

Report 11.207
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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 Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) Office since the last report to the Committee on 24 February 2011.

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

Since February 2011 the main areas of work for the Wellington Regional Strategy Office have been:

- Hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operational Group (BOG).
- Working with the WRS Review team and SORT.
- Gathering data for the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) report and establishing software to host the GPI online.
- Completing the regional open space maps and publishing the Wellington Region Open Space Strategy and Action Plan.
- Facilitating the regional urban design working group and continuing to progress the work outlined in the Wellington Region Urban Design Action Plan and Stocktake.

4. Broadband

The Broadband Operational Group continues to work with Crown Fibre Holdings, CityLink and the Ministry of Economic Development (MED).

Regular meetings are held with MED to discuss the trials undertaken in the Wellington region and how the work of BOG relates to the development of standards. MED has written a draft “Standards Specification for Telecommunications Cabling Deployment” which is to form part of the National Utilities Code of Practice for Working in the Transport Corridor. Some of the region’s experts in trenching technologies and roading management provided detailed comments on the draft. A second draft is to be disseminated shortly.

Telecom/Vodafone held a meeting in Wairarapa on the Rural Broadband Initiative which is now being implemented by them.

Regular meetings are held with Wellington City Council to discuss the work of BOG and how it relates to the Digital Strategy being developed for the Council.

5. WRS Review

The WRS Office has been providing information to Martin Jenkins for the review of the WRS. The final report and findings of the review was presented to all councillors in the region on 1 June.

A report on the WRS Review is included as a separate item on the agenda.

6. Genuine Progress Index

In April, Waikato Regional Council invited the WRS Office to speak about the Wellington region GPI at a meeting of staff from councils in the Waikato region.

There is on-going collaboration with Auckland Council and the Waikato Regional Council who are also working on GPIs. A meeting was held in May to work together on the full cost account work and determine how data and methodologies from the national level GPI can be handed over to the regions.

The contract for the full cost account proposal is underway. Waikato Regional Council is part of the proposal and is undertaking the same study as the Wellington region. Full cost accounting is a way of recognising and accounting for the economic value of non-market assets that are not traded in the market economy, such as the social, environmental and cultural impacts of activities.

In May, along with Auckland Council and the Waikato Regional Council, we commissioned a report from Market Economics on a regional income inequality indicator.

A separate report on the Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index 2001–2010 is included as a separate item on the agenda.

7. Open Spaces

The Wellington Region Open Space Strategy and Action Plan has been finalised, with the information for the regional maps received from all organisations. The Strategy has now been published and mailed out, and is available on the WRS website.

The regional open space maps are available for all councils to use in their open space planning, and are also available on the WRS website. It is anticipated that these maps will be updated annually.

Work is continuing on the biodiversity and walking track portals. The biodiversity portal features what is considered to be the top 50 biodiversity sites in the region – those with high biodiversity values and which are easily accessible. It is anticipated that this portal will go live on the WRS website in the middle of July.

A review of the Wellington Region Open Spaces Action Plan is about to begin. A sub-group is currently organising a Regional Parks Managers Forum for which all open space managers and directors in the region will be invited to attend. This forum will establish the key priorities for the next year.

8. Urban Design

The regional urban design working group is continuing to progress the work outlined in the Wellington Region Urban Design Action Plan and Stocktake.

A sub-group has met with Ian Cassels and Chris Gollins from the Wellington branch of the Property Council of New Zealand. Ian Cassels is now a member of our urban design working group.

A sub-group also met with Carl Reller, Urban Design Manager at New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA). A representative from NZTA is presenting at our next working group meeting in July, and will be further engaged with our working group.

The Urban Design working group is currently working with the Ministry for the Environment and Local Government New Zealand to explore urban design training opportunities for council staff and councillors across the region.

At the New Zealand Planning Institute Conference in March, Kate O'Regan from the WRS Office and Yvonne Weeber from the Ministry for the Environment presented a workshop for elected local government representatives. This workshop was an interactive session discussing urban design training needs for elected representatives. This workshop assisted with getting feedback from Councillors about what urban design meant for them, and their interest in further training opportunities.

9. Communication

Communication on matters relating to the workstreams occurs as relevant information is identified.

10. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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