

Regional Sustainable Urban Development Strategy: Report Back on Potential Structures

21 July 2003

1. Background

The concept of developing a regional sustainable urban development strategy was approved at the 30 May 2003 meeting of the Wellington Mayoral Forum. The Mayors directed that the concept be reported back to each Council and two further reports developed. The first, which would go the July Mayoral Forum, would identify a potential structure for governance of the project. The second, for the August meeting, would identify a more detailed process and a proposed work programme.

This report discusses potential governance structures and briefly discusses resourcing considerations. It is proposed that the resource issues be considered in detail at the next Chief Executives Forum in early August, along with the report on the work programme, prior to reporting to the August Mayoral Forum.

2. Governance

2.1 Governance Requirements

Any structure to advance the development of a regional sustainable development strategy needs to address the following:

- the mechanism by which elected representatives from each Council can oversee and guide the project;
- membership of participating councils;
- the on-going process for working with the Mayoral Forum;
- the way in which mandate and approval for each stage of work is obtained from constituent councils;
- the method by which iwi will be included;
- the means by which Chief Executives can oversee delivery;
- the structure at officer level for advancing the work;
- the relationship with the Regional Land Transport Committee and the associated technical officers group;

2.2 Structure Options

There are three broad options available. These are:

- **Informal:** officers undertake work collectively on a regional strategy which is reported through to the individual Councils for decision;

- **the Mayoral Forum:** (including the Chair of Greater Wellington Regional Council) acts as the overview group, subject to mandate for the approach being obtained from each Council;
- **Committee:** establishment of a joint committee under Section 30, Part 1, Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act.

Option 1 is not considered viable because it would not allow for political co-ordination and linkages. Options 2 and 3 encourage joint discussion and debate and ensure an integrated approach.

2.3 Recommended Option

It is recommended that at this stage the Mayoral Forum act as the overview group with the responsibility to ensure the development and progression of the programme. It is felt that the complexities of developing a formal committee structure in the early stages may slow down a process that is gathering impetus.

The Mayoral Forum would have the responsibility for overseeing the development of the work programme, receiving comment and input back from the Councils, acting as an initial sounding board for the development of concepts and direction. The Forum would approve draft documents for discussion and endorsement by each Council. The Forum would not have final approval of any strategy but would oversee its initial development. It would overview the process to ensure involvement of all elected members in discussion and development of ideas.

The final strategy, and any key decision points on the way, would require the endorsement of each Council before it could be fully adopted.

Membership of the project needs to allow for the Wairarapa Councils. At this stage it is proposed that the development of the strategy focus on the Wellington metropolitan area, with the opportunity to involve the Wairarapa councils via their quarterly presence on the Mayoral Forum. However, it will be important to include the Wairarapa Councils in the process at the officer group level at the earliest stage. There are important growth management issues on the periphery of the urban areas and in terms of economic development which affect all Councils.

If the proposed overview structure is approved by the Mayoral Forum, the next step will be for a report to be prepared by each Council reporting on the initiative and seeking formal mandate. It is recommended that this is done no later than the end of August.

2.4 Partnership with Iwi

It is important that the urban development strategy is developed from the outset in partnership with iwi. A regional forum already exists under the aegis

of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The committee, known as Ara Tahi, includes representatives from all the iwi within the wider region. It is recommended that a report be prepared for that Committee seeking support for a partnership approach. The committee's views on how they might wish to work with the regional urban development process at the elected member and officer level should be canvassed.

It is recommended that the report be presented from either the Mayoral Forum or the CEs group.

2.5 Organisational Structure for Delivery of the Work Programme

It is proposed that the work programme is overseen directly by the CE's Forum, with the requirement that all papers to the Mayoral Forum and the respective councils are approved by the CE's Forum before they proceed.

An officer group would report to the CE's Forum. That group's tasks would include:

- progressing the work programme, including overseeing any research and commissioned work;
- being the initial forum for discussion of key concepts and ideas that inform the strategy;
- monitoring the development of relevant key projects undertaken by each Council in the period up to the development of the strategy, to achieve integration where possible with developing ideas and timelines. (Note: the officer group does not have any role in these individual projects but may report to the CEs if any concerns arise about impacts on the development of the overall strategy);
- ensuring liaison and integration with the Regional Land Transport Committee processes;
- preparing reports to the CE's Forum, the urban development committee, Ara Tahi and the Mayoral Forum;
- developing the final strategy document, and any interim documents.

2.6 Resourcing

It has been identified that a Project Director is needed to provide a dedicated resource and management for the project. That person's task would be to act as convenor of the group, to oversee any commissioned work, would ensure reports are developed in a timely way. It is likely that this person would undertake the development of draft reports although this is a task that would also be undertaken by other members of the group. The Project Director must be an officer of one of the Councils, or someone recruited to that specific task and located in one of the Councils. This is for both cost and intellectual property reasons. The use of consultants for this task is not recommended. It is not expected that this job would be full-time at this stage.

It is recommended that members of the officer group have a component of their time specifically devoted to advancing the development of the strategy.

There is a risk otherwise of the work becoming an add-on to current work programmes and not being advanced.

The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy officer's group consisted of relatively senior staff with an understanding of, or interest in, sustainable urban development issues, and technical skills in aspects of urban development and management. Other technical skills were brought into the process when needed, and at various stages working groups around particular issues were set up. It is recommended that there is flexibility to do this when needed.

2.7 Links with Regional Land Transport Planning

There is a strong and obvious interrelationship with the regional land transport planning process. This was acknowledged at the Mayoral Forum and that there would be a need to revisit some transport issues as the strategy developed but that the current transport planning programme would continue.

There is a need for strong links through to the Regional Land Transport Committee, and to the technical officers group. There is already cross-over with the latter in that regional officers on that group also sit on the current regional sustainable urban development group. It is proposed that once the new regional urban development strategy officers group is established, that this cross-over is strengthened.

Meetings are being held with the Greater Wellington Regional Council staff responsible for the Regional Land Transport technical group, to talk over mutual work programmes and ways of integrating any timetables. This integration would not modify the Land Transport programme.

2.8 Links with Other Initiatives

A key aspect of the sustainable urban development strategy will be the decisions made by central government agencies. The most obvious are the nature and location of health services and facilities, the location of schools and school zones, and central government housing initiatives. It is important that there is discussion at the officer and political level.

Once a draft strategy is developed, there is potential for this to link back through LTCCP processes, to seek clear central government statements as to how they will work with the strategy. (The urban development strategy has the potential to be adopted as part of each Council's LTCCP process).

In developing the strategy, the following is proposed:

- there is an early report by the Mayoral Forum to the Wellington MPs on the initiative and that regular updates follow;

- that a report is prepared to go to the District Health Boards on the initiative, drawing clear links with health services planning and seeking guidance on a mechanism for on-going liaison;
- that Housing New Zealand and the Ministry of Education are contacted to discuss the initiative;
- that a report is prepared on the initiative for the Regional Economic Development Agency
- that relevant officers from these organisations are invited to participate in the development of the work programme. How this might occur will evolve out of discussions.

3. Other Matters

3.1 Work Programme

The officer's group briefly discussed areas of work that will need to be explored. This will be reviewed in preparation for the August report to Mayoral Forum. Thinking to date includes:

- documenting the rationale for a sustainable urban development strategy in more detail – e.g. over optimistic land-use planning assumptions, implicit competition models being used by Councils, infrastructure costs, transport cost impacts, housing choice and flexibility;
- identifying data needs and analytical framework, taking a sustainable development perspective. This will include the obvious land-use planning and urban form issues but will probably require improved understanding of urban economics, energy issues and infrastructure impacts and cost;
- current data held by councils etc, gaps and opportunities;
- land-use planning and development assumptions - e.g. availability of land – residential and industrial

4. Conclusion

It is anticipated that all Councils will have received a formal report on the initiatives for discussion by the end of August/ early September. Some, such as Hutt City which is reporting in late August, will have one report which will encapsulate all the issues raised in the discussions to date by the Mayoral Forum. Other Councils will need to report through in a second stage on the structural and resourcing implications as they are developed.

5. Recommendations

That.

1. *The principle that final approval of any regional sustainable urban framework or strategy must be obtained from each individual Council, is adopted.*
2. *The Mayoral Forum has the responsibility for overseeing the progress of the regional sustainable urban strategy.*
3. *A review of the overall structure and progress be undertaken in June 2004.*
4. *A formal report is brought to each Council, seeking approval of the proposed structure and review timetable.*
5. *The following terms of reference for the Mayoral Forum on this matter should be:*
 - *overseeing the development of the work programme,.*
 - *ensuring appropriate and timely reporting to Councils of key documents and reports;*
 - *receiving comment and input back from the Councils;*
 - *acting as a sounding board for the development of concepts and direction;*
 - *overseeing links with other key committees such as the Regional Land Transport Committee.*
6. *There are reports on the initiative made to:*
 - *to the Ara Tahi Iwi Representative Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council;*
 - *the Wellington MPs group;*
 - *District Health Boards*
 - *regional economic development agencies*
7. *An officer working group is established. (Note: membership of this group will require review/ confirmation)*
8. *A Project Director is appointed – resourcing and work programme matters to be brought back to Forum in August, along with further discussion of an initial potential work programme.*

