

Summary of submissions, officer comments and recommendations

1. Rates, financial strategy and funding

1.1 Summary of submissions

1.1.1 Overall plan and approach

A majority of submitters supported each of the specific consultation proposals in the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 (LTP), including:

- continuing current levels of service for existing activities within inflation
- continuing to meet our commitments to provide long-term infrastructure
- six proposals for additional funding or new projects.

However, there were a number of submitters that expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed overall levels of expenditure in the plan and the associated impact on the level of rates and/or debt.

A general theme of these comments was that they considered that the draft plan did not reflect the realities of the current economic climate and particularly households/ratepayers who were feeling the strain from a combination of rising living costs and income stagnation and could not afford anything more. Households/ratepayers are having to tighten their belts and therefore so should Greater Wellington.

1.1.2 Constrain spending

There was a desire expressed in many submissions for Greater Wellington to constrain spending and stop living beyond its means. Some submitters raised the need to be more accountable about proposed spending. Areas of potential savings identified by the submitters were mostly around reducing administrative costs, car usage, staff and/or councillor wages and wasted expenditure.

Some submitters would have liked to have seen more evidence of where we have trimmed costs, been given more information about the drivers behind cost increases and/or have been presented with options for reduced services, rather than simply adjusting current services for inflation. Others would have preferred that the plan focused on necessities only and not proposed any non-essential activities.

Some submitters called for Greater Wellington to focus on core services. Examples of what submitters considered to be core services included roads, rates, rubbish, internal transport,

water, parks, managing the environment and pest control. While others said pest control and flood protection as well as business and social issues were not core services.

1.1.3 Debt levels

Another theme raised by some submitters was concern about the forecast increase in debt over the term of the plan. Many of the submissions expressed these concerns very strongly and some warned of over-burdening future generations. There was a desire to see Greater Wellington operate within its means and either holding debt or reducing debt, but certainly not increasing debt levels.

1.1.4 Appropriate level of rates

Of those submitters that gave a view on an appropriate alternative level of rates it was fairly evenly split between:

- an increase in line with or below inflation – some specifically cited the Consumer Price Index, another BERL Local Government Price Index
- a zero rates increase or rates reduction.

Some submitters stated a preference for using the Consumer Price Index over the BERL Local Government Price Index as it is more relevant from a ratepayers point of view.

1.1.5 Other points raised

Other points raised in relation to rates and funding included:

- more local funding for local projects/services, especially in Wairarapa
- more users pays (for public transport, flood protection, land management)
- looking at alternatives to using capital value as the basis of the rate take as it does not fairly reflect where benefits accrue and the level of service received
- looking to sources of revenue other than rates such as sponsorship and advertising
- that particular areas are paying too much – Kapiti, Upper Hutt and Wairarapa were mentioned
- concerns that current differentials disadvantage the business sector, especially in regards to the allocation of costs of public transport
- the risk that Greater Wellington's borrowing programme could be undermined by a lack of growth in rateable properties and/or less central government funding

- concerns that Greater Wellington's policy of using the costs of borrowing rather than the costs of capital as the internal interest rate, as this was seen to subsidise high risk activity by CentrePort.

1.1.6 Insurance

8 submissions were received on insurance. There was no opposition to the proposal to change our insurance to lower the amount of cover for some assets, and effectively self-insure for part of these as well as including extra funding to cover expected cost increases. Some submitters expressly supported this approach. The remainder expressed the view that insurance was an important issue.

1.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

A number of submitters have questioned the need for any rates increases, especially given the current fiscal environment and financial constraints facing many people.

Greater Wellington must balance the public demand for more services with the demand for low or no rates increases. To put the position in context, the average residential ratepayer across the entire region pays around \$350 per annum, the proposed increase in rates is \$17 per annum for the average residential ratepayer. Considered against the context of services provided, particularly in the infrastructure areas such as public transport and flood protection services the rates, as set, are good value for money.

Specifically, some submitters have asked why rates cannot be linked to the Consumer Price Index. The problem is twofold. Firstly, the Consumer Price Index measures a basket of household goods which do not mirror the inputs of councils. Secondly, the Consumer Price Index does not take into account increases in service quality or quantity. Often rates increases are viewed as simply a price increase on the same service. The Greater Wellington draft LTP is proposing significant improvements in service as demanded by the community.

A number of submitters have raised questions around debt. Debt is necessary to fund infrastructure replacements and additions such as new trains, stopbanks and water supply assets. Greater Wellington borrows to fund these essential items and sets rates to recover the loan repayments and interest. The other option would be to rate in advance and put the money aside until enough has been saved to fund the asset purchase. This would take many years and would create inequity across generations as those paying for the asset would not enjoy the benefit of using it. Greater Wellington has set lending limits it believes to be prudent relative to the assets owned and the ability to pay.

Greater Wellington does not lend to CentrePort under our internal borrowing policy. CentrePort is a separate commercial entity with both Greater Wellington and Horizons Regional Council as shareholders. CentrePort has its own Treasury Policies and sources its funding requirements on the open market. Thus the internal borrowing policy as it stands, does not require amendment.

Several submitters raised questions relating to the management of insurance. Greater Wellington considers insurance to be a key area of risk management. We are continuing to work with our insurance advisors to achieve the best balance of appropriate insurance cover with the escalating costs of commercial insurance cover.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

2. Regional leadership

2.1 Emergency management hub proposal

2.1.1 Summary of submissions

827 (77%) of 1073 submitters who commented on the emergency management hub supported the proposal.

Of submitters that did not support the proposal the main reasons given were:

- suitable facilities already exist and a new hub would be unnecessary
- concerns about putting "all eggs in one basket", with the focus on a single hub and/or concerns about the accessibility of the proposed hub in a disaster
- concerns about cost and the lack of detail about costs
- concerns about growing bureaucracy.

Submitters thought the location of the hub was important, with a desire for it to be somewhere less vulnerable to natural hazards and easy to access in an emergency. Outside of the Wellington CBD was suggested.

2.1.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

There is a degree of public support for proceeding with an emergency management hub. The reason for the support is quite varied but largely relates to preparedness. One of the reasons given for opposing a facility is that a suitable facility already exists (Regional Council Centre), but this is not the case for a major seismic event. The Regional Council Centre is expected to be damaged and the surrounding area may not be accessible. A number of facilities have been mentioned as being suitable options. Several have previously been investigated and are either not suitable or not available.

Officers recommend that the Council supports a emergency management hub in principle and makes a final decision once a business case has been received and all the expected costs are known.

2.2 Wairarapa water use project proposal

2.2.1 Summary of submissions

682 (65%) of 1050 submitters supported the proposal to continue with funding the feasibility work for the Wairarapa Water Use Project.

Some of this support was conditional on environmental concerns being sufficiently investigated and addressed.

Those submitters that did not support the proposal mainly did so for one of two reasons:

- an objection to how the proposal was to be funded, rather than an objection to the project *per se*. The submitters were of the view that the project is of mostly private or local benefit rather than public or regional benefit and therefore either the direct beneficiaries (farmers, growers etc) or local Wairarapa ratepayers should fund the work, not general ratepayers.
- concerns about the possible environmental impacts of the project, particularly from the intensification of dairy farming on water quality but also impacts on water tables, aquifers, indigenous ecosystems and salination of soils.

Submitters wanted to see a rigorous assessment of the environmental and social impacts of the project as a key part of the investigations.

Some submitters would prefer to wait for confirmation of government funding before proceeding.

2.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Those that support the project mention possible economic growth as one of the reasons for doing so. For those against the project, the economic benefits are still recognised but their objection relates to Greater Wellington funding it, environmental and other concerns. Part of the funding objection can be overcome if Greater Wellington is successful in obtaining a grant from the Government's Irrigation Acceleration Fund. The outcome of this application may be known before the LTP is finalised.

A small number oppose the project on environmental grounds, particularly relating to increased intensity of farming. These concerns are valid. A key part of the project investigations relates to how this intensification can be managed. This is just one of a wide range of investigation studies that are part of the project.

Taking into account the urban rural mix of the Region's population a support response of 65% should be viewed vary favourably.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

2.3 Governance

2.3.1 Summary of submissions

53 submitters choose to comment on their preferred governance arrangements for the Wellington region. The majority of submissions on this issue favoured some form of amalgamation or rationalisation of councils – with a variety of arrangements suggested as an alternative to the status quo. Submissions were fairly evenly split between those who would prefer a single regional authority and those that would prefer an expanded role for city and district councils (although in some cases with fewer of them). The benefits cited were cost savings and a reduction in bureaucracy.

2.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

Greater Wellington is establishing an independent panel to review the local government arrangements in the region. Comments received on the governance issues through the LTP process will be made available to the panel. There will be the opportunity for people in the region to provide their views to the panel. It is also likely the panel will carry out a survey across the region to assist them to understand the views of the people in the region.

A report from the panel, identifying the most efficient and effective governance model for the region, is expected by the end of October.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

2.4 Regional transport planning

2.4.1 Summary of submissions

Themes in the points raised relating to regional transport planning include:

- opposition to Roads of National Significance and the funding of roading projects as opposed to other transport projects, including wanting Greater Wellington to advocate more strongly against the emphasis on roading
- a desire to see progress on specific roading projects, particularly Transmission Gully
- wanting provision made for the outcome of the Public Transport Spine Study, including support for light rail
- increased use of sea/and or rail freight, including advocating against closure of the Northern rail line, north of Masterton.

2.4.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

The Regional Land Transport Strategy and the supporting Corridor Plans provide for a multi-modal transport network at a strategic level. There are several important projects proposed in the Corridor Plans and the draft Regional Land Transport Programme that

relate to improving walking, cycling and public transport. The Wellington PT Spine Study, currently underway, is considering the best options for a high quality public transport system in central Wellington, including the option of light rail. Sea freight is not within the responsibilities of Greater Wellington, this is a central government responsibility. Rail freight is also the responsibility of KiwiRail.

Provision in the LTP for the outcome of the PT Spine Study, as suggested, is premature. The outcome of the study will not be known until early 2013, at which time the community will be invited to comment on the high quality public transport options coming out of the study. Any decision on the most feasible long term option for high quality public transport through the Wellington City spine will not be made until late 2013. Implementing an option may not occur until some time in the future, quite possibly outside the period of the LTP.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

2.5 Sustainable transport

2.5.1 Summary of submissions

Submitters supported increased provision and support for walking and cycling, particularly increased cycleways, including Great Harbour Way, to promote cyclists safety. There was also support for Greater Wellington's leadership and programmes in the active/sustainable transport area.

2.5.2 Officer comment on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Support for Greater Wellington's walking and cycling activities is noted. Greater Wellington does not provide cycleways, but we will continue to advocate to local councils and the NZ Transport Agency to improve their respective walking and cycling infrastructure.

A number of suggestions were made for new wording for the LTP that relate directly to policy in the Regional Transport Strategy and its supporting plans. There would be little value in repeating such provisions in both sets of documents. A number of other matters raised, particularly regarding the prioritisation of transport activities, are matters that will be addressed through the Regional Land Transport Programme process. This process is running at the same time as the LTP process, by the Regional Transport Committee.

The Great Harbour Way is already provided for in the relevant transport plans and Greater Wellington continues to advocate to the road controlling authorities they make appropriate provision for this initiative.

The detailed comments relating to the State Highway in Kapiti have been passed on to the NZ Transport Agency for their consideration.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

2.6 Other regional leadership matters

2.6.1 Summary of submissions

Some submitters thought too much was spent on regional leadership activities. Other points raised included:

- A need to do more regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation
- A request for funding for the MATES male suicide prevention programme (a share of \$151,100 per annum with all other councils in the region)
- Leadership on spatial planning and urban building issues.

2.6.2 Officer comment on points raised in submissions and recommendations

Greater Wellington is currently working on a Climate Change Strategy and mitigation is being taken into account in this work. Greater Wellington also has a climate change Corporate Action Plan, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions of our own organisation. Actions to implement this Plan have included installation of mini hydro generation at two of our water supply plans, a travel plan and vehicle purchasing policy for the organisation and a waste minimisation strategy.

The request to sponsor the MATES programme will be further investigated by officers. It is outside the current type of activities carried out by the regional council, so in investigating the opportunity consideration will need to be given to whether we have appropriate resources to support such a programme. It may be more appropriate for another agency to take the lead on this programme.

Without a clear mandate to take a role in spatial planning and urban building we need to negotiate with other councils in the region on these activities. In the past many of the region's councils have not seen a role, let alone a leadership role, for Greater Wellington on these issues. We agree that these are important issues and will continue to pursue opportunities to find solutions.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

3. Public transport

3.1 Electronic integrated ticketing proposal

3.1.1 Summary of submissions

680 (61%) of 1117 submitters commenting on electronic integrated ticketing supported the proposal.

Supporters thought electronic integrated ticketing would be a convenient service improvement for users. Some submitters thought the project should be given greater priority as the current system was behind the times.

Among both those that supported and those that opposed the proposal submitters identified a need for further information about the project. Both groups of submitters also raised concerns about costs. To these submitters \$39 million to implement a new ticketing system seemed to be too much, they did not feel the benefits justified the expenditure and for some it was more than they were willing to pay.

Submitters raised the issue of implementation costs skyrocketing, citing recent experiences in Australia. Submitters also questioned why Snapper could not simply be extended for use on trains and all buses, which they thought would cost significantly less. Submitters asked Greater Wellington to look to successful overseas models, rather than reinventing the wheel.

Other submitters thought continuing to use paper tickets, with more integrated fares was adequate. The necessity of ticket barriers was questioned, given the cost, and an honesty-based system was preferred by some submitters.

Other submitters were not opposed to the concept of electronic integrated ticketing being introduced one day, but did not see it as a priority at this time. They gave two main reasons for this:

- needing to get the basics right first – they thought the money would be better spend improving other aspects of the public transport system, primarily reliability of the rail system. Making fares cheaper was also raised.
- needing to restrain spending in the current economic climate. A new ticketing system was seen as a luxury which could wait until another day.

Some submitters opposed the proposal on the basis that it would result in a loss of jobs. Others do not like the current Snapper system and would not like it extended. There were concerns about the reliability of an electronic system and the practicalities of how ticket gates would work in Wellington Railway Station. Submitters also raised the risk of investing in technology that is likely to be superseded shortly and suggested waiting until mobile phone payment technology was further developed.

Concerns were raised about the usability for older passengers and how the system would work with the Super Gold Card. Submitters said that the system must consider the needs of people with impairments (e.g. wheelchair users, visually impaired, hearing impaired and deaf).

3.1.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

The introduction of an electronic integrated ticket for use on all Metlink services is a highly desirable and in some cases necessary enhancement of Wellington region's public transport services.

Policy 8.2 of the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2011 – 2021 (RPTP) is to “develop and implement an integrated electronic ticketing and fares system.”

An electronic integrated ticket will:

- allow customers to use one ticket or fare product, ie, pay once, regardless of mode or operator
- allow the development of the layered service approach set out in the RPTP
- provide more flexibility when changing fares and fare products
- speed up boarding of services
- improve revenue collection on rail
- provide valuable data on revenue, patronage and travel which will enhance monitoring, service design and quality and performance improvements
- enhance our ability to implement the proposals in the Wellington City Bus Review and the fare structure review.

The LTP includes budgetary provisions that would enable us to start to develop and implement an electronic integrated ticketing system over the next three years. The first step will be to carry out further investigation to scope the system and refine the costs. The investigation will consider matters such as:

- the need to gate Wellington Railway Station
- if Wellington Railway Station is gated, how many gates would be necessary and how would they operate
- how the system would work at outer stations
- what level of monitoring and enforcement is necessary
- how would the system work for those with impairments
- how would we incorporate the Super Gold free off peak travel scheme
- how many of the ticket machines will take cash

- etc.

As far as possible we will be building on the ticketing system currently being implemented in Auckland and we will use the national ticketing central system being procured by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). By using existing systems and processes we will reduce costs and importantly the risks associated with a project of this nature.

The costs that have been included within the LTP are budget provisions essentially for the system itself and the hardware that will be required to implement an electronic ticket on rail. The costs include an allowance for electronic gating of Wellington Railway Station and ticket readers and upload facilities at all stations.

To put the costs in context, the total cost of the Auckland ticketing system is \$98m with \$42m being paid by Auckland Transport and the remainder by the NZTA for the central system.

Greater Wellington needs a region and network-wide system for bus, rail and harbour ferry services which is independently owned and managed by it as manager and funder of the Metlink network. System suppliers, including Snapper, will have the opportunity to tender against our requirements in due course, in a transparent and contestable process which will ensure that we achieve the best value for money outcome.

While there are currently some integrated paper ticket products, large scale implementation of integrated paper tickets is administratively complex, and problematic in terms of sharing revenue between operators.

Technology is always developing and we would be looking to implement a system that was as future proof as possible, and able to incorporate technology developments such as use of mobile phones as electronic tickets.

Like other public transport activities, the development and implementation of an integrated electronic ticketing system as proposed in the LTP would be funded about 50% by users with the remainder coming from NZTA (25%) and ratepayers (25%). In order to secure NZTA funding a business case will need to be developed that demonstrates that the investment will provide good value for money. If the project does not demonstrate value for money it will not proceed.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

3.2 Public transport fares

3.2.1 Summary of submissions

Of the submissions received on this issue, most people sought a reduction in fares. This was mostly for the reasons of affordability (in some cases relative to car use) and to encourage more users. Concerns were raised about the impact of increasing fares on the

disadvantaged who may have the greatest need for public transport. Concessions were sought for beneficiaries, community service cardholders and university students.

Some submitters sought a greater portion of user pays. The most common reason given was an objection to paying for services that they do not use.

Submitters also made comments about fare levels and the appropriate apportionment of the costs of public transport between users and ratepayers.

Equity between bus and rail users was raised, with a concern that bus fares are being increased to pay for rail user costs.

There was also a concern that in setting fares the goal should be maintaining the fare recovery level rather than raising fares as a goal itself.

3.2.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

As a condition of on-going funding support from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), Greater Wellington must comply with NZTA's National Farebox Recovery Policy. The National Farebox Recovery Policy requires that fares nationally cover at least 50% of public transport operating costs nationally in the medium term. The policy also requires regional councils to prepare a farebox recovery policy, including farebox recovery targets, that must be included in their Regional Public Transport Plan.

The Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2011 – 2021 has only recently been adopted, and included a fare recovery policy which set farebox recovery target ranges at essentially current levels. The LTP signals increased costs for the provision of public transport services, and to remain within the target ranges fares must be increased so that users continue to meet their share of the costs. Rates and funding contributions from NZTA are also forecast to increase.

While there is a budget assumption that fare revenue will increase each year by 3%, an annual fare review will determine what, if any, fare increase is required in any given year. The objective is to stay within the fare recovery target, not to increase fares per se.

The issue of what, if any, concessions should be offered for public transport is being considered as part of the fare structure review currently underway. Public input on this review will be sought shortly. In the interim it would be inappropriate to make any changes to the current concessions that are available.

While it may not be widely recognised by the public, non users of public transport services do benefit from the funding of these services. The distribution of benefits is set out in the LTP in the Revenue and Financing Policy. The following distribution of benefits is listed:

- Road users benefit directly through less congested roads

- Public transport users benefit directly by travelling to their destination for a subsidised fare, and from more frequent and better quality services
- People in the region benefit indirectly through reduced pollution (reduced car emissions) and the existence of a public transport system as an alternative transport option
- Roading authorities benefit from reduced wear and tear on their networks and delayed construction of new roads.

The transport disadvantaged, including people with disabilities, benefit directly by obtaining transport services:

- Family and friends of those with disabilities benefit indirectly by less need to “taxi” people with disabilities.

The issue of equity between bus and rail fares has been raised. While it is true that there are more passenger trips by bus users, rail users make up the majority of passenger kilometres. Greater Wellington operates a network of services, and does not try and set fares based on the subsidy costs of individual trips, as this would be administratively impractical. The nature and basis for how fares are charged is being considered as part of the fare structure review.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

3.3 Other public transport matters

3.3.1 Summary of submissions

There was general support for continued improvement of the public transport network and services. Frequently raised areas for specific improvement included:

- Increased services to, from and within Wairarapa
- Increased services to, from and within Otaki
- Better integration between cycling and public transport, particularly bringing forward the installation of bicycle racks on buses, improved bicycle parking at railway stations and increased capacity for the carriage of bicycles on peak rail services
- Upgrading Upper Hutt Railway Station
- A new railway station for Raumati
- Extended Park and Ride facilities at various stations
- A bus service for Riverstone Terraces, Upper Hutt

- A bus service for Tawa hills.

3.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

It is pleasing to see the general support for continued improvements to the public transport network. In terms of the frequently raised areas for specific improvement:

- Increased services to, from and within Wairarapa.

Wairarapa public transport services have been reviewed over the last 12 months. Changes to bus services have been approved and we are currently in negotiation with the operator to bring the changes into effect in the second half of the year. We are still working through possible changes to rail services. One of the solutions that has the potential for early implementation is reconfiguration of carriages to better align capacity with demand. Running a longer train will have timetable implications with the ex Wellington services expected to take an extra 8 minutes to reach Masterton. We are currently seeking confirmation from KiwiRail that the extra time will not affect other services in the Hutt Valley, and that the cars can be reconfigured from an operational perspective.

The LTP includes funding for the next financial year for converting 6 SE carriages that were used on the Hutt line for use on the Wairarapa line. We have also sought funding from the New Zealand Transport Agency. If funding is approved we will look to commence the work. The extra carriages will provide a significant boost to capacity on the line.

- Increased services to, from and within Otaki.

Bus services in Otaki have recently been reviewed with input from the community. A number of changes are planned and will be implemented following conclusion of contract negotiations with the operator.

- Better integration between cycling and public transport, particularly bringing forward the installation of bicycle racks on buses, improved bicycle parking at railway stations and increased capacity for the carriage of bicycles on peak rail services.

The installation of bike racks on buses has been considered and is provided for in the LTP in 2017/18. Given the pressures on the public transport budget this project is not seen as a priority requiring earlier implementation. Over the past few years there has been significant improvement in bicycle parking at railway stations, and a new policy on the carriage of bikes on trains was adopted. This policy is to be reviewed over the coming months.

- Upgrading Upper Hutt Railway Station.

Since it took over ownership of rail stations, car parks etc last year, Greater Wellington has been developing an asset management plan and an associated asset

investment prioritisation tool to assist decision making on its spend on rail asset maintenance and improvement. In addition it has completed a condition assessment of the assets. The LTP includes funding of \$3.5m per year for investing in rail infrastructure assets. Upgrading Upper Hutt Railway Station will be considered alongside other upgrade work on the rail infrastructure assets.

- A new railway station for Raumati.

During 2012 a detailed review and update of the Regional Rail Plan (RRP) will be undertaken. The primary objective will be to refresh RS1, whilst re-examining the Implementation Pathway beyond this point. The detailed review includes some specific issues, including new stations at Lindale and Raumati. There will be an opportunity for community input firstly through the Metlink 2012 customer satisfaction survey (which will ask what is important to existing and potential users in relation to the RRP's Targeted Outcomes), and secondly through community engagement meetings to be held over the coming months. The RRP sets our strategy for the overall future development of the passenger rail network, and is the appropriate place to consider changes to the network such as new lines or stations.

- Extended Park and Ride facilities at various stations.

Since it took over ownership of rail stations, car parks etc last year Greater Wellington has been developing an asset management plan and an associated asset investment prioritisation tool to assist decision making on its spend on rail asset maintenance and improvement. In addition it has completed a condition assessment of the assets. The LTP includes funding of \$3.5m per year for investing in rail infrastructure assets. Extending park and ride facilities at stations will be considered alongside other upgrade work on the rail infrastructure assets.

- A bus service for Riverstone Terraces, Upper Hutt.

Greater Wellington Regional Council carries out regular service reviews with the aim of delivering an effective, efficient and integrated public transport network.

There are two types of reviews, area-wide reviews which look at all corridors and routes in the review area and targeted reviews which are designed to be more responsive to smaller scale changes. The Regional Public Transport Plan 2011-2021 details the schedule of area-wide service reviews. Riverstone Terraces is part of the Eastern Review which is scheduled to begin in 2012/13.

Area-wide reviews give us the opportunity to look at the network as a whole and meet the challenge of balancing both provision and funding of services. A targeted review often proves to be more problematic as this micro approach to reviewing an individual service does not often offer opportunities to balance the cost for a new service with the potential to rationalise service in other areas.

Whilst we are aware of the feedback from the community of Riverstone Terraces and are currently exploring options which provide service at no additional cost to the ratepayer the optimal time to review the potential to implement a service in this area would be during the Eastern service review.

- A bus service for Tawa hills.

Greater Wellington Regional Council carries out regular service reviews with the aim of delivering an effective, efficient and integrated public transport network.

There are two types of reviews, area-wide reviews which look at all corridors and routes in the review area and targeted reviews which are designed to be more responsive to smaller scale changes. The Regional Public Transport Plan 2011-2021 details the schedule of area-wide service reviews. Tawa services are included within the Porirua area which is scheduled to be reviewed in 2015/16.

Area-wide reviews give us the opportunity to look at the network as a whole and meet the challenge of balancing both provision and funding of services. A targeted review often proves to be more problematic as this micro approach to reviewing an individual service does not often offer opportunities to balance the cost for a new service with the potential to rationalise service in other areas.

Tawa was included in the review of bus services in Porirua in 2009/10. At that time a services for the Tawa hills was not considered to be warranted based on the assessed demand and travel times.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

4. Water supply

4.1 Summary of submissions

In general, there was support for increased water conservation to defer the need to provide additional water storage capacity, for both economic and environmental reasons. This included calls for fixing leaking infrastructure and incentivising the installation of domestic rainwater storage tanks. Submitters had a mix of views on the most appropriate form of additional water storage capacity for the future – dam versus lake storage. There was also mixed views among submitters on the appropriateness of introducing domestic water meters. Increasing the resilience of the water supply to emergencies was supported. Another theme in the submissions was a desire to see the bulk water supply extended to serve Kapiti.

43 submissions were received calling for fluoridation of the bulk water supply to cease. The reasons given to discontinue fluoridation included:

- a lack of scientific consensus that fluoridation is safe

- the health risks outweigh the health benefits
- it is not effective in treating tooth decay
- the legal basis for its use is open to challenge
- it is not used in other countries (particular Europe) and/or other parts of New Zealand
- it is a form of mass medication that negates individual freedom of choice.

4.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

Greater Wellington continues to look at options for meeting demand for water. We recognise the very significant benefits of demand reduction and have been working with the other Local Authorities on joint initiatives. Next year will see more focus on agreeing effective demand reduction strategies – this does not include water meters. Greater Wellington does not manage reticulation to consumers, which is where the majority of water is lost through leaks. We are aware that the city councils have made significant progress in leak reduction over recent years as can be seen by record low levels of water demand this year.

Rainfall modelling found that rainwater tanks could meet a high percentage of households' water needs for toilet flushing and outdoor use. However it was found that it would not negate the need to increase water storage to meet peak demand in dry summers from a growing Wellington population.

Greater Wellington does not have the ability to require people to install rainwater tanks. However, through the Regional Policy Statement Greater Wellington requires city and district councils, when considering resource consents and reviewing or changing their district plans, to give particular regard to requiring water collection, water demand management options, and water reuse and/or water recycling measures so that water is used efficiently.

The Wellington Region Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group has applied to the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management for funding to subsidise 210 litre rainwater tanks (complete with diverter, stand and instruction manual) for households across the region for emergency use.

All water sourced for water supply within the Wellington area contains a natural level of fluoride and Greater Wellington, upon advice from the Ministry of Health, increases the fluoride level to achieve the guideline value set by the Drinking Water Standards of New Zealand.

In response to the 2010 submissions on fluoridation Greater Wellington requested feedback from the Ministry of Health regarding its policy and guidelines for the fluoridation of water supplies and the evidential basis for the fluoride levels set in the Drinking Water Standards.

In terms of policy, the Ministry of Health; *‘strongly recommends water fluoridation as a safe, effective and affordable way to improve and protect oral health across the population. This position is adopted on the basis of a large body of historical and current research that confirms the safety of water fluoridation, within certain parameters.’*

In May 2011 the Regional Public Health Service presented* to Greater Wellington the views of the District Health Board regarding recent publicity and current research about the risks and benefits associated with water fluoridation. These views were very much supportive of the MoH’s policy and recommendations.

It is in light of this information that Greater Wellington, by agreement with the City Councils, will continue its policy of water fluoridation for the cities of Upper and Lower Hutt (excluding Petone), Wellington and Porirua.

* A similar presentation and other fluoride information can be found on the MoH website, (<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/fluoride-resource>). The information available through this website is up to date and deals with the majority of questions relating to the public health aspects of fluoride.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

5. Environment

5.1 Expansion of pest control proposal

5.1.1 Summary of submissions

886 (80%) of 1108 submitters commenting on the pest control proposal supported the expansion of possum control and changing the way that we rate for it.

There was acknowledgement amongst both those that supported and those that opposed the proposal of the good work achieved to date reducing bovine Tb and improving biodiversity.

The most common reason for supporting the proposal given was conservation/biodiversity benefits. Some submitters supported the proposal but thought we should look for more cost effective ways of doing the work.

One submitter supported the proposal, but thought landowners should have more say on the pest management methods used on their land as they would be paying the majority share of the costs. In his case, this would be an increased use of 1080 as he found it more cost effective.

Titahi Bay - Makara (one submitter) and Karori (one submitter) were raised as good target areas for the expanded programme.

Of those submitters that did not support expansion of pest management the main reason given was opposition to the continued and expanded use of 1080/poison/unhumane forms of pest control.

Some submitters were supportive of our current pest control and happy for it to continue at current levels, but thought expanding it was unaffordable in the current economic climate.

Other submitters opposed the proposal because they think it is the Animal Health Board's responsibility.

Some landowners objected because they did not think possums were a problem in their area (Otaki/Te Horo and Paekakariki Hill).

One submitter, while supportive of the Council's work, objected to contributing to the reduction of bovine Tb, as this was mainly of private benefit to landowners.

5.1.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Greater Wellington is committed to long-term possum control across the Wellington region. Reducing possum populations is essential to achieve the objectives of the national strategy to eradicate bovine Tb, whilst also protecting and enhancing our native biodiversity.

Most of the possum work to date in the region has been undertaken under the Animal Health Board's national Tb strategy. The proposed increase in targeted rates to fund this strategy is to more fairly reflect the direct benefit to landowners.

Greater Wellington works to control a wide range of pests at a number of high-value ecological sites. We are also aiming to expand our work into areas where bovine Tb possum control has ceased. This is to ensure that the environmental and economic benefits achieved to date can be maintained into the future.

Effective ongoing possum control requires committed long-term funding for all lands in the region, including the Crown estate. Greater Wellington is conscious of areas which have not received any possum control, in particular, rural areas around Wellington City and Porirua. Our plan is to move into these sites as funds allow. A mix of targeted and general rate contributions is considered to be a fair way of funding this work.

The effective control of possums uses a range of methods and pesticides. Our staff work with landowners to identify and agree methods that are cost effective, where risks can be managed. Greater Wellington recognises that the compound 1080 is of significant concern to some sectors of the community. Our use of 1080 has reduced significantly since the 1990s. Its use is now constrained to rugged, inaccessible areas where alternative methods are inappropriate. We have participated in a number of studies and believe that the benefits of using 1080 outweigh the negative effects. In 2007 the Environmental Risk Management Authority reviewed the use of 1080 and allowed its ongoing use, and in

2011 the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment released a paper supporting its continued use. Greater Wellington continues to investigate any alternative possum control methods as they become available.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

5.2 Other pest management matters

5.2.1 Summary of submissions

Some general comments on pest management were received.

The need to do more to control feral cats was raised. Rabbits, hares, goats, mustelids, rats and pest plants were also identified as needing more control. Increased surveillance and early intervention was also requested. One submitter requested that we do not cull wild goats.

Some submitters wanted a change in pest control methods eg less 1080, trapping only and using work schemes for the unemployed.

Some submitters wanted more investment in pest control.

A submitter raised new national pathway plans under proposed legislation and that Greater Wellington should be thinking about what plans it would like to see developed.

5.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

The Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) includes a wide range of pest plants and animals which present a threat to our region. The RPMS outlines the pest management responsibilities of Greater Wellington and landowners. Greater Wellington has responsibilities for pests of regional significance where those pests are either new to the region or are limited in number and density, and eradication is possible. Depending on the situation and species, we offer advice, assistance or the sale of materials to landowners where they have responsibility to manage pests. In most cases, widespread RPMS pests such as rabbits, gorse, and thistle species are the responsibility of landowners. This reflects the direct benefits to landowners that arise from their control. Greater Wellington monitors a range of RPMS pests to ensure landowners are undertaking their responsibilities in accordance with the Strategy rules.

Large scale pest control in the Wellington region has historically focused on agricultural pests like rabbits, possums and gorse. In more recent times the focus has expanded to include biodiversity protection, with intensive control now concentrated on our Key Native Ecosystems. Control is focused on these sites because they feature the best biodiversity in the Wellington region and integrated pest management gives the best results. Greater Wellington takes responsibility for managing pests in KNE and other high values biodiversity sites.

Greater Wellington undertakes pest management activities using a combination of staff, contractors and volunteer groups. This approach has been proven to give the most effective pest management results. We have utilised unemployed people through Central Government works schemes, with some success. We will continue to review the benefit of these schemes when they become available.

The effective control of pest plants and animals uses a range of methods and techniques. Management is carefully considered for each species and site, before the most suitable method is applied.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

5.3 Sustainable land management proposal

5.3.1 Summary of submissions

781 (72%) of 1077 submitters commenting on sustainable land managed supported the proposal to increase funding to:

- develop Land Environment Plans for lowland areas
- increase Greater Wellington's share of work costs from 30% to 50% should MAF funding no longer be available.

Of submitters that did not support the proposal for additional funding the main reason given was that as the landowners are the primary beneficiaries and/or exacerbators they should pay more (in some cases, all) of the costs. Some supporters also thought landowners should play more of the costs.

There was a request for Greater Wellington to support a NZ Dryland Forests Initiative/University of Canterbury proposal to Ministry of Science and Innovation for research funding 2013-2018. The proposal seeks \$3.8 m funding from the Ministry of Science and Innovation over six years for tree breeding, management of trials and an extension programme, with a view to supplying new, elite planting stock of naturally durable eucalypts that are adapted to drought prone erodible lands of the east coast within that 6-year timeframe. They are seeking a contribution from Greater Wellington of \$5,000 per annum for six years.

5.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

The level of regional council contribution to this work represents the regional benefit of the land management programmes in priority catchments. While it is acknowledged that landowner benefit does occur as a result of the programme the benefit to local infrastructure, catchment waterways, biodiversity and coastal ecosystems needs to be acknowledged. Fifty percent is the highest level of funding assistance and is applied to priority catchments where sediment loss is greatest. Farm Plans outside of these priority catchments receive funding assistance of either 30% or 40%, reflecting the greater direct benefits received by the landowners. These costs only reflect the inputs required to

commence a change in the management of soils. Ongoing costs to the landowner, such as loss of productive land, fence and access track maintenance, are not included.

Greater Wellington was an initial supporter of the New Zealand Drylands Forest programme and there are already three trials set up in the Wairarapa to support propagation of high performing ground durable eucalypt species. The proposal fits in well with the current Land Management programmes and will offer diversity in future forest species that will suit a large proportion of the region. This is an extremely good investment that integrates well into existing programmes and offers opportunities for Akura Conservation Centre to be part of the supply chain.

Officers recommend supporting the proposed \$5,000 per annum investment in the New Zealand Drylands Forest Initiative from 2013-18, subject to funding being secured from other regional councils, CRIs and affected landowners. This funding is required before the Crown will consider committing its share.

5.4 Biodiversity management

5.4.1 Summary of submissions

Local authorities and community groups expressed appreciation for the assistance Greater Wellington has given them with their biodiversity restoration projects. Concerns were raised about potential reductions in funding for community biodiversity projects.

Schools and others involved in the Enviroschools Programme thanked Greater Wellington for their support of the programme and requested that Greater Wellington continue providing appropriate funding for a regional co-ordinator.

The Enviroschools Foundation requested an increase in budget from \$60,000 + GST per annum to \$95,000 + GST for 2012/13 (with inflation adjustments for out years). This would cover a 20% increase in hours for the regional co-ordinator and an increase in hour rate, as well as increasing the operating budget to cover resources etc to bring it in line with other regions of a similar size.

Submitters wanted to see more evidence in the Long-Term Plan of Greater Wellington's commitment to implementing the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan.

5.4.2 Officer comment on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

The mandate and challenge for Greater Wellington is to address the decline of indigenous biodiversity across the region by focussing on the areas of highest biodiversity value. This way we can maximise the effectiveness of our limited resources. This approach reflects international best practice for biodiversity management, the NZ Biodiversity Strategy 2000 and the Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2011.

As part of the establishment of a Biodiversity department within Greater Wellington, all existing biodiversity-related programmes are being reviewed in terms of the goals of the Biodiversity Strategy. Special emphasis is being placed on high value ecosystems and two of these, Wairarapa Moana and Porirua Harbour and catchment, will become focus areas. A plan to involve, educate and engage the broad community, including schools, will be developed for each of these areas in the next financial year. The part that “Take Action for Water” may play in these programmes will be assessed at that time.

One of the implications of the focus on the areas of highest biodiversity value is a gradual shift away from supporting community groups working on lower value sites to encouraging groups to work on higher value sites. However, Greater Wellington will honour the funding and support commitments made to all care groups through to the end of their existing five-year support agreements. Greater Wellington will seek to link groups working on lower value sites with their local council to obtain ongoing support.

The existing support for Enviroschools consists of a grant of \$60,000 per annum to support a part-time coordinator and the provision of access to office space, computer and general support.

Enviroschools is well regarded in the community. Greater Wellington’s schools-based education programme will cease on 30 June 2012 and there may be opportunities, particularly as part of the Porirua Harbour and Wairarapa Moana community projects to integrate with the Enviroschools programme to deliver key messages to schools.

There is currently no provision in the proposed LTP for a \$35,000 increase in funding. However, it is clear from the submissions that there is very strong support for this increase.

Regarding Porirua Harbour, it is recognised that the proposed additional funding of \$90,000 for the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy was not highlighted sufficiently in the draft LTP document. This will be remedied in the final document.

Once additional funding is confirmed, the Porirua Harbour and Catchments Strategy Steering group will determine priorities for action in line with the recently approved strategy.

Officers recommend supporting the request for \$35,000 per annum to secure additional resources for the Enviroschools regional co-ordinator.

5.5 Other environment matters

5.5.1 Summary of submissions

Submitters requested further action from Greater Wellington on a number of environmental and resource management issues, in particular:

- improving water quality – there was particular concern about the pollution of waterways from agricultural activities and the persistent of toxic algae on the Hutt River
- protecting and enhancing Porirua Harbour and its catchment
- banning fracking
- addressing air pollution from domestic fires in Kapiti and Wairarapa.

5.5.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

We are well aware of the range of water quality issues affecting waterways across Wellington region, particularly around impacts from a range of land management and urban waste water practices. We continue to monitor the quality of our major waterways, and have a number of broad programmes in place to help us manage water quality. These include consenting all industrial, farming and earthworks related discharges; managing the taking of water within sustainable allocation limits set by our regional plans; working with the primary sector to produce guidelines to better manage stock around waterways; and working with the land development sector around improved practices at earthworks sites. National policy means that we will need to adopt a programme of improving water quality around set limits for specific catchments. Our current review of our regional plans will be developing new policies and provisions around land and water management to improve water quality.

In relation to the monitoring toxic algae in the Hutt River, Greater Wellington, together with several other regional councils, is helping fund PhD research into the environmental factors that promote the growth of toxic cyanobacteria, including the role nutrient concentrations and stream conditions (habitat) may play. It is anticipated that this information in combination with investigations undertaken by Greater Wellington will contribute to a future catchment management plan for the Hutt River catchment of which one of the objectives will be to reduce cyanobacteria growth.

Greater Wellington is a partner in the recently released Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan. We already undertake a wide range of monitoring in the harbour and catchment, including monthly water quality sampling on the three main tributary streams, stream flow, the suitability of the water for contact recreation at three locations, general harbour water quality (nutrients, clarity, etc) at six locations, sedimentation rates at selected locations within both arms of the harbour on an annual basis, sediment contaminant levels and sediment dwelling fauna at two-yearly intervals in five subtidal locations of the harbour and general health of the estuarine sediments and its fauna and flora at four intertidal locations, two in each arm. In response to priorities in the strategy, we have recently increased the number of sedimentation measuring points in the harbour and are currently working with specialists to refine a sediment transport model for the harbour. This is going to involve installation of continuous turbidity sensors on the lower reaches of the three main tributary streams early in 2012/13. Work

also continues on assessing the potential for seagrass restoration in the harbour, a priority action identified in the Strategy and Action Plan.

The Porirua Harbour and catchment also remains a focus for our regulatory work, in terms of consenting large earthworks discharges and stream works associated with new subdivisions. More and more, these consents are requiring a higher standard of practice including reducing sediment discharges and increasing the level of mitigation for the loss of watercourses. These requirements are reflected in more robust consent conditions. Our regional monitoring programme and strategy incorporates all but the very minor resource consents. All major earthworks sites in particular are subjected to very regular (up to fortnightly or monthly) monitoring inspections to ensure we are doing all we can to encourage full compliance with consent conditions.

Currently there is no oil exploration drilling in this region, however we are taking steps to ensure we are ready to deal with any future applications which may involve fracking. This includes ensuring we draw on best national practice in terms of the use of the best available technical expertise to advise on the risks and impacts, and the application of appropriate consent conditions should consents be granted. We have no powers to 'ban' activities such as fracking, nor at this stage do we consider it necessary to apply a moratorium to this activity. However, the current review of our regional plans may be able to better guide how we assess and manage fracking.

Air quality monitoring, emission inventories and analysis of particulate matter samples show that fires for home heating are responsible for poor air quality (i.e., elevated particulate matter (PM10) concentrations) during the winter months in the Masterton and Carterton urban areas of the Wairarapa airshed. The Wairarapa airshed is classified as a 'polluted airshed' under the national environmental standards for air quality because the average number of exceedences (high pollution nights) per year is more than one. Less is known about air quality in the Kapiti airshed. A short-term air quality investigation in Raumati South (Kapiti Coast) during winter 2010 found localised and degraded air quality due to domestic fires during periods of calm and cold weather. PM10 monitoring using the national standard reference method in other areas of the Kapiti Coast is now needed to obtain a fully-informed picture of air quality - as the Raumati South results are unlikely to apply to the wider airshed.

As part of the review of the regional air plan, the Natural Resource Management Committee - Te Upoko Taiao decided in April 2012 to further investigate options that would improve air quality from domestic fires in the region, specifically Masterton. The options if approved would affect all homeowners in the region, including the Kapiti Coast.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

6. Flood protection and control works

6.1 Summary of submissions

The points raised regarding flood protection included:

- wanting increased restoration of native vegetation along riverbanks
- wanting a greater share of the costs of flood protection being borne by those who benefit directly
- support for funding of an environmental riverhand for the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers
- concerns about the environmental impacts of flood protection works
- new floodplain management plan for Mangaone stream, updated plans for Waitohu, Otaki and Waikanae, repealing and revision of the Mangaroa River plan
- more flexibility for landowners to maintain their own rivers
- specific works were requested for the Mangaone, Rangiuru and Waipoua rivers

Local authorities supported the activities proposed for their areas.

6.2 Officer comments on points raised on the submissions and recommendations

Greater Wellington has increased the amount of native planting undertaken along rivers and streams in the region significantly over the last few years. This work will remain an important component of our annual budget. Whilst there is often a demand to do more, we have had to consider affordability in each case. We also need to consider what the most appropriate flood protection measures are in each situation. Native plantings may not be appropriate if existing defences are poor, and further structural measures are a priority. We will continue to encourage local community groups to help with native planting and maintenance, as this is where the community can add great value.

The flood protection work undertaken by Greater Wellington has a national, regional and local benefit and Council has had to apportion the costs to reflect where these benefits lie and ability to pay. The current policy of funding up to half of these costs regionally has been carefully considered by Council and considered a good balance between the direct flood protection provided and the greater regional economic, social and environmental benefits.

Flood protection staff work closely with Fish & Game NZ, Forest & Bird NZ and local iwi to ensure that flood protection work in and or near rivers is managed appropriately to minimise environmental impacts. All work undertaken is either allowed for in the Regional Plan or covered by resource consents. We are in the process of preparing new applications for many of these consents and this will be the opportunity for people to have input into the way in which we undertake our work and to ensure the environmental impacts are minimised. A new Code of Best Practice is also being drafted to guide river management practices as part of the consent renewal work.

We have received a number of submissions in support for the provision of an environmental river hand to assist with work in the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers. There were no submissions against this proposal and recommend maintaining this item as provided for in the draft LTP.

There were a number of submissions seeking additional flood mitigation information, particularly for the Rangiuru and Mangaone Streams in Otaki, the Mangaroa River in Upper Hutt and the Waipoua River in Masterton. Each of these areas are included in the review of existing Floodplain Management Plans or in new ones proposed to be commenced shortly.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

7. Parks

7.1 Summary of submissions

848 (77%) of 1099 submitters who commented on the proposed improvements to regional parks supported the proposal.

Of those submitters that did not support the proposal the main reasons were:

- that the parks are already of sufficient quality and improvements are not a financial priority at this time, or
- they preferred natural, less developed parks.

In regards to regional parks, there was strong support for easy and medium grade tracks for walkers and cyclists, especially tracks that can be used for commuting as well as recreation. The Hutt River trail was cited as a successful example of this type of track. There was particular support for a cycleway through Queen Elizabeth Park from Paekakariki to Raumati. Submitters also raised dog walking areas, mountain bike tracks, 4WD access, shooting ranges and fitness areas as improvements submitters would like to see.

The proposed heritage precinct at Queen Elizabeth Park received mixed support. There were concerns that the proposed printing press museum was more suited to an urban environment and not connected with the park's heritage. Concerns were also raised about the large budget for capital expenditure in Queen Elizabeth Park relative to other parks.

There was support for Greater Wellington improving the sustainability of farming operations in parks, particularly in regards to parks in the Porirua Harbour catchment. There was also support for continued pest control and environmental restoration across the parks network, particularly riparian environments.

There was concern for Greater Wellington to advocate for the mitigation of potential impacts on the parks network from state highway developments.

7.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

Improvements to the parks network proposed in the Long Term Plan are designed to enhance the visitor experience for people in a number of different areas. Perhaps most importantly, Greater Wellington believes that as a land manager and land owner, and as a leader in environmental management, we have a responsibility to demonstrate how sustainable land use practices can be integrated into the management of our parks. The improvements proposed in the LTP, amongst other things, will enable the retirement of stream catchments and exclusion of livestock from streams across the Parks network so that we can deliver on this responsibility. Funding will continue for pest control and tree planting, including wetlands and riparian areas.

In addition, some of the proposed new expenditure is required to provide basic facilities, such as toilets, in areas where we have recently taken on a management role, such as Baring Head. We also have significant management challenges in the Baring Head area around illegal access to the coastal area that will likely require some physical interventions to resolve which will require funding.

The coming year will also see an assessment of our track network, and an associated identification process to assess the gaps in the provision of easy to medium walking and cycling tracks which will allow greater accessibility to parks for families and others who may be less fit and able but who would like to visit them.

Greater Wellington is working with the community on plans for a family-friendly cycle track running from Paekakariki to Raumati South through Queen Elizabeth Park. Some work has already been completed on the “Yankee Trail” south of Whareroa Road, and we are encouraging community groups to seek external funding to assist its completion. We are also working with the New Zealand Transport Agency for the provision of a cycleway in Queen Elizabeth Park, as part of measures that mitigate the impacts of state highway development on the park. Other measures will ensure the most useful connections possible for walkers, cyclists and horse riders are maintained across both Belmont Regional Park and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

With regard to specific activities in regional parks, Greater Wellington aims to accommodate a wide range of activities across the regional parks, although not every activity will be possible in every park. Visitors may already take dogs to all parks except Battle Hill, and those farming areas in Belmont Regional Park and the Parangarahu Lakes and Baring Head areas.

Hunting is permitted in the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests, Hutt Water Collection Area, Kaitoke Regional Park and by balloted permit in East Harbour Regional Park and the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas. The Upper Hutt Deerstalkers Club runs a shooting range in the Pakuratahi Forest. Should another shooting club approach Greater Wellington with a proposal to develop a similar range elsewhere, it would be considered according to the criteria in the Parks Network Plan.

While many people use park tracks and other areas for exercise; Greater Wellington sees the development of fitness areas as the role of city or district councils, as they require specialised equipment and provide for local, more specific recreation needs.

The heritage values of Queen Elizabeth Park are rich and diverse, spanning natural, cultural and technological areas. Greater Wellington considers that the proposed heritage precinct at Queen Elizabeth Park will help educate visitors about the park, attract those who might not otherwise visit, and help preserve regionally important aspects of our heritage.

In relation to motorised recreation, Greater Wellington already provides the largest area of public land in the region for this activity through access to the Akatarawa Forest, and we have a strong working relationship with groups representing those who have an interest in motorised recreation. The forest is accessible to users from throughout the region.

Greater Wellington works closely with the region's Territorial Authorities and the Department of Conservation to achieve complementary recreational offerings and enhancing ecological connections. Greater Wellington is part of a joint agency bid to the New Zealand Cycle Trail network for a "Great Ride" from Wellington to Wairarapa, with potential links to the proposed "Great Harbour Way/ Te Aranui o Pōneke". Part of the Wellington-Wairarapa cycleway runs along the historic rail formation from Maymorn to Kaitoke, which would support its future improvement.

Officers recommend no change from the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22.

8. Investments

8.1 Earthquake strengthening or co-location proposal

8.1.1 Summary of submissions

799 (74%) of 1079 submitters supported the proposal to either earthquake strengthen Greater Wellington's Wakefield Street offices or co-locate with other local authorities.

Many submitters specifically identified that they supported the option of co-locating over earthquake strengthening, either because it would save costs or was sensible given they thought amalgamation was likely in the near future.

Of those submitters that did not support the proposal the reasons given include:

- more economical to move to another building and sell the old site (some said this should be out of the CBD either to reduce costs and/or natural hazard risk)
- concerns about what seem excessive costs.

Concerns about costs were also raised by those that supported the proposal, along with a need to balance cost against risk and not go overboard with strengthening.

8.1.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Since the draft LTP was approved for consultation on 8 March 2012 further information has been obtained on the seismic performance of the Regional Council Centre. The building is classified as earthquake prone and the proposal in the draft LTP is no longer valid. Alternative options and funding arrangements need to be put in place. **Attachment 3** outlines the new information received, the options available and a proposed way forward.

Officers recommend reconsidering the funding proposed in the draft Long-Term Plan 2012-22 in light of the advice contained in Attachment 3.

8.2 Forestry cutting rights proposal

8.2.1 Summary of submissions

659 (58%) of 1135 submitters commenting on the forestry cutting rights supported the proposal to sell them. Some of this support was conditional on things such as:

- reducing the term to 10 years from 60 years
- using the proceeds to repay debt
- replanting
- sustainable management
- maintaining public access to recreation
- selling to New Zealand-owned interests
- selling to foreign interests.

Of those submitters against the sale the most common reasons given were:

- a desire to see publicly owned assets retained in public ownership – this included a desire to generate income from the assets in the future and a concern jobs and profits would be lost overseas
- concerns about public access to the forests for recreation being restricted or lost altogether. The value of access to the Akatarawa forest was particularly noted by several submitters
- concerns about the inflexibility of the proposed 60 year term.

Regarding public access and recreation, submitters were concerned from experience elsewhere in New Zealand that mechanisms to protect public access often do not work in

practice and the public ends up locked out. For this reason they preferred public ownership and/or were very cautious about private ownership of the cutting rights.

A number of submitters questioned the financial sense of the proposal – if a private company could profit from the cutting rights then surely Greater Wellington could too? Some thought it was a good idea for Greater Wellington to be exiting the forestry business.

There was a desire for more information to assess the proposal.

Amongst both supporters and those opposed there were concerns about the potential environment impacts of logging operations (erosion, siltation etc). Selling the cutting rights was seen by some submitters as an opportunity to ensure best practice in sustainable forestry management was achieved in the future.

Concerns were also raised about selling at the bottom of the market/predicting future prices.

New Zealand Farm Forestry Association wanted assurance that cutting rights to their demonstration block, Stanton Park, in Akatarawa Forest would be excluded from the sale.

8.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

(a) Background

Greater Wellington has approximately 3,700 hectares of plantation forest in the western side of the region and approximately 1,500 hectares in the southeast Wairarapa area.

The forests were planted over many years and for different reasons including improving water quality for future water catchments, job creation and particularly in the Wairarapa for soil conservation purposes. The cost of the forestry development has been debt funded and the returns from forestry have fluctuated, resulting in the Council still holding considerable debt. Approximately 70,000 tonnes a year of the western forests are being logged and 15,000 tonnes from the Wairarapa forests. The Wairarapa logging volume will increase over the coming years when the Stoney Creek forest reaches maturity.

While Greater Wellington generally supplies to local sawmills at market prices, the prices are related to the international price for logs which are traded in US dollars. The high New Zealand dollar relative to the US dollar and increasing fuel prices have resulted in relatively poor forestry returns for some years.

As with any commodity market, there are differing views as where prices will go in the medium to long term.

Greater Wellington has registered its forests for the Emissions Trading Scheme and it will continue to manage the carbon credits and debits associated with the forestry operations.

(b) Proposal

The proposal in the LTP is to sell the cutting rights for the forests for a period of 60 years. On concluding a sale, the Council would receive a sum to put towards the debt associated with the forestry operations. Selling the cutting rights leads to certainty, whereas if the Council continued with its forestry operation, it will have to take the ups and downs of the forestry market returns for the foreseeable future.

There is quite a cost associated with preparing the contract documents for selling the cutting rights, undertaking a marketing campaign and then paying a fee on completion of the sale. The Council’s expenditure in this regard can be made less risky by undertaking a staged process. The first stage would be to advertise for Expressions of Interest to obtain indicative prices. Once the Council has evaluated the indicative prices, it can then decide whether or not it wishes to proceed with the tender process. The table below indicates the preliminary costs for undertaking this work. The costs are preliminary because the final costs payable are likely to include an element related to the price received.

	\$000	
	2012/13	2013/14
1. Expressions of Interest	200	
2. Tender of cutting rights		1,500
Draft LTP amounts	500	1,200

As part of the sale process, provision would be made for maintaining full recreational access to the forests, very much as it is at the present time. This means that the only restrictions are largely around areas where logging taking place. It is expected that Greater Wellington will continue to employ a forestry ranger, not only to supervise elements of the contract but also to ensure that there is a harmonious relationship between the forestry contractor and other forest users.

Officers recommend that Greater Wellington proceeds with selling the cutting rights to the forests on a staged basis with the first stage being to seek Expressions of Interest in the 2012/13 year, and provide for \$0.2m in 2012/13 and \$1.5m in 2013/14.

8.3 Proposal to sell surplus land

8.3.1 Summary of submissions

590 (51%) of 1148 submitters commenting on the proposed sale of surplus land supported the proposal.

Submitters noted the land area described did not match the maps provided.

Some of the support was conditional on:

- native and/or regenerating bush being retained or covenanted

- sale to New Zealand-owned interests
- obtaining a good price.

Some submitters suggested Greater Wellington investigate other areas suitable for sale.

Of those submitters opposed to the proposal the most common reasons given were:

- opposition to the sale of public land and assets – some objected on principle, others thought it should be retained as a source of income for the future, others were concerned that what is surplus now maybe need in the future and once it is gone it is gone
- a desire to retain the land so its recreation, amenity and biodiversity/conservation values can continue to be enjoyed by the regional community.

A number of submitters noted particular recreation and amenity values of the land proposed for sale:

Mangaroa

- skyline
- hang gliding launch and landing
- walking/running
- mountain biking
- access to Mt Climie and connection with other track networks.

Maungakotukutuku

- walking/tramping
- motorised recreation
- mountain biking
- connection to Karapoti.

Some submitters commented that Greater Wellington and volunteer groups spend so much time, effort and expense restoring native vegetation on Greater Wellington lands, so questioned why we were proposing to sell areas of native and regenerating bush.

Submitters wanted assurances that under any sale appropriate mechanisms would be in place to preserve areas of native and regenerating bush, maintain public access, prevent soil erosion and protect water catchments.

There was less opposition to the proposed sale of the Mangapakeha land, although one submitter thought it would be more economical to retain this nursery than expand Akura and another said it would be a cost to make the land suitable for sale.

Amongst both submitters that supported the proposal and those opposed there were concerns about what the land would be able to be used for in the future and the potential environmental impacts of those uses.

Some submitters raised whether the land or a portion of the proceeds of the sale should be offered to the relevant iwi.

8.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

(a) Background

The LTP includes a proposal to sell three blocks of land at Mangapakeha in Wairarapa, Mangaroa in Upper Hutt and Maungakotukutuku on the Kapiti Coast. Below is an outline of the rationale for proposing the sales and a recommendation about how to proceed.

(b) Mangapakeha land

This is an area of 16 hectares of rural land situated 35km from Masterton and is a nursery for propagating poplar and willow trees to assist with Greater Wellington's river and soil conservation works. It is proposed to lease land adjacent to the main Akura Nursery allowing the Mangapakeha block to be sold. Rationalising the location of the nurseries to Akura will result in a more efficient operation.

(c) Surplus forestry land

(i) Mangaroa (333 ha)

This land is to the east of Upper Hutt central business district and rises to nearly the Mt Climie ridgeline. The lower slopes are mostly covered in pine plantation that forms about half the area, and above this is regenerating native bush. It is heavily impacted on by the prevailing wind closer to the ridgeline. The land is designated as forestry land and can be sold by the Council.

(ii) Maungakotukutuku (347 ha)

This block forms both sides of a valley to the east of State Highway 1 on the Kapiti Coast. The eastern side of the block abuts the Council's Akatarawa Forest area. Plantation forestry covers 181 hectares of the block.

As a result of seeking a legal opinion about the ability to enter into a long term lease for a reinstated Rimutaka Railway application, Greater Wellington's legal advisors made specific comment about the possible difficulty of selling land that is subject to the Wellington Regional Water Board Act (WRWBA). The Maungakotukutuku land is

designated for water supply purposes and comes under the WRWBA. The full legal opinion is attached to Council report 12.29 “Application in principle to reinstate the Rimutaka Railway”. This sale difficulty surprised GW’s legal advisers who went as far as researching the parliamentary records (Hansard) of the early 1970s to understand the reasoning behind the sale restriction.

Councillors were advised of the sale difficulty in an email in March and it was discussed at a Council workshop on 8 March before the LTP was approved. At the time it was decided to go ahead with the proposal to sell the land in the LTP. It appears there are some options available that could allow a sale - these will be discussed further with the legal advisers if Council decides to proceed with a sale.

(iii) Forestry land valuation

The value of any land will be determined by the market at the time of sale. A number of factors will influence the price, including its underlying District Plan zoning, access and typography. The following is an indication of the possible value. Note, the plantation values are based on .May 2012 forecasted valuation.

	Rateable land value \$000	Value of plantation \$000	Total \$000
Maungakotukutuku	515	1813	2,328
Mangaroa	2770	1712	4,482
Total	3285	3525	6,810

(d) Community feedback

The LTP process sought to obtain public comment on the sale of the three blocks. There has been minimal comment on the Mangapakeha block. One submitter did challenge the costs of extending the Akura nursery and whether it would be more economic to continue to use the two existing nurseries. As well as bringing the two operations together a larger land area will be provided for the nursery to meet future demand. So, even if the land sale was not to go ahead, the Akura site would need to be expanded.

For the other two blocks, a number of issues have been raised by submitters. It is apparent that the community would have liked more information on these issues. The issues include protection of the ecology and ongoing public access for recreational purposes.

Separate to the LTP consultation, the Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) has written to Greater Wellington to express an interest in securing a cycling/walkway/horse riding track through the Maungakotukutuku block. This appears to have merit from a recreational

point of view if KCDC will maintain it. Ideally, this issue is resolved before any potential sale.

In addition to the issues of detail, the land areas for the Mangaroa and Maungakotukutuku blocks were incorrectly shown in the draft LTP, by referring to only the plantation forestry areas within the blocks. This was corrected on the Council's website part way through the consultation process. However, most people who were potentially interested in the land sale proposals may not have seen the corrected information.

(e) Proposal

Officers believe that the sale of the two forestry blocks should not proceed at this time. Instead further analysis should be carried out and more information about the sales be prepared. If the Council still wishes to proceed with the sales once presented with the additional information the 2013/14 Annual Plan process can be used to re-consult with the community. By carrying out a new consultation process with more detailed information it is expected that many of the people who have reservations about the sale would receive greater comfort once more comprehensive information is available. This additional information can cover recreational access and how the ecology will be protected.

Officers recommend that:

- **The sale of the Mangapakeha block proceeds once the Akura Nursery is expanded in two to three years, time.**
- **The sale of the Mangaroa and Maungakotukutuku blocks be removed from the LTP.**
- **further work is carried out on the sale of the Mangaroa and Maungakotukutuku blocks, prior to the Council's preparation of the 21013/14 Annual Plan.**