

Report 10.57
Date 15 February 2010
File WRS/09/01/01

Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee
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WRS Office Update

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with an update on activities of the WRS Office since December 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. Work Programme

Since December 2009 the WRS Office has had its major focus on:

- finalising the report on the Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (the GPI report is to be discussed in a workshop immediately following this meeting)
- hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operational Group (BOG) meetings (a separate Broadband project update is on the Committee's agenda)
- determining on-going workstreams for Senior Officers's Resource Team (SORT)
- facilitating the regional open space working group and finalising the regional open space strategy
- facilitating the regional urban design working group
- assisting with progressing the regional industrial land project.

4. Open Spaces

At the last WRS Committee meeting Sir Ngatata Love requested additional wording in the Strategy to incorporate the status of the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust as an owner and co-manager of public open space. This has been done and a final draft is to be circulated to Committee members shortly.

A workshop of open space providers/managers was held earlier this month. Outcomes of the workshop include developing sub-groups to drive four major issues regarding open spaces. These are:

- information sharing (between open space providers and for the public)
- biodiversity (identifying sites for protection and monitoring/consistency of measurement tools)
- motorised access in open spaces (developing stocktake of regional rules and existing tracks)
- private land into public estate (exploring mechanisms to incentivising more private landowners to protect high quality lands)

5. SORT workstreams 2010

The SORT team determined that its on-going work for the coming year will be to continue driving the five key projects of the strategy. These are: broadband, open spaces, industrial land, urban design and the GPI. In addition it will develop work on rural residential development guidelines.

The WRS identifies the need to establish regional principles to guide identification and release of sustainable rural residential development opportunities. Kapiti Coast District Council undertook a study of the demand for rural residential subdivision as part of the first stages of this workstream. A survey was undertaken to obtain information on the demand characteristics of residents of rural lifestyle blocks (4 hectares or less), commonly created through rural subdivision. The report provides a useful stocktake, which could be a starting point for policy comparison and collaboration, particularly if surveys like the one conducted in Kapiti Coast District are undertaken elsewhere in the region.. A sub-group of SORT has been established to work on developing this.

SORT members agreed that it will be valuable for council officers if they had the ability to discuss and share information about district plans and any other long-term strategies around the region. This will help to inform members about any matters of regional significance. SORT will hold regular workshops to share information and discuss approaches.

6. Urban Design

The working group on urban design is developing training initiatives to commence this year. Information-sharing is taking place through the WRS

website. An urban design information hub has been developed on the website. A register of practitioners is now available to councils throughout the region.

Regular meetings are to be held at each of the councils in the region to discuss urban design examples of best practice and any key urban design issues at each council.

7. Communication

Communication on matters relating to the workstreams above will happen as relevant information is identified.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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