



Report 08.150  
Date 17 March 2008  
File E/06/29/03

Committee Transport & Access Committee  
Author Francis Ryan, Manager Secretariat

## Establishment of a Disability Reference Group

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee on progress with the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

On 14 August 2007 the Council resolved to request the Chief Executive to consider the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group and to report back to the Council.

This decision followed the Council's consideration of a report (Report 07.433) from Cr Glensor, chair of the then Passenger Transport Committee, which discussed establishing a mechanism for input from the community that would be region-wide, cover the range of disabilities, and cover all aspects of council activity.

### 4. Action to date

A study has been undertaken of the statutory and non-statutory frameworks which support inclusion of disability perspectives in decision-making. These frameworks include:

- Local Government Act 2002 – section 78 requires a local authority, as part of its decision-making process on a matter, to give consideration to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by or to have an interest in the matter.

- Human Rights Act 1993 – in 2005 the Human Rights Commission produced a report providing a comprehensive review of the issues surrounding disability and public transport, and noted that regional councils play an important part in the provision of accessible public transport.
- Community Outcomes – there are three Community Outcomes in the Council’s LTCCP which may be met by the establishment of a regional disability reference group: quality lifestyle, connected community and healthy community.
- The New Zealand Disability Strategy – provides a framework for removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society.

Officers have ascertained the arrangements that the region’s territorial authorities and district health boards have in place to facilitate input, from a disabilities perspective, into decision-making. There would appear to be some gaps in coverage in the region, particularly in the Wairarapa; we are still gathering information to clarify the overall regional situation.

Officers have also canvassed other regional councils to ascertain their approaches to disabilities input into decision-making. This showed that a number of regional councils have no formal arrangements in place, while others utilise processes established by constituent territorial authorities in their regions.

## **5. Next steps**

Following discussions with Wellington City Council’s Disabilities Advisor, officers are arranging to meet with the region’s existing disabilities reference groups to discuss options for a framework that would best facilitate a disabilities perspective in Greater Wellington’s decision-making.

The discussion will focus on:

- Developing an effective framework which would appropriately draw on the existing disabilities resources in the region.
- Establishing the terms of reference and potential make-up of any consultation body to be established.

Officers expect to be able to report with a substantive proposal to the Transport and Access Committee meeting on 26 June 2008.

## **6. Communication**

No external communication is required relating to this report.

## 7. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. *Notes the progress made relating to the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group.*
2. *Notes that officers will report on a substantive proposal for the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group to the Committee's meeting on 26 June 2008.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

**Francis Ryan**  
Manager Secretariat

**Jane Bradbury**  
Divisional Manager,  
Corporate and Strategy