee requested some amendments to be included in the officers’ comments on submissions. These amendments, along with resolutions
and comments from the Hearing Committee, have been incorporated into the revised summary document set out in Attachment 1 to this report.

4. **Communication**

Following adoption by Council, the variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan and associated fares schedule and fares package will be made available on the Council website and sent to key stakeholders.

All submitters who made submissions on the *Better Metlink Fares* consultation will be informed of the Council decisions and will be provided with a link to the summary of submissions, variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan and associated final fares schedule and package.

A media release has already been issued. Further communications and engagement on the changes will occur closer to the time of implementation, and as part of the wider communications and engagement process for the Public Transport Transformation Programme.

5. **Consideration of climate change**

The matters addressed in this report are of a procedural nature, and there is no need to conduct a climate change assessment.

6. **The decision-making process and significance**

The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act).

6.1 **Significance of the decision**

The subject matter of this report is not a decision in itself, but part of a decision-making process that will lead to the Council making a decision of medium significance within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2002.

The decision-making process for the proposed variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan is set out in the Land Transport Management Act 2003. In accordance with section 125 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, the special consultative procedure has been followed for consultation on *Better Metlink Fares* and the proposed variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan.

6.2 **Engagement**

In accordance with the Significance and Engagement Policy, officers determined that the appropriate level of engagement was ‘consulting’.

Consultation was carried out on the proposed fares changes and variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan, consistent with section 125 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

7. **Recommendations**

*That the Council:*

1. Receives the report.
2. *Notes* the content of the report.

3. *Notes* the resolutions and commentary in the updated summary of submissions document at Attachment 1 to this report.

4. *Notes* that, following adoption of the variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan by Council and agreement of the fares package, all submitters will be informed of the Council decisions and will be provided with a link to the summary of submissions, variation to the Regional Public Transport Plan and associated fares package.

Report prepared by:

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Chair, Sustainable Transport  
Committee

**Attachment 1:** Updated summary report on fares consultation