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Committee Council
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Report on the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee meeting held on 21 July 2009

1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee that took place on 21 July 2009.

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. Report

3.1 Long haul project

Wellington International Airport Ltd's John Howarth, GM Planning and Assets, and Andy Scotland, General Manager Marketing, made presentations to the committee on the airport's 2030 Master Plan and the long haul project.

3.1.1 2030 Master Plan

The airport company's goals, expressed in the 2030 Strategy, include (by 2030):

- More than doubling passenger numbers
- Increased freight tonnage by 500%
- A 10% increase in flights
- Investment of \$450m in infrastructure

- Improvement of passenger transport linkages to/from the airport

The strategy estimates this will have the following impact on the Wellington region's economy:

- \$3.1 billion total impact
- 1.4% contribution to regional GDP
- 11,500 new jobs
- 21,375 total jobs.

The company's expansion plans involve using its current land area more efficiently. Changes proposed include increasing aircraft parking from the current 29 gates to 42, extending the current terminal including retail space, and redeveloping the parking area to provide for public transport and parking in a multi-level building.

3.1.2 Long haul

Bringing direct long-haul flights to Wellington is one of the key projects in the Wellington Regional Strategy. The strategy includes the following statements:

“Our distance from international markets is a barrier, but one that is being continually reduced through technology.”

“Our international research shows that long haul capability is a core component of successful regions. This is because of the tourism, exporting and business travel (and therefore business location) advantages it provides. Currently Wellington businesses or tourists that wish to travel or export to any country other than Australia must do so via Auckland or Christchurch. This is a handbrake on the regional economy and one that is being addressed.”

Positively Wellington Tourism has been leading this project, in partnership with Wellington International Airport Limited. The original target date for having long haul flights into Wellington was 2010. This was on the assumption that new aircraft would be available in 2008.

Andy Scotland talked to the committee about the current airline market, including the many changes that are occurring in the aviation industry. She talked about the impact the low cost airlines are having on the industry. Air capacity and competition have a major constraining impact on the airport. She showed the committee a graph demonstrating the strong (negative) correlation between ticket prices and passenger numbers.

She told the committee the company is focusing its approach on incentivising growth, in partnership with airlines.

The first long haul aircraft (Boeing's 787) is expected to be delivered in 2010, with Qantas likely to receive its planes starting in 2013. Andy told the

committee that long haul aircraft will still come to Wellington, although there continue to be delays.

3.2 Broadband project update

Paul Desborough, Wellington City Council, is leading the WRS broadband project. He made a presentation to the committee on progress with the four project workstreams:

1. Governance
2. Funding
3. Technologies/deployment
 - Region-wide rules for new trenching technologies
 - Region-wide rules for aerial deployment
 - Federated GIS / Road Openings/ Regional repository of local government assets
 - Regional agreed policy for access to local government assets
4. Uptake/demand aggregation
 - Businesses – Grow Wellington
 - Health
 - Education
 - Councils – particularly Councils as IT purchasers.

He told the committee that broadband remains a key project for the region under the Wellington Regional Strategy, and preferably as an early adopter.

The change of government and review of broadband rollout plans has introduced a delay and meant a refocus for councils – reducing the likelihood of equity participation.

He said that councils will need to maintain a dialogue with major telcos and any facilitation of broadband rollout will need to be available to all.

Work on deployment and technologies remains highly relevant and will be needed regardless of who is actually installing new networks.

He told the committee that the WRS Broadband Operating Group will continue to report back regularly on progress with these projects, and the release of the government's Broadband Investment Initiative will be the next major milestone.

3.3 Grow Wellington projects

Nigel Kirkpatrick, CEO of Grow Wellington, made a presentation to the committee on two of its current projects: *Wellington on a Plate* and the Rugby World Cup 2011.

3.3.1 Wellington on a Plate

One of the aims of the WRS is to “Invest in growing our economy, especially our exports”. Under this aim Grow Wellington has an objective to develop the region’s food capability. It has identified that to grow food exports the region needs capability to supply quality and volume. Nigel told the committee that many producers supply quality but lack consistency to export. Before exporting they need to prove themselves locally. Many producers need to combine for export and this is starting to happen, e.g. Wairarapa Wine Group.

Nigel said that the region is both a food producer and “quality consumer”. To achieve the export objective the region needs to

- Develop our “brand”
- Develop supply capability
- Develop the local economy
- Develop export potential.

To support this work Grow Wellington and Positively Wellington Tourism are working with the food industry to launch *Wellington on a Plate*. This is a two-week event aimed at highlighting the region’s food capabilities, including food production, processing and restaurants. As well as working towards the medium term objective of growing our food exports, the event will also provide tourism growth short term.

The festival will run for two weeks from August 17th to the 30th.

3.3.2 Rugby World Cup 2011

The Wellington region will host a number of games and teams at RWC2011. Nigel told the committee Grow Wellington is not involved in the hosting, but will work to ensure businesses can leverage the opportunities that RWC2011 provides both during and beyond the tournament.

Nigel told the committee that the business leverage opportunities include

- Immediate business opportunities
- Opportunities during the event
- Legacy from the RWC.

Central government is heavily involved with promoting the business opportunities from a national perspective. This includes working with economic development agencies around the country. In Wellington, Grow Wellington is targeting international businesses where these align with our priority sectors and are linked to export opportunities.

3.4 WRS Office update

Melanie Thornton, WRS Project Leader, updated the committee on the various projects being lead or facilitated by the office. Work has included:

- facilitating the regional open space providers' working group and leading the development of the regional open space strategy and action plan
- organising the regional information-sharing forum on regional centres, intensification and subdivision design, and undertaking research and analysis
- assisting with progressing the regional industrial land project
- finalising the regional urban design stocktake and action plan 2009 (see separate report on the agenda)
- assisting Wairarapa councils with urban design approaches and principles and the process to sign up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol
- collecting and analysing data, and commencing reporting on the Wellington region Genuine Progress Index (see discussion below)
- hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operating Group meetings
- preparing plans for the WRS Summit on 29 October 2009.

3.5 Wellington region urban design initiatives and action plan

The committee adopted a regional urban design action plan.

The WRS signalled two actions related to urban design. The first is that all of the region's councils will sign up to the national Urban Design Protocol. Greater Wellington signed up to this two years ago (Councillor Baber is the council's Urban Design Champion under our protocol obligations). All but two councils in the region are still to sign, and it has been signalled that they will sign shortly.

The other action was the preparation and implementation of a regional action plan. The action plan adopted by the committee covers the following areas:

- New Zealand urban design protocol
- education / training
- urban design information hub
- best practice
- register of urban design practitioners
- peer review panel
- subdivision design guidelines review
- annual regional urban design summit.

3.6 Non-local government appointment to the WRS Committee

The committee nominated a person to fill a current vacancy on the committee. This is the subject of a separate (public excluded) report on the agenda.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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Attachment 1: Unconfirmed Public Minutes