

Report 11.565
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Committee Economic Wellbeing Committee
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Wairarapa Public Transport Review

1. Purpose

To update Committee members on progress with the Wairarapa public transport review, and seek approval to proceed with the bus component of the review ahead of the rail component.

2. The decision-making process and significance

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002.

2.1 Significance of the decision

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking into account the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines. Due to the procedural nature of this decision officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

3. Background

The Committee approved the terms of reference for the Wairarapa public transport review at its meeting on 17 March 2011. The review has proceeded, and is now at the stage where changes are being considered for the future.

Bus options being considered include:

- Introducing a fourth bus route in Masterton (there are currently three routes)
- Extending one of the Masterton routes to include the new Lansdowne Park Lifestyle Village

- Reducing the hours of operation of the Masterton services to between 9am and 3pm (currently 9.15am to 4.25pm)
- Reducing the weekend Featherston to Masterton service to operate only on Saturday (currently services operate on Saturday and Sunday)
- Introducing extra services between Greytown and Woodside station to connect with all trains (currently only some trains are met)
- Deleting the late Friday night bus connection between Featherston station and Martinborough

The general feedback from rail passengers has been:

- Provide extra capacity on each peak train
- Change departure time of peak services from Wellington
- Introduce more weekend and weekday off-peak.

4. Current position

The review has proceeded according to timetable and according to the terms of reference. However the review is beginning to fall behind schedule because of a number of rail-related issues (see below). The final consultation stage was due in October and final design was due in November, before coming to this Committee for final approval in February 2012.

The operational feasibility and affordability (the terms of reference require any changes to be accommodated within existing budgets) of various bus and rail options is currently being assessed. Further information has been sought from the operators of the services. However any possible changes to rail are more complicated, will require additional time to work through, and are unlikely to be able to be implemented quickly.

On the other hand the bus options are relatively simple, have largely been resolved and could be implemented quickly. The bus options are also largely independent of the possible rail changes. But at the moment the bus options are being delayed pending the investigation of the possible rail changes.

To avoid further delays to the bus component of the review it is suggested that the review proceed with the bus component independent of the rail component.

There will be some bus/rail integration matters that will need to be considered if the bus and rail components are to be separated. For example, any changes to off-peak or weekend rail timetables may have a flow-on affect on bus timetables. However because the implementation of any rail changes is unlikely to occur in the immediate future, the bus changes could still proceed but be reviewed again once decisions have been made on the rail matters.

5. Next steps

Assuming the Committee agrees to separate the bus and rail components of the review, the next steps in terms of **the bus component** are to send the draft final recommendations to the review reference group, and targeted consultation will then occur. This can be done before the end of the year and the matter will then come back to this Committee for final consideration as scheduled in early in 2012.

The next step in the **rail component** is to further investigate with KiwiRail the operational feasibility and cost of the changes suggested by the passengers. This can hopefully be done within the next few months. Then possible options can be considered by the review reference group and this Committee early in 2012. Some final consultation with the major stakeholders can then be undertaken. The matter will then come back to this Committee for final consideration, hopefully in about May 2012.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Notes that the Wairarapa Public Transport review is being delayed as some rail costing and operational matters relating to possible changes need to be addressed, and that this is delaying bus changes which are independent of the rail issues and which are ready to proceed to the final consultation stage.*
4. *Agrees to proceed with the bus component of the review ahead of the rail component.*

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