



Submission to Greater Wellington Regional Council

On the draft Long Term Plan 2012-22

From Kāpiti Coast District Council

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For further information

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Greater Wellington Regional Council Long Term Plan 2012-22

Introduction

1. The Kāpiti Coast District Council (the Council) welcomes this opportunity to provide feedback on Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) draft Long Term Plan (LTP). The Council would like to take the opportunity to speak to this submission at the hearing.
2. The Council acknowledges the work that GWRC undertakes to gain the best results for the Kāpiti Coast and the region.

Greater Wellington Regional Council Long Term Plan 2012-22

Financial Strategy and Rates

3. Kāpiti Coast District has the second highest increase in both regional and targeted rates in the region. The Council is concerned about the impact on Kāpiti Coast residents. Recent work undertaken by the Council has identified that particular groups are vulnerable to increases in costs. The Kāpiti Coast District Council is the only Council to report on rates impacts on vulnerable households and has done so since 2006 – refer Assessment of Affordability Impacts report April 2012
<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/LTP/Draft/2012-32/supporting-documents/Affordability-Impacts-Review.pdf>. The Council recommends that GWRC undertake affordability assessments of rates increases.
4. The Council notes that GWRC claims to have the same credit rating as Central Government. That may be correct for foreign currency but in terms of local currency (New Zealand Dollar) GWRC has a credit rating below Central Government (AA compared with AA+). As all of GWRC's borrowing is in local currency, because council's are not permitted to borrow in foreign currency, then the credit rating for local currency is the more relevant credit rating.

5. There is no explanation in the Financial Strategy as to what is driving the increases in existing services for 2013/14 and 2014/15 years where the respective increases are 3.9% and 5.5%. These are well above the average Local Government Cost Index. Some explanation would be helpful to the readers to gain an understanding of what is driving those higher levels of increases.
6. The indicative total rates increase for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 years are 10.2% and 11.3% respectively for which there is an analysis of the key components (existing services, previous commitments and proposed service improvements). However there is no indication of rating impacts on each community. Even though it may not be a legal requirement to disclose the rating impacts for each local authority in the Wellington region after the first year, GWRC should do this given the relatively high increases for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Regional leadership

Relationship with tāngata whenua

7. The Council supports working in partnership with tāngata whenua through governance leadership (Aratahi) and setting strategic direction (Te Upoko Taiao). The partnership could be strengthened so that tāngata whenua are more involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of projects that GWRC are involved in.

Partnership with tāngata whenua should be significant regardless of the treaty settlements. The Council suggests that additional funding be allocated to support the capacity of tāngata whenua and councils (at the regional and local level) to respond to treaty settlements.

8. The Council supports the review of the Charter of Understanding - it is good to see it as a living document that is reviewed regularly.
9. The Council would like to see a statement from tāngata whenua about how they see the relationship, the outcomes that the partnership has and will achieve, their priorities for working within this partnership framework and their

priorities for the environment. This would include the values that tāngata whenua have identified as key to their partnership with GWRC and how they are reflected in the priorities.

Changes to governance structures and relationships

10. The Council is supportive of continued investigations into the potential for shared services among the region's local authorities. The Council has unanimously rejected the idea of partnering with GWRC on local government reform. The Council does not see the independent review panel, as proposed by GWRC, as the way forward. The Council will engage directly with the local community to develop alternatives to take to the Local Government Commission, as one of the things the Commission will be looking at is community buy-in to any proposed reform.

Previous commitments (regional infrastructure)

Upgrading the rail network and other public transport infrastructure

11. The Council continues to see opportunities for public transport improvements in the District. More detailed comments are included in the Council's submission on the RLTP.

Flood protection and control works

12. The Council supports GWRC's work in this area and would like to see it extended to include a flood plain management plan for the Mangaone Stream and an update to the Waitohu, Ōtaki and Waikanae flood models so that they can be combined with the Council's local flood models. These models need to include appropriate allowances for climate change. It is important that climate change allowances are aligned between the two councils, as well as alignment on the timing of management plan updates and any implementation actions.
13. The Council strongly support the proposal for funding in the Flood Protection budget dedicated to supporting 'environmental enhancement' work on the Waikanae and Ōtaki rivers, as this is crucial to maintaining community restoration efforts.

Proposed service improvements

Integrated ticketing

14. The Council supports in principle the introduction of electronic integrated ticketing but is concerned with the cost and timing of this proposal when affordability is an issue.

Expanding pest control programmes

15. The Council supports the proposed enhancement of the pest control programme.

Improving regional parks - Queen Elizabeth Park

16. The Council continues to support the development of the Queen Elizabeth Park cycle track from Paekākāriki to Raumati South and notes opportunities for this through the Expressway, should it proceed. The Council encourages GWRC to continue to plan for this through the Expressway process. This is an important and safe link between the north and south of the District. It would connect with the cycle route from Wellington that ends at Paekākāriki and also link up with the cycleway proposed as part of the MacKays to Peka Peka component of the Expressway.
17. The Council would like to see Whareroa Farm and the Queen Elizabeth Park farming operations combined. The Council supports the continued management of farming in the Park, which keeps weeds under control and reduces fire risks.
18. The Council supports the development of a heritage precinct at Queen Elizabeth Park.
19. The Council and the Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board support the installation of toilets at the northern entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park. The Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board has received requests for this, especially from Raumati South School who are frequent users of the northern end of the Park. During the week the northern entrance is more frequently used by park visitors than the McKays Crossing and Paekākāriki entrances.

There is also a large population north of Queen Elizabeth Park that supports the need for toilets.

Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS)

20. The Council supports this proposal.

Emergency Management

21. The Council supports recent changes to Emergency Management and the development of an emergency management hub while retaining local offices to enable effective local responses to emergencies. The Council considers that it is important that the region continues to learn from the Canterbury experience. In an emergency we need to be fully coordinated at a regional level and still retain an effective and immediate local response.

Sale of forestry cutting rights and sale of surplus land

22. The Council finds it difficult to see the reasoning behind the “service improvements”, including the sale of land at Maungakotukutuku. The Council agrees that management of forestry land and activities needs to ensure that any public access for recreation and the original purpose for which the land is owned (future water catchment and erosion control) are protected.
23. If the sale of forestry land, including the 181 hectares at Maugakotutuku goes ahead, the Council wants assurances that walkway links and water catchments are not compromised. The Council also wants to see a caveat in the Certificate of Title for the Maugakotutuku land that no residential activity or future development takes place on that land.

Policies

24. *Revenue and financing policy – public transport.* The Council continues to seek clarification around the funding allocation for public transport services. The Council agrees that public transport provides a social good and that Kāpiti and the Wairarapa should receive a discount on the social service component of the transport rate as they generally receive fewer public transport services. The Council however seeks clarification on why there has been an apparent decrease from 50% to 25% in the discount for the 5% portion of the social benefit of the targeted rate for the Kāpiti Coast District.

25. The Council notes that previously the targeted rate covered Regional Transport Network Planning, encouraging sustainable transport choices through Travel Demand Management (TDM), walking and cycleways, and Public Transport. The Council notes that the targeted rate no longer covers TDM and regional transport network planning functions as these now fall in the general rates. Regional rates and targeted transport rates have both increased but it's not clear why the Targeted Transport Rate has gone up to such an extent, when some of the functions appear to be covered by the increase in general rates.
26. The Council continues to be concerned about the level of service the District, especially Ōtaki, receives. As signalled at the joint meeting of 3 April 2012, the Council has undertaken an examination of service costs versus levels of service and rate paid, based on available information. The Council will be seeking clarification of this information from GWRC.
27. The Council notes in the RLTP that the Kāpiti Public Transport Review is scheduled for 2013/14. As part of this review GWRC could include exploration of a Kāpiti Coast District targeted rate to achieve an increased public transport level of service for the District.