

Report 12.287
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Committee WRS Committee
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Wellington Regional Strategy – document

1. Purpose

To consider and approve the refreshed Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) document, prior to final design and publication.

2. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

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). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

2.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

The decision being sought in this report refreshes an existing strategy.

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

3. Background

The WRS was formally adopted by the Interim WRS Committee in May 2007. This included the establishment and funding of a regional economic development agency (Grow Wellington Ltd), as well as establishing a committee (WRS Committee) to oversee the implementation and further development of the Strategy.

3.1 Independent Review

As agreed in 2007, the WRS was reviewed in 2010/11. Consultants MartinJenkins were commissioned to undertake the review.

The review findings were presented to the WRS Committee, all Councillors in the region, and the Grow Wellington Board in June 2011. Overall, the review supported the fundamental rationale behind the WRS and continuation of a regional approach to facilitating economic development. The final report concluded that there remain good reasons for continuing to pursue economic development at a region-wide level, and to fund and deliver economic development activities on a region-wide basis.

Following the independent review of the WRS, on 30 June 2011 the WRS Committee agreed that the function of regional economic development should be continued (Report 11.296). In making this decision the Committee also supported the review's recommendation that to fully recognise the benefits of a region-wide approach to economic development, it is important that the Strategy itself be refreshed and that changes to the governance and implementation arrangements should be considered.

Consequent to this decision, the process was agreed on by the WRS Committee to undergo the refresh of the Strategy.

3.2 Process

The following process was followed from late 2010 to refresh the Strategy.

Task	Date
MartinJenkins commissioned to undertake a review of the WRS	Late 2010
Findings from MartinJenkins report presented to the WRS Committee, all Councillors in the region and the Grow Wellington Board	June 2011
Draft issues and options paper developed by SORT ¹ and the Chief Executives Group	August/September 2011
WRS Committee meeting agreed to adopt and release draft issues and options paper for consultation with Councils and Grow Wellington Board	26 September 2011

¹ Senior Officers Resource Team, with membership from all the region's councils and Grow Wellington

Workshop with SORT and Chief Executives	14 October 2011
MartinJenkins report 'Background Paper – Economic Development Issues for the Wellington Region' produced for the Strategy refresh	November 2011
Mayoral Forum workshop identified six focus areas as the most important for the region.	15 November 2011
Environmental scan undertaken by SORT	October – December 2011
WRS Committee meeting endorsed the six focus areas and agreed the process for the WRS refresh	7 December 2011
Workshop with WRS Committee and Grow Wellington Board to consider goals and focus areas	February 2012
WRS Committee meeting approved a draft letter of expectation to the Chair of the Grow Wellington Board based on the 6 draft focus areas	7 February 2012
Consultation with stakeholders on revised focus areas lead by SORT	March – June
Workshop with WRS Committee and Grow Wellington Board to test goals and focus areas	18 April 2012
WRS Committee to adopt final WRS	22 June 2012

3.3 Refreshed Strategy

The refreshed WRS confirms a renewed commitment by all the councils in the Wellington region to support, promote and facilitate economic growth for the region.

The refreshed Strategy has been informed by the changes in the economic climate since the strategy was first developed in 2007. The Committee recognised the need to have a strategy which has a tighter focus than the wider approach of the original strategy. This is reflected in the refreshed strategy, which focuses primarily on economic development matters. It also moves away from a core focus on exports and centres of excellence to a more supportive, promoting and enabling approach that is focused on the key strengths of the region.

The draft refreshed WRS document is included as **Attachment 1**.

The aim of the refreshed WRS is to build a resilient, diverse economy – one that retains and creates jobs (especially high value jobs), supports the growth of high value companies and improves the relative regional position in relation to the national GDP and national employment.

The draft refreshed WRS is centred around six focus areas. Combined, they set out what Councils, Grow Wellington (in support of businesses in the Wellington region) propose to do to support economic growth and build a resilient and diverse economy, in collaboration with other parties.

The Focus Areas comprise:

- **Focus area 1: commercialisation of innovation**
With a focus on business led innovation, this focus area involves supporting existing successful businesses, and leveraging the region's attractiveness as a vibrant and supportive environment for entrepreneurs to set up firms, access capital, and to innovate.
- **Focus area 2: investment mechanisms for growth**
This is about attracting international investment, making more of existing investment networks (such as angel investment networks) and ensuring these are connected internationally and through local business opportunities.
- **Focus area 3: building world class economic infrastructure**
Regional economic prosperity is heavily dependent on the region's level of connectedness and resilience at local, national and international levels. This is in turn, dependent on the quality of our foundation infrastructure and transport systems.
- **Focus area 4: attracting business, investment and talent to the region**
This focus area is about having a targeted approach to attracting businesses, potential investors, skilled migrants and students to the region.
- **Focus area 5: education and workforce development to service regional economy needs**
This focus area is about building on existing connections and initiatives to grow the region's skills and education base, and ensure the region's specific skills needs are met.
- **Focus area 6: open for business.**
Being open for business is about councils delivering business services with a 'can do' attitude and facilitating a business environment where smart, innovative firms can flourish.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Publication and design

Subsequent to the approval of the Strategy document by the WRS Committee, and prior to printing the Strategy, design work, including formatting and illustrations will be added to the document. This may result in some minor editorial changes.

All members of the Committee will receive a published version of the Strategy. Copies will be circulated to councils and regional partners and stakeholders that have an interest in economic development matters.

5. Communication

The Strategy will be communicated following publication and design.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Approves the refreshed Wellington Regional Strategy document, subject to any changes agreed at the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee meeting.***
4. ***Delegates to the Chair or deputy Chair the ability to make minor editorial changes as part of the publication and design stage.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Draft Wellington Regional Strategy