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Committee Council
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Report on the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee meeting held on 17 March 2009

1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee that took place on 17 March 2009.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Report

3.1 Proposed Te Araroa Walkway from Levin to Wellington

The committee received a presentation from Bill Wakelin and Suzanne Pollard of Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust. They were seeking the committee's support in principle for the proposed Te Araroa walkway access route from Levin to Wellington. The committee's support was being sought in anticipation that this will assist the Trust in securing funding from agencies such as the Lotteries Commission.

The Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust has been established to secure a right of access for walkers from Levin to Wellington, as a sector of the 'Long Pathway' from Cape Reinga to Bluff. They anticipate that the establishment of the pathway will engage local communities, promote outdoor activities and create an asset (the pathway) which will be a 'plus' for the people of the region.

The entire project is being put in place under the direction of the Te Araroa National Trust, based in Auckland. A pathway the length of New Zealand has the aim of completion by the end of 2010.

The committee discussed a number of issues associated with the proposal, including a potential alternative walkway route alongside the current SH1. Committee members highlighted that, should the Transmission Gully Motorway go ahead and the coastal route re-categorised as a local road, this would provide a more level walkway option. The current proposal includes an elevated walkway that would require cutting into steep hillside that will have some engineering challenges.

The committee members agreed that the project was a very worthy project and that it aligns with the open space objectives of the Wellington Regional Strategy. However they believed the committee could not support the proposal at this time because of the timing issues with the Transmission Gully Motorway decisions, and the potential opportunities to integrate the walkway into the coastal road route. The committee therefore agreed to let the report “lie on the table”, and encouraged the Trust to talk directly to the relevant territorial authorities.

3.2 Grow Wellington Half Yearly Report 2008/09 and Statement of Intent 2009/10

The Committee received a presentation from Nigel Kirkpatrick, Chief Executive of Grow Wellington, and John Lumsden, Grow Wellington Board member.

The committee congratulated the Board on its achievements over the past six months, and its draft Statement of Intent. They sought, and received, reassurance that the company has allowed for flexibility within its upcoming work programme to respond to the changing economic environment and new opportunities as the year progresses.

The committee agreed that it was not seeking any changes to the draft Statement of Intent 2009/10.

3.3 Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI) monitoring framework

The committee considered a set of indicators that has been developed by the GPI working group (a subset of the Senior Officers Resource Team) that will be used for the region’s GPI. Officers outlined the extensive process to develop the indicator set and the GPI framework

There was some debate on the detailed indicators. Melanie Thornton explained how the indicators were chosen. She told the committee that they specifically reflect the descriptions of each of the community outcomes. In some cases the descriptions limited the range of indicators that could have been selected. She said the indicators were chosen to capture several aspects of each outcome and in most cases to provide a sensible set of indicators.

A report on the GPI monitoring framework will be considered by the Regional Sustainability Committee at its meeting on the 25th March.

3.4 Wellington Regional Open Spaces project

The committee received a report by Victoria McGregor on the WRS Open Spaces Project. Page 36 of the Wellington Regional Strategy document identifies that:

“Quality open spaces are fundamental to world-class cities and regions. There are opportunities to improve the open space network and to gain economic benefits from these assets.”

The Regional Policy Statement also recognises the importance of compact, well designed sustainable regional form through integrated public open spaces.

The committee was told the Open Space project is part of the work being done through the Senior Officers Resource Team (SORT) process. A working group of SORT, involving all relevant partner organisations is identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in our public space network. The report noted that Greater Wellington’s Parks Department is currently reviewing the role of regional parks. The report said that while this is a separate project, it will help to inform the development of a strategy for the regional open space network.

The committee endorsed the Terms of Reference for the project.

3.5 Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy (WRLMS)

The committee received an update on the WRLMS from Mel Harrington, Regional Labour Market Manager, Work and Income, Ministry of Social Development, and Mike Styles, Labour Market Knowledge Manager, Department of Labour.

The Ministry of Social Development and Department of Labour sponsor and facilitate the WRLMS. It is a complementary strategy to the Wellington Regional Strategy.

In addition to the material contained in the report Mel and Mike talked about the regional employment summit that is to be held in Wellington on 8th April 2009. This follows on from the national job summit held at the end of March.

3.6 Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project

The Regional Refugee and Migrant Recruitment and Self-Employment Project is one of the strategic actions in response to three base strategy documents: the Wellington Regional Strategy, the Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy and the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy.

This initiative builds on the 2006/08 *Wellington Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Well-being* for refugees living and settling in the Wellington region that included Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council and Wellington City Council as partners “to improve access to information and services that lead to financial independence, appropriate employment and small business opportunities.”

The WRS office is hosting this project as a partnership arrangement with the Ministry of Social Development. It is being funded by the Ministry. It is a pilot project, running for a 12month period. It finishes on 14 April 2009.

The committee received a final update on progress with the project. Officers reported a high level of support and co-operation from the region's councils. An employment pathway scheme has been developed and this is expected to be picked up by the Ministry at the completion of the project.

3.7 Wellington Regional Strategy Office Update

Melanie Thornton, the WRS Office Project Leader, provided a general update to the committee on activities of the office. The major focus for the office during the period has been on progressing the Genuine Progress Index project, open spaces, urban design, WRS resourcing of council-led projects and updating the WRS website.

3.8 Appointment of Grow Wellington Board Member

The committee nominated a person to fill a current vacancy on the Board of Grow Wellington. This is the subject of a separate (public excluded) report on the agenda.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

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

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Unconfirmed Public Minutes