

Report to Wellington Regional Council
From: Cr Margaret Shields, Deputy Chairperson

Proposed Study Tour

1. Purpose

To seek approval in principle for the Chairperson to undertake a study tour in the United Kingdom.

2. Comment

- (1) The forthcoming change in Government here could see significant changes to the roles of the WRC. Those areas are well known to you.

Comments by the Region's MPs in the last Parliament made it clear that they have a huge level of respect for the WRC.

I am sure that this Council will have appropriate opportunities to make input, both on a formal and informal basis into the development and implementation of the New Government's policies that are relevant to its roles.

- (2) Current developments in Britain have components which are very relevant to current thinking here. They include:
- (a) The different approaches to regional assemblies in London, Scotland and Wales.
 - (b) The relationships of regional government with central government and local authorities.
 - (c) UK experiences from, a political perspective, in managing water both in an environment of private ownership (England and Wales) and continuing public ownership (Scotland).

- (d) The importance of Regional economic development as a key role of local government in the UK. It is understood that Humberside is a very interesting case study of a voluntary regional assembly comprising representatives of the public and private sectors.
 - (e) Transport as it undergoes continuing change, with integration a key driver. The UK has problems of a scale we cannot comprehend, but which are very similar in type to our own transport problems.
 - (f) The different models of local government now being applied in England, Scotland and Wales. Of particular interest is the new Greater London Authority, which is to be elected in May 2000.
3. It is proposed that Cr Macaskill undertake a short study tour of the United Kingdom to observe firsthand some of these developments and meet with some of the key proponents and implementors of the changes there.
 4. The possibility of possible assistance with development of a programme has been discussed with the UK High Commissioner to New Zealand (His Excellency Mr Martin Williams). Not only has he expressed eagerness to involve himself in this way but he has also indicated his intention of recommending that “in-country” costs (i.e. within the UK) be met by the Government of the United Kingdom.
 5. The timing for the visit would be July 2000 following the adoption of the Council’s reviewed Long Term Financial Strategy in June 2000.
 6. It is envisaged that Councillor Macaskill be accompanied by Mr Maguire who would certainly benefit from the opportunity to learn from observing the management of political processes in another country. Approval of any travel for Mr Maguire is a matter for the General Manager who has indicated his support.
 7. Any additional costs relating to accompanying partners would not be a charge on the Council.
 8. Approval in principle is sought at this stage to enable plans to be developed. Formal approval of Council would be sought when a detailed itinerary has been developed and the level of any financial support is confirmed.

9. **Recommendation**

That Council

- (1) *Approve in principle that the Chairman undertake a study tour relating to regional government in the UK during July 2000.*
- (2) *Note that Cr Macaskill would be accompanied by Mr Maguire.*
- (3) *Note that a detailed itinerary and budget would be submitted for Council approval early in 2000.*

MARGARET SHIELDS
Deputy Chairperson