Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee
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WRS Office Update

1. Purpose

To update the WRS Committee on activities of the WRS office between July and November 2009, and report on progress with council-led projects.

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. Work Programme

Since July 2009 the WRS Office has had its major focus on:

- finalising the report on the Wellington region Genuine Progress Index (see discussion below)

- facilitating the regional open space providers' working group and finalising the regional open space strategy and action plan

- assisting with progressing the regional industrial land project

- publishing and circulating the regional urban design stocktake and action plan

- assisting Wairarapa councils with urban design approaches and principles and the process to sign up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

- hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operational Group meetings (see discussion below)

- facilitating for the WRS Summit on 29 October 2009 (see discussion below).

3.1 Genuine Progress Index (GPI)

Data for each of the indicators has been assessed and analysed. A workshop was held with the WRS Committee to confirm the approach taken and to ensure the data was represented in a way that was easy to understand. An officer workshop was held in September with Ron Colman to assist in the writing of the report.

Ensuring the accuracy of the data and the most comprehensive analysis of the nearly 100 indicators has taken a considerable amount of time. Our need for clarification of some of the data has resulted in the final report being delayed. This will be presented to the Committee in February 2010.

3.2 Broadband

The Broadband Operational Group assessed the Government's Ultra-Fast Broadband Initiative (UFBI) and the Rural Broadband Initiative and has prepared comments and submissions on both.

The aim of the Broadband project is to ensure that the Wellington region is at the forefront of these developments and is "fibre friendly". This means that we are streamlining our processes and local policies to enable easy and potentially cheaper deployment of fibre in the region, while still maintaining core objectives like minimising community disruption.

Our priority workstreams, and leaders within each council, are therefore:

- Completing a **stocktake of council policies on access to council assets with a view to developing a region-wide policy** (e.g. ducts, pipes, buildings), including fees and charges and legal agreements (Leader: Hutt City Council).

The information for this has now been gathered by direct interview and is being analysed.

- Reviewing District Plan **rules for aerial deployment** and considering if any inconsistencies identified should be addressed (Leader: Wellington City Council).

A template for gathering this information has been completed and is with councils for input.

- Developing **region-wide rules for new trenching technologies**, particularly shallow trenching but also micro-trenching (Leader: Wellington City Council).

- Evaluating **current processes for managing road openings** and how these could be improved (Leader: Kapiti Coast District Council).

An assessment of GIS management and the applicability of software to the new broadband deployment environment has been completed. The focus is now on establishing better processes under the soon to be adopted National Code of

Practice for Utilities' Access to the Transport Corridors.

- Developing an **online tool for businesses in the region to access up-to-date information on broadband speeds and costs** (Leader: Grow Wellington).

The specification for this has been completed and it will shortly be going to the market to seek proposals for implementation.

3.3 WRS Summit

The annual WRS Summit was held on 29 October at Te Papa. Nearly 60 people attended from across a range of organisations. Many of the region's mayors, staff from the three universities in the region, Crown Research Institute staff, investment bankers, technology companies and other business people attended.

The keynote speaker was Kenneth Husted, Professor of Innovation and Research Management at Auckland University's business school. Professor Husted spoke about what makes for effective regional innovation systems, using some Danish examples. Dr Helen Anderson, CEO of the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology spoke about the government's new directions for innovation and commercialisation of science.

Participants discussed a range of topics including why we aren't commercialising more research and development (R&D) in the region, and what can we do as a region to establish more effective mechanisms to help drive innovation and commercialisation in the region.

The outcome of the summit was a number of actions which the office is collecting and distributing to the attendees. Follow-up sessions will be held.

4. Communication

Communications continue to be made on an on-going basis.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.

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

Report prepared by: Report approved by:

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