



Report 11.101
Date 7 March 2011
File PK/16/01/01

Committee Council
Author Murray Waititi, Manager, Parks

Implementing the park service at Whitireia Park

1. Purpose

For Council to approve Greater Wellington commencing operational management of Whitireia Park.

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 1 December 1998, the Whitireia Park Board wrote to the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) Chairperson asking that the Council consider taking over the control and management of the Park. The letter states that since its establishment in 1978, the Board has struggled with limited funding to maintain the Park to the standard it deserves. The Park Board considered that the attributes of the Park are similar to those in the Regional Park network and because Park users come from around the Region, GWRC would be an appropriate Park Manager. The [then] Landcare Committee considered this request in Report 99.482. The relevant resolutions were:

- i. Agree that Whitireia Park has regional significance and at some point, in the future the Wellington Regional Council may be the appropriate level of government to manage the park.*
- ii. Agree that should the Wellington Regional Council take over Whitireia Park, then it would be appropriate to bring it up to the standards and service levels of the Regional Parks network and that sufficient funding will need to be allocated for this purpose.*
- iii. Request Officers to model the cost for consideration through the Long-term Financial Strategy for the year commencing 2000/01.*

The Landcare Committee considered a financial model to take over the management of Whitireia Park as part of the Council's 2000/01 long-term Financial Strategy. GWRC made financial provision to take over the management and control of the park in 2005/06, in Towards a Greater Wellington – 10-Year Plan 2000/2010. \$20,000 was also budgeted as an annual contribution until GWRC took over the management and control.

As there have been delays in taking over the management and control of the Park, GWRC has continued making the annual contribution of \$20,000 toward operating costs. In September 2010, with the management arrangement being imminent, Council approved expenditure of up to \$70,000 to enable restoration of the area burned in the February 2010 fire to commence.

Also in September 2010 (see Report 10.492), Council considered various governance mechanisms that could be used to establish joint governance of the Park with Ngāti Toa Rangatira. Council agreed to the establishment of a joint management board as it was consistent with previous Council discussions on the future management arrangements for the park. Establishing the board through the Ngāti Toa Rangatira settlement legislation will provide the certainty Ngāti Toa Rangatira is seeking for the ongoing management of the park, and is not dissimilar to the current joint management arrangements.

Council also agreed to the establishment of an interim joint management board that replaces the existing Whitireia Park Board with a board comprising equal numbers of representatives nominated by Ngāti Toa Rangatira and GWRC. This interim board will enable Greater Wellington and Ngāti Toa Rangatira to progress the future management of the park without further delay.

4. Current status of the day-to-day management of Whitireia Park

Currently, the day-to-day management of the Park is undertaken by Department of Conservation (DoC) on behalf of the Park Board. DoC currently allocates their ranger staff to provide security and enforcement, deal with public enquiries, maintain park facilities and administer the daily requirements of the Park.

As the Park itself is vested in the Whitireia Park Board as opposed to GWRC, the powers that enable GW officers to be the day-to-day managers of the Park can only be granted by the appropriate resolutions being made by the Park Board. Enforcement powers for the Park will require Board resolution and approval from the Minister of Conservation. It is anticipated that the existing Board will make the required resolutions at its next Board meeting (24 March 2011).

The 24 March meeting of the current Park Board will be the last of the existing Board. At this meeting the Board will grant Powers to GWRC officers to act as servants of the Park Board, and resolve to change the representation of the Board to comprise equal membership from GWRC and Ngāti Toa Rangatira. The newly represented Whitireia Park Board will then come into effect once

the appropriate approvals and appointments are made by the Minister of Conservation.

DoC and GWRC officers had anticipated 1 March 2011 to be the operational transfer date, as it was thought that all the required Park Board resolutions would have been made by then. However, delays have been experienced due to the Park Board not being quorate at this time as some current Board member appointments have lapsed. Once new appointments are made to the current Board to enable the Board to transact its final business, the current Board will be wound up, and the new Board representatives put in place.

To provide a level of certainty around the transfer date for operational delivery, GWRC staff will be assisting DoC under assignment to deliver the Park service from 1 March 2011.

Once operational management is transferred to GWRC formally by the Board, because of legal constraints imposed by the Reserves Act 1977, some duties surrounding issuing leases, licenses and concessions will continue to be administered by DoC. All other operational duties would transfer to GWRC staff to undertake.

5. The proposed 2010/11 work programme

GWRC has allocated \$120,000 to implement a Park service at Whitireia Park in its 2010/11 Annual Plan.

Council has currently spent \$31,000 (which excludes staff time) implementing stage one of the gorse spraying operation. That leaves \$89,000 to be spent by year end. As it is the role of the Park Board to define its work programme for the year, Officers intend to take a proposed work programme to the existing Board for approval. The work programme will include:

- Completing the planned gorse spraying operation in April
- Options for fence reinstatement
- Urgent structural and facility maintenance requirements
- Options for restoration of the burnt area
- General Park administration and maintenance

6. Communication

A media statement is not considered necessary at this time.

7. Recommendations

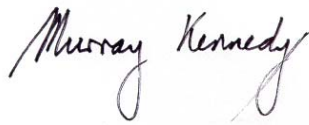
That the Council:

1. *Receives the report.*

2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Notes the new joint governance structure for Whitireia Park is in the process of being finalised.*
4. **Approves** *Greater Wellington undertaking the management of Whitireia Park under the direction of the Whitireia Park Board.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Murray Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and 'K'.

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks

Murray Kennedy
General Manager, Utilities
and Services