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Committee Economic Wellbeing Committee
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Wairarapa Public Transport Review - Update

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the progress with the Wairarapa public transport review.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Background

The Wairarapa review is part of the rolling programme of reviews undertaken by Council. The Wairarapa review began in 2011. The review covered bus and rail services, but because of the complicated nature of some of the rail issues the Committee approved at its meeting on 24 November 2011 that the review be split into a bus component and a rail component

Following a further round of targeted consultation in January/February 2012, at its meeting on 15 March 2012, the Committee approved a number of changes to the bus services and that any new service be provided on a trial basis. Approval of the evaluation criteria for these new services was delegated to the Chair of this Committee. A copy of the approved evaluation criteria are attached as **Attachment 1**.

This paper updates the Committee regarding the implementation of the bus component and progress on the rail component.

4. Overview of the review's objectives and scope

The review encompassed the urban areas of the principal Wairarapa towns of Masterton, Greytown, Carterton, Featherston and Martinborough. The review looked at both local travel within the Wairarapa and connections to/from Wellington City.

The review was undertaken on the basis that:

- Buses would continue to provide the principal connection between towns within the Wairarapa
- Trains would continue to provide the principal connection between the Wairarapa and Wellington

The primary objectives of the review was to ensure the bus services introduced in 2007 were meeting public transport users and the wider community needs in a cost effective manner. The opportunity was also taken to review Wairarapa train services and consider possible service alternatives where these can deliver an improved service in a cost effective manner.

The review looked at achieving operational improvements to the existing network within existing public transport expenditure.

5. Consultation

A reference group was established to assist with the review. The members of the reference group comprised of four councillors (one from each of the Wairarapa territorial authorities and one from Greater Wellington) and a representative from each of the transport operators which provide contracted public transport services in Wairarapa (Tranzit Coachlines and KiwiRail). The reference group have met on several occasions throughout the review.

A survey of train users was undertaken on 22 June 2011, and a copy of the results is attached as **Attachment 2**

General public consultation was undertaken in June/July 2011 which included a brochure with a short survey. A copy of the survey results is attached as **Attachment 3**.

A second round of targeted consultation was undertaken in January/February 2012.

6. Proposed bus changes

Negotiations with the exiting transport operator have taken longer than anticipated due to other prioritises for the operator. However we are now in a position to confirm changes to the bus services will commence from 30 September 2012. The changes are largely consistent with those discussed in the 15 March 2012 report to this Committee. As mentioned earlier in the report the new services will be provided on a trial basis and will be subject to performance criteria to establish their ongoing viability, details of the performance criteria are provided in **Attachment 1**. Below is a summary of the bus changes which will commence at the end of September:

Masterton town services

- a fourth route is being introduced, to cover the east side of Masterton around the Cameron Crescent area

- the number of services per route will be reduced from the current four to three
- there are also some slight changes to existing routes to ensure some newly developed facilities (e.g. a health centre, retirement village, and Mitre 10) are covered by a bus route

Greytown – Woodside service

- All **peak** train services stopping at Woodside station will continue to be met by a bus service to Greytown (Woodside station is 5km from Greytown)
- Extra services will be provided so there are bus connections with all weekday **off-peak** trains and all Saturday trains, but there will continue to be no connection to the late night Friday trains

Masterton to Featherston (and Martinborough) service

- Service will only be provided on one day at the weekend, this being a Saturday as it is the more popular of the two days.
- All existing Saturday services between Martinborough and Featherstone, and Featherstone to Masterton will be retained
- The two late night Friday buses between Martinborough and Featherston which connect with the late night Friday trains in Featherston will no longer be provided

Detailed route descriptions and proposed timetables are provided in **Attachment 4**.

7. Proposed rail changes

Greater Wellington has been discussing the proposed changes to the Wairarapa service for some time. There are two key initiatives:

- Reconfiguration of the number of carriages on each service to better match demand
- Introduction of the SE fleet to provide additional capacity

Reconfiguration of the number of carriages on each service requires physical works on the generator carriages and at the Masterton stabling yard. Some operational rostering of shunting and yard staff, in Masterton, is also required.

The generator carriages (which provide electrical power to the train) need modifications to provide the necessary power to a longer train, and the Masterton yard requires additional lighting and works underfoot to facilitate the additional shunting and coupling.

The physical works and roster consultations are expected to be complete to enable the reconfigurations to become business as usual in November 2012.

Modifications are required on the SE carriage fleet to allow the carriages to run on the Wairarapa services. The key item is the addition of toilets, and work to mitigate any corrosion.

KiwiRail advises that the carriage bogies must be removed in order to fit the tanks and other plumbing associated with the toilet conversion. This requires heavy lifting gear, restricting options to Hutt or Hillside workshops. Hillside's availability for future work cannot be guaranteed at this point due to the sale process that is currently underway.

Hutt Workshop is currently fully committed to existing projects. All lanes are full and both workshop and project management resourcing is close to capacity. February 2013 remains the earliest available start date for SE conversion at Hutt Workshops.

8. Communication

The proposed marketing and communications for the bus changes commencing in September 2012 will consist of the following:

- New separate easier to understand Masterton bus timetable (currently all Wairarapa public transport services are shown on a single timetable, which is quite cluttered and therefore it is proposed to split the current timetable into two)
- New Wairarapa bus & train timetables printed
- Newspaper advert in Wairarapa News
- Posters on Transit buses currently serving the Wairarapa area
- Press release issued
- Local Radio adverts
- News item on Metlink Website
- Posters on Wairarapa line trains

The communications plan will start to roll out approximate 4 weeks before the changes commence.

Once an implementation date has been confirmed for the changes to the train configuration information will be provided to passengers on the Wairarapa rail services.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Performance Criteria and Reporting Requirements

Attachment 2: Results of survey of Wairarapa train passengers

Attachment 3: Results of Wairarapa public transport consultation

Attachment 4: Bus route descriptions and proposed timetables