



Report 12.195
Date 15 May 2012
File SP/05/03/03

Committee Long Term Plan Hearing Committee
Author Amy Helm, Statutory Planner

Submissions received on the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22

1. Purpose

This report provides an overview and highlights the key issues contained in the submissions that Greater Wellington received on the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22. A full copy of the submissions has been provided to the hearing committee.

This report complements Report 12.180 which sets out the process for handling submissions, both at this meeting and following the consideration of submissions.

2. The decision-making process and significance

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

2.1 Significance of the decision

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking into account the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines. Due to the procedural nature of this decision officers recommend that adopting a process for the consideration of submissions be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

2.2 The decision-making process

Officers have taken into account the principles set out in section 14 of the Act and the need to manage the Council's resources prudently.

Officers advise that a decision-making process for the Long-Term Plan is explicitly prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002 and requires the use of the special consultative procedure.

3. Consultation

3.1 Long-Term Plan consultation

The draft Long-Term Plan was approved by Council for consultation on 8 March 2012. The consultation period was from 26 March to 4 May 2012. A summary of the draft Long-Term Plan was distributed to all households in the region. The summary and full draft Long-Term Plan were available on Greater Wellington's website, from Greater Wellington offices and at all libraries in the region. A series of open days were held around the region for members of the public to discuss the draft Long-Term Plan with councillors and staff. An online discussion forum was hosted on Greater Wellington's website and market research was conducted to get the views of a representative sample of the region's residents.

3.2 Concurrent consultation

3.2.1 Wellington Regional Strategy

The draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 included a proposal to continue with the Wellington Regional Strategy. Submissions on this proposal could be made on the same submission form as that for the draft Long-Term Plan. 980 submissions were received on the Wellington Regional Strategy proposal and these will be considered by the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee on 17 May 2012.

3.2.2 Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15

The consultation period on the draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15 was also from 26 March to 4 May, and the summary was distributed to households together with the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 summary. 544 submissions were received on the draft Regional Land Transport Programme and these will be considered by the Regional Land Transport Programme Hearing Subcommittee on 28 May 2012.

Electronic integrated ticketing was an issue common to both the draft Regional Land Transport Programme and the draft Long-Term Plan. Just over 100 submissions on electronic integrated ticketed were received in the Regional Land Transport Programme process. Half of the submissions were in support and half were opposed.

4. Summary of key points raised in the submissions

In total 1326 submissions were received. The number of submissions grouped by type of organisation is as follows:

Organisations (including community groups)	81
Local government	6
Central government	3
Individuals	<u>1236</u>
Total	1326

The draft Long-Term Plan summary included nine proposals for specific feedback relating to the key matters being consulted on in the draft Long-Term Plan. The table below summarises the views of all submitters who expressed a preference.

Table 1: Key proposals presented in the Summary of the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22

	% support ¹
1. Do you support continuing our current levels of service for existing activities?	87%
2. Do you support continuing to meet our commitments to provide long-term infrastructure for the region?	88%
3. Do you support continuing with the feasibility work for the Wairarapa Water Use Project?	65%
4. Do you support the proposal for electronic integrated ticketing for public transport?	61%
5. Do you support additional funding for sustainable land management programmes?	73%
6. Do you support the extension of pest control programmes?	80%
7. Do you support the proposed improvements to regional parks?	77%
8. Do you support the additional funding to earthquake strengthen Greater Wellington buildings or co-location with other local authorities if practicable?	74%
9. Do you support the establishment of an emergency management hub?	77%
10. Do you support selling our forestry cutting rights?	58%
11. Do you support selling surplus land?	51%

A summary of the key points raised by submitters and officer comments and recommendations for the committee to consider in their deliberations is contained in **Attachment 1**.

¹ This was calculated as the percentage of submitters who marked "Yes" on the submission form or indicated support for the proposal in their submission out of the total number of submissions made on the proposal.

5. Other consultation material

5.1 Online discussion forum

Between 17 March and 4 May Greater Wellington hosted an online discussion forum on its website to complement formal submissions. The discussion forum was publicised on the Greater Wellington website, through social media and by an email to people who had registered for previous online discussion forums. During the discussion period 332 people visited the site. 84 copies of the full draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 were download, along with 48 copies of the summary document. A short video publicising the LTP was posted on the discussion forum and received 370 views.

A small number of comments were made on the discussion forum. The points raised were:

- Opposition to rates increases
- Opposition to electronic ticketing
- Support for integrated ticketing
- Concern about debt
- Concern about selling forestry cutting rights for 60 years
- Opposition to changes to rural rates for possum control
- Opposition to any new projects
- Opposition to Wairarapa Water Use Project
- Support for pest control
- Opposition to increasing funding for land management
- Opposition to increasing funding for regional parks

5.2 Independent Market Research

Independent market research was also undertaken at the same time as the formal LTP submissions process, to obtain a regionally representative view on some of the key proposals. This was conducted through an online panel, with responses from 924 residents, and provides a margin of error of +/- 3.2% at the 95% confidence interval. The data has been weighted by the population size of each territorial authority area to gain a representative sample of the region.

The survey asked for residents responses to the following areas:

- The relative importance of activities undertaken by Greater Wellington
- The relative satisfaction with activities undertaken by Greater Wellington
- The relative priority of the proposed service improvements in the draft Long Term Plan
- The willingness to pay for improved services in each activity group.

The results of the research are presented separately in **Attachment 2**. These provide a very useful additional resource on which to consider the appropriateness of the proposals in the draft Long Term Plan, and can be compared and contrasted against the formal submissions received.

One of the key questions was to ask respondents to rank the priority of the proposed service improvements in the draft Long Term Plan. This was conducted as a set of trade-offs (Q-sort) to ensure respondents made more realistic decisions and avoid all proposals being ranked as the highest priority. The results for the overall region show the following:

Sustainable Land Management	Priority 3 (Highest)
Wairarapa Water Use Project	Priority 2.6
Expanding pest control programmes	Priority 2.5
Electronic Integrated Ticketing	Priority 2.5
Improving Regional Parks & Forests	Priority 2.4 (Lowest)

The responses to “Electronic Integrated Ticketing” were the most polarised. Whilst this had the greatest number of respondents placing this as their highest priority (31%), it also had the greatest number of respondents placing this as their lowest priority (33%). The comments received in formal submissions on the Long Term Plan also show a similar level of polarisation. Many submitters who supported this proposal thought the cost was too high, and many submitters that opposed it, agreed with it in principle but were swayed by the overall cost.

Interestingly whilst “Improving Regional Parks” ranked the lowest priority in terms of the proposed service improvement, this has to be seen against the fact that “Regional Parks” was ranked as the highest importance of all the activities undertaken by Greater Wellington, and was the area that respondents were most satisfied with overall. This perhaps shows that respondents consider this activity to be less urgent for additional funding.

A further question in the survey asked respondents to indicate their general willingness to pay for improved services against a range of activity areas. They were provided with the 2011/12 cost for an average ratepayer of each activity area and asked to nominate how much extra they would be prepared to pay. This was also totalled up as a total rates increase to ensure respondents understood the overall resultant rates increase. The overall results for the region show the following:

Activity Area	Average additional rates proposed by respondents for improved services	% of 2011/12 rates for average ratepayer
Public transport	\$30	+12.5%
Flood Protection	\$11	+15.9%
Resource Management and Land Management	\$11	+22%
Pest Management and Biodiversity	\$9	+24.3%
Parks	\$8	+26.6%
Economic development activities	\$7	+29.2%

The survey results indicate that overall there is a willingness to pay additional rates for improved services in all of the activity areas identified. Whilst the total \$ amounts may be small, seen as a proportion of the average current rates the percentage increases are reasonably high, ranging from increases of 12% to 29%.

The results also show that a proportion of respondents for each activity area were not willing to pay any more rates. This ranged from 23% to 33% across the activity areas. This reinforces some of comments made in formal submissions about the affordability of rates being a significant issue, particularly for those on fixed or low incomes. There are also regional differences in the willingness to pay.

6. Further information

Since the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 was approved for consultation on 8 March 2012 the findings of seismic investigations into a number of Greater Wellington's buildings have become available. Further information regarding Greater Wellington's buildings and a proposed way forward is contained in **Attachment 3**. This information is relevant to the consideration of the draft Long-Term Plan as the proposed way forward has an impact on rates and would involve changes from what was proposed in the draft.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Considers the information in this report in determining its findings and recommendations to Council.*
4. *Recommends to the Council changes to the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 as agreed at the meeting.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Summary of submissions, officer comments and recommendations

Attachment 2: Market research report

Attachment 3: Further information on Greater Wellington's buildings