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Committee Wellington Regional Strategy  
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## WRS Office Update

### 1. Purpose

This report is to provide the Committee with an update on activities of the WRS Office since April 2010.

### 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 April 2010 the WRS Office has had its major focus on:

- Socialising the GPI report and looking at various ways of representing the data on the WRS website.
- Hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operational Group (BOG).
- Facilitating the regional open space working group and sub-groups, and organising the Wellington Regional Open Spaces Forum.
- Facilitating the regional urban design working group and continuing to progress the work outlined in the Wellington Region Urban Design Action Plan and Stocktake. In conjunction with the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (and the Ministry for the Environment), the WRS Office is having regular meetings to progress the Urban Design Symposium which is to be held in August.

- Assisting Hutt City Council with progressing the regional industrial land project and organising the workshop which is to be held 17 June. Invitations have been sent out to various members of the business community who are directly linked with industrial activities, including Centreport, Paraparaumu Airport and Colliers.

#### **4. Broadband Operational Group**

The Broadband Operating Group (BOG) has been holding meetings with potential Local Fibre Company (LFC) bidders to the Urban Fibre Broadband Initiative (UFBI). As previously indicated the scale of any new fibre build in the region is considerable and may have several implications for the region.

One of the most immediate implications is about councils' capacity to handle the increase in road openings. Several thousand kilometres of roads are expected to be opened over the next 2-3 years and this is likely to stretch councils' current capacity for processing road opening applications.

In addition, the coordination of road openings across council boundaries may become a significant issue. There will be considerable pressure to work closely with the nominated LFC to drive down the costs of coordinating road openings across the region and to reduce the disruption to our urban environments.

It is proposed to hold meetings with the Rugby World Cup Office to determine 'brown-out' or "no deployment" areas and times so that any fibre deployment will not take place during these periods. Both potential LFCs have indicated willingness to work with councils to ensure minimal disruption during this time.

In addition BOG has been assisting the Wairarapa community determine how it can best ensure that it is one of the first rural areas to get fibre. We have attended two meetings with councils, school principals and District Health Board staff to determine what course of action may be needed.

A meeting was held with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to discuss the Rural Fibre Initiative (RFI) and the boundaries set for it. This includes the fact that the Makara community comes within the Wellington City Council boundary yet Makara School is being covered by the RFI. A second boundary issue concerns the government's allocation of boundaries for the lower North Island. The Wellington region comes within Zones 11 and 12 but is split vertically as opposed to the current regional boundary. MED has indicated that it is happy to receive a submission on the boundaries.

Other BOG workstreams are continuing.

## 5. Open Spaces

The WRS Office gave a presentation to members of the New Zealand Recreation Association on 6<sup>th</sup> May about the WRS Open Spaces project. Kate spoke about the development and implementation of the Wellington Regional Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan.

We are currently finalising the agenda for the Wellington Regional Open Spaces Forum which is to be held in July at Te Rauparaha in Porirua. This forum is aimed at open space managers and practitioners. It will be a half day event which will enable further sharing of information about key projects which are happening in the region.

The first bi-monthly Open Spaces newsletter was sent out at the end of March. The newsletter was emailed to practitioners around the region and is available to the public on the WRS website. The newsletter outlined key projects that councils in the region are working on and key challenges councils are experiencing. This has enabled further sharing of information and research amongst the councils.

As stated previously, a workshop of open space providers/managers was held in February. Outcomes of the workshop included developing sub-groups to drive four major issues related to improving open spaces in the region. These are:

- Information portal. This workstream is looking at establishing a regional portal of recreational information for the public to access so that information is easily accessible and is gathered and shared in a common way.
- Biodiversity. This workstream is aimed at identifying sites for protection and monitoring, and using consistent measurement tools to explore mechanisms to incentivise more private landowners to protect high quality lands in their ownership.
- Motorised access in open spaces. This workstream has been established to identify the major issues with motorised recreation. The group is looking at developing a stocktake of regional rules and existing tracks, and exploring ways of working with users in the region to arrive at solutions. The group will also look at education of users and common approaches to management of the areas. The group will explore working with users such as Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee (ARAC) so that we can establish common solutions and have consistent approaches of managing motorised recreation across the region.

- Sports fields. This sub-group will explore the quality of turfs in the region, the expectations of turf quality and the availability for codes. There are gaps across the region in what is provided and this workstream will look at how we can address these issues.

## **6. Urban Design**

The WRS Office gave a presentation to the Urban Design Forum on 19<sup>th</sup> May. The Forum was focussed on centres and urban design. Melanie spoke on the regional work done on centres planning and explained about the establishment of the District Plan Managers group. This group will foster information-sharing on, amongst other things, centre planning activities across the region, sharing knowledge and research.

A register of urban design practitioners is now available to councils throughout the region. This register provides consultants' contact details, a brief description of their experience and examples of projects they have worked on for local authorities throughout New Zealand.

For 2010 the major focuses for the Urban Design working group will include:

- Information-sharing. This is taking place through the WRS website. An urban design information hub has been developed and provides useful links to regional, national and international urban design-related websites. There are also links to urban design-related courses being held both within New Zealand and in Australia.
- Developing training initiatives. This includes holding regular 'walk and talk' sessions at councils around the region, with the first session to be held in Porirua on 8<sup>th</sup> June. These sessions are open to practitioners and urban design champions from across the region. At these sessions council officers will discuss key urban design issues experienced at their council and any examples of best practice.
- WRS Urban Design Symposium. This symposium will be held in August in conjunction with the Ministry for the Environment on the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. Speakers are currently being finalised.

## **7. Communication**

Communication on matters relating to the workstreams above will happen as relevant information is identified.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

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