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Committee Parks, Forests and Utilities
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Greater Wellington Regional Council's role in providing parks – project plan and timetable

1. Purpose of Report

To propose a project plan and timetable for the development of the Greater Wellington Regional Park Network Strategy.

2. Significance

The matters 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

At the Council meeting on 3 November 2008, Council approved the development of a Greater Wellington Regional Park Network Strategy and the process to be followed. However, comment was made regarding the process and degree of community engagement, especially prior to the draft being prepared for public consultation.

As a result, Council directed officers to review the degree of community engagement and prepare a detailed project plan and timetable for further consideration by Council.

4. Project plan - Community engagement in the development of the draft strategy

Officers propose that Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) spend the early part of the review collecting and assessing information from a wide cross section of the regional community, and use that information to develop a draft strategy that can then be tested through the public consultation process.

To ensure a wide representation of views, officers propose that in the development of the draft strategy GWRC collects views from those that:

- Currently use the parks and forest areas
- Currently use parks but not the GWRC parks and forest areas

- Have an interest in the effective development of the parks network in terms of national, regional and/or local community outcomes.

Attachment 1 indicates stakeholder groups that should provide that wider regional cross section and therefore be involved in the development of the draft strategy. It also notes why they should be involved, and proposes how their views will be captured and incorporated into the draft strategy.

The list of stakeholders is not intended to be definitive but to provide the Council with an indication of the types of community groups and agencies that should be involved, and more importantly why. There are many more community groups and clubs that could be added to the list but we have omitted them at this point because of brevity. However, we do have a comprehensive list of community groups and clubs on our contacts database that will be contacted during the course of preparing the draft strategy.

The list of stakeholders includes:

- Central and local government agencies
- Non Government organisations and clubs
- Iwi
- Community interest groups
- Current park users, including individuals, groups and clubs
- The wider general public

In response to the Council's desire for more community engagement prior to the development of the draft strategy, officers have included surveying of community interest groups and current park users.

While this community engagement is taking place, officers will be researching current literature about parks.

5. Methods of engagement

5.1 General

With a variety of individuals and groups being proposed to be engaged through this process, officers are proposing a combination of "one-on-one" meetings and community surveys to gather views.

Reviews of a range of current and potential regional park users are being sought through focus groups and interviews (see the draft discussion guide attached).

Once the results of this work have been reviewed, a structured questionnaire will be developed to test the depth and breadth of these views across the Region.

Given the sheer number of interest groups that will be involved in this proposed process, meetings will only be held with key Government agencies, territorial authorities and iwi.

Community groups, park users, relevant clubs and the general public will be surveyed for their views via questionnaires for them to complete and send back. The questionnaire will also be available on-line through GWRC's web site.

As a lot of the development of the draft strategy will rely on feedback being gathered by survey questionnaires, the quality of those questionnaires is critical. As such, they will be developed in conjunction with a market research company and tested to ensure they elicit useful feedback.

Officers anticipate that all this information will be compiled and presented to Councillors via a series of workshops by 30 September 2009. The draft Strategy will be prepared and approved for release for consultation by 30 November 2009.

5.2 Consultation on the draft strategy

Once the draft strategy is developed, it will be released for public consultation. This will included:

- (1) Advertising in the regions newspapers.
- (2) Mailing it to key stakeholders and others who have been involved in the review to date (territorial authorities and other agencies). For some groups, officers will meet with the stakeholders to introduce the strategy and gauge views.
- (3) Mailing it to all the people on our current contacts database and others that may have an interest in the review. Again officers will meet with some of these groups to introduce the strategy and gauge their views.

Officers also see it is important that some form of road show be undertaken around the Region, which could incorporate a mix of public meetings and displays in public places like shopping malls.

Officers recommend that the submissions period be three months (December 2009 to March 2010).

Once consultation is completed, hearings will be held for those that wish to be heard.

Officers anticipate that public consultation will be completed in April 2010.

6. Timetable

Task	Timeframe
Focus group interviews and survey development	November to December 2008
Literature review	January to May 2009
General public surveying	January to March 2009
Meetings with Government agencies, territorial authorities and iwi	December 2008 – March 2009

Task	Timeframe
Surveying interest groups	February – May 2009
Compilation and assessment of data gathered	June – August 2009
Presentation of data to Council – Direction given to officers to prepare draft	September 2009
Preparation of draft Strategy	October 2009
Draft strategy approved by Council for consultation	November 2009
Consultation on draft Plan	December 2009 – March 2010
Hearings on draft	April 2010
Revised draft prepared	May-June 2010
Final Strategy approved by Council	July 2010

7. Communications

No communications are necessary at this point.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report***
2. ***Notes the contents***

That the Committee recommends that Council:

1. ***Agrees*** to the project plan and timetable as outlined above being implemented in order to prepare the draft Regional Parks Network Strategy.

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Attachments

- 1 Community engagement
- 2 Peter Glen Research proposal