Mayor and Councillors
COUNCIL

16 OCTOBER 2014

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

I-SITE RATIONALISATION DECISION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1   The report seeks Council's decision on the rationalisation of i-SITES.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

2   This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy.

BACKGROUND

3   The rationale for Council providing economic development funding for i-SITEs is to provide visitor information services via the i-SITEs so that the service will:

- help attract more visitors to the district;

- result in increased employment in the tourism sector and increases visitor spending with tourism businesses, (e.g. accommodation, transport, attractions) and related service businesses (e.g. retail, supermarkets, cafes).

4   Council has been aware that nationally, use of i-SITEs was reducing. In 2013, it initiated an independent strategic review of the Kāpiti Visitor Information Network (i-SITES). The findings of the strategic review, identified:

- that the majority of the use of the current sites at Paraparaumu and Ōtaki was by the local community rather than visitors to the district;
- the ratepayer cost per inquiry at the i-SITEs was $10.70;
- two i-SITEs in close proximity to each other was not warranted;
- i-SITEs still have a role, however use of digital information has an increasing role in providing for visitor information needs; and
- the current design of the Kāpiti sites is no longer best practice. Increasingly they are being co-located and redesigned as centres which act as a window to the destination and are visitor attractions in their own right.

5   The strategic review noted that '*it is confusing for ratepayers to fund the predominantly community use of the i-SITEs from economic development or tourism funding which aims to generate increase spend and employment. If the community places a high value on maintaining a subsidised bus and ferry ticketing service to help local residents travel outside the district, then this should be funded from some form of community servicing budget*'.

6   Following the receipt of the Strategic Review in February 2014, Council notified in the draft 2014-2015 Annual Plan that it intended to rationalise the i-SITEs during this financial year.

7   An i-SITE Rationalisation Group was established in June to seek community and visitor sector views and advice on options. Two workshops with the Group were held during July and August. The terms of reference and membership of the group are attached as Appendix 1. They exclude reconsideration of the decision

to rationalise. The context provided to the Stakeholder Group and its recommendation is attached as Appendix 2.

8   Following the Stakeholder Group recommendation, reports were provided to the Ōtaki and Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Boards and Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti. Their recommendations are attached as Appendix 3.

9   The views of the Kāpiti Company, who manage the i-SITEs on behalf of Council, were also sought on both the strategic review and the Stakeholder Group recommendations. Their comments are attached as Appendix 4

CONSIDERATIONS

The Kāpiti i-SITES

10 The Paraparaumu i-SITE is located in a Coastlands tenancy facing Rimu Road. The current term of the lease runs to May 2015 with two rights of renewal of one year and two years respectively. Council needs to make a decision on whether to seek renewal of the lease by December 2014.

11 The Paraparaumu site was relocated to its current location in 2010. The location was chosen prior to the M2PP Expressway replacing the Proposed Western Link and was in anticipation of Rimu Road being the main road of the Paraparaumu Town Centre. The cost of the fit out of the tenancy including signage, equipment and fittings amounted to $105,000.00. The Strategic Review noted that there is considerable operator concern about the location not being optimal.

12 Ōtaki i-SITE is located in the Old Ōtaki Courthouse on Centennial Park in the main shopping area on State Highway 1. There is no on-or-off street, dedicated parking at the site. The building was relocated to the site by Council for use as an i-SITE in 1998. It is owned by Council and is listed as a heritage building in the district plan. The internal design of the building and the need to retain the heritage features limits how the space within the building can be used.

13 The sites are fully accredited sites within the national i-SITE network. To be an accredited site they are required to be open mandatory hours, seven days a week, provide information on tourism activities in the wider national network as well as within Kāpiti. The staff are required to hold NZQA standard tourism qualifications.

14 Both sites are managed for Council by the Kāpiti Company Limited. The current term of their contract is due to finish in June 2015. Their contract provides for two possible extensions of one year each.

15 Management of the sites is only part of the services in the Kāpiti Company contract. Under the service delivery model the Kāpiti Company staff both operate the i-SITEs and have an integral role in the other aspects of their contract e.g. supporting events and the promotion plan. i-SITE rationalisation prior to the expiry of the contract term on 30 June 2015, could compromise the ability of the Kāpiti Company to deliver the remainder of the contract services.

Changes in Enquiries at the i-SITEs Since the 2013 Strategic Review

16 The strategic review used Ōtaki and Paraparaumu enquiry numbers from the 2012 annual Deloitte i-SITE survey. The information was benchmarked against comparable sites. This showed a gradual national decline in visitor numbers with Ōtaki and Paraparaumu sites recording a 9% decline in enquiries from 2010.

17 Data from the Kāpiti sites for the period April 2013 to March 2014 shows a further average 16% decline in total visitor numbers since June 2012. (The decline at Paraparaumu and Ōtaki was 20% and 16% respectively).

18 The next Deloitte benchmark survey is not due to be published until late October 2014. Until that survey is released it is not possible to see whether the further decline at the Kāpiti sites is a consistent national trend for comparable sites.

Current Use of the Kāpiti i-SITEs

19 A list of the types of enquiries addressed to the i-SITES is attached as Appendix 5.

20 The main use of the i-SITES by locals has been:

- booking of bus and ferry tickets (which the Kāpiti i-SITES do without charging additional booking fees);
- provision of local events and activities information; and
- general 'community' information.

21 Prior to commencement of the Stakeholder workshops staff made enquiries with other Intercity agents in Paraparaumu and Ōtaki. In addition to direct on-line bookings, both the AA in Paraparaumu and Ōtaki Travel provide Intercity ticketing without a booking fee.

22 Consideration was also given to whether the non-tourism 'community' enquiries could be relocated within existing Council services (e.g. Libraries and Service Centres). These services already receive similar enquiries. It is anticipated that the Service Centres and Libraries would absorb the additional i-SITE 'community' inquiries within their existing budgets.

23 The libraries already accommodate visitors who want to use the library computers or the free Wi-Fi. Any consideration to transfer some, or all, of the remainder of the i-SITE visitor information service to the Service Centres and Libraries, could not be accommodated within their existing operational budgets. This would require additional staff with appropriate training and would be constrained by space availability.

24 Staff also discussed with key tourism operators whether they are interested in holding additional Kāpiti visitor information at their sites. Some have indicated that they would and dependent on Council's decision, staff will continue to work with them to see how this may be facilitated.

25 The Stakeholder Group was provided with this information.

Options for Rationalisation

26 The options to rationalise the sites are:

- Retain the Status Quo

- Closing one site and diverting some or all the funding to either digital information or improving the design and style of the other i-SITE.

- Close both sites and diverting some or all of the funding to digital information

- Close both sites

27 The following table summarises the implications and matters for consideration for each of the options.

Option	Implications	Considerations
Status Quo		
• Retain both sites and funding for tourism and community enquiries	Responding to Community enquiries at i-SITEs: • outside of Economic Development funding rationale • community service funding towards sites not warranted as duplication of Council Service Centre function Operational costs of running 2 i-SITEs not efficient use of Economic Development funding	• Option was outside of Stakeholder Group TOR
Close one Site and redirect Economic Development funding		

Close Ōtaki
 	
Redirect current funding to:
• Improving telling the Kāpiti Story digitally and in the remaining i-SITE; and
• Some provision for Ōtaki community to promote tourism in and around Ōtaki
	• May need to improve communication and signage to redirect community enquires to Ōtaki Service Centre
	
	• Renew the Paraparaumu site lease lease for 1 + 2 years.
		• Recommendation of Stakeholder Group
		• Recommendation of OCB
		• Recommendation of PRCB as interim measure
		• ART support for some funding retention for Ōtaki community tourism promotion & iwi involvement in this.
		• Long term - Paraparaumu best location for single site.
		• Paraparaumu tenancy is not optimal location however:
		  ▪ it has less physical constraints to improving design than Ōtaki; and
		  ▪ facilitates transition to changed traffic flows post expressway without interim fit out costs.

Close Paraparaumu	• Visitors heading north unlikely to backtrack from Ōtaki to visit local attractions. • Physical limitations of the Ōtaki building mean high levels of funding would be required to improve it. • Would release greater level of Economic Development funding for redirection	• Not the recommendation of Stakeholder Group, OCB, PRCB or ART
Close both sites		
	Funding could be redirected to other Economic Development initiatives e.g. digital	• Not the recommendation of Stakeholder Group, OCB, PRCB or ART

28 In deliberating how to rationalise the i-SITEs, Council needs to consider:

- rationalisation is a reduction in the level of service Council currently provides
- that while visitors are increasingly using digital information they still value personal recommendations and local knowledge about activities and things to do in Kāpiti; and
- the local community also uses the i-SITEs to get visitor information about Kāpiti for their visiting friends and family.

29 If Council decides to accept the recommendation of the Stakeholder Group to keep Paraparaumu open, staff will come back to Council with options for operating the site from 1 July 2015.

Financial Considerations

30 Funding is provided in the 2013-2014 Annual Plan for operation of both i-SITES until 30 June 2015.   This included provision to cover associated costs of either renewing or relinquishing the Paraparaumu lease.

Legal Considerations

31 Council must make a decision on renewal of the Paraparaumu i-SITE lease by December 2014.   It needs also to consider that the management contract for the i-SITE is not a standalone contract. It sits within a wider contract for the delivery of other tourism services which is aligned to the current Economic Development Strategy and runs to 30 June 2015.   The Economic Development Strategy is under review as are the contracts under it. This may have implications on how tourism services are delivered in the future. These matters will be addressed in the 2015 Long Term Plan once the strategy review is completed.

32 There are no other legal considerations.

Delegation

33 Only the Council has the delegation to make a decision on this matter.

Consultation

34 A Visitor and Community stakeholder group was established to provide advice to Council on options for rationalisation.   The Group's recommendations were reported to the Ōtaki Community Board on 2 September 2014, Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Boards on 16 September 2014 and Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti on 7 October 2014.

Policy Implications

35 There are no policy implications.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

36 Iwi were represented on the Stakeholder Group and supported the reorganisation of two sites to one, retaining the Paraparaumu site. They also supported the retention of some allocation of funding to ensure that the Ōtaki community to still be able to promote tourism in and around Ōtaki and would like to be part of any further discussion on how this can be supported.

Publicity Considerations

37   A press release is being prepared for when Council makes its decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a) That Council accepts the recommendations of the Community and Visitor Stakeholder Group, Ōtaki Community Board and Paraparaumu Community Board to close Ōtaki i-SITE and from 1 July 2015, redirect the current Ōtaki funding to:

   a.   Improving how the Kāpiti story is told digitally and in the remaining renamed Kāpiti i-SITE; and

   b.   maintaining some provision for the Ōtaki community to still provide for visitor information in and around Ōtaki;

38   That the Council notes that staff will prepare an implementation plan for Council's information.

Report prepared by:	Approved for submission by:	Approved for submission by:
Jane Hewitt	Stephen McArthur	Tamsin Evans
Senior Advisor Strategic Projects	**Group Manager Strategy & Partnerships**	**Group Manager Community Services**

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1 to SP-14-1329:   Terms of Reference - i-SITE Rationalisation Visitor and Community Stakeholder Group

Appendix 2 to SP-14-1329:   Visitor and Community i-SITE Rationalisation Stakeholder Group Workshops and Recommendation

Appendix 3 to SP14-1329:   Recommendations of the Ōtaki and Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Boards and support of the ART view by Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti.

Appendix 4 to SP-14-1329:   The Kāpiti Company comments

Appendix 5 to SP-14-1329:   Current inquires at the i-SITEs

Appendix 1 to SP-14-1320: Terms of Reference - i-SITE Rationalisation Visitor and Community Stakeholder Group

Purpose:

To provide community and tourism advice and commentary to Council on rationalisation of the Kāpiti i-SITE network. Background on why council rationalising is attached as Appendix 1.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Stakeholder Group:

- To workshop the options for rationalisation and alternative provision of services currently provided from the i-SITEs;
- To provide advice on the options as one of the inputs into the decision that Council will subsequently make on the final rationalisation.

Not included in the scope:

- Not rationalising the i-SITEs

Membership:

A maximum of 14 members. Each member to have experience in or represent the:

- iwi of the district
- visitor sector
- business community
- provision of community services

Membership to include:

- 1 representative of Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki
- 1 representative of Te Āti Awa
- 1 representative of Ngāti Toa Rangatira
- 1 representative of the Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce
- 1 representative of the Department of Conservation
- 1 member of the Ōtaki Community Board
- 1 representative of the Ōtaki Business/Visitor community nominated by the Ōtaki Community Board
- 1 member of the Paraparaumu Raumati Community Board
- 1 representative of the Paraparaumu Raumati Business/Visitor community nominated by Paraparaumu Raumati Community Board
- 1 representative of i-SITE NZ
- 1 representative of Manaaki Kāpiti
- 1 representative of the Tourism Action Group
- 1 member of the Waikanae Community Board
- 1 member of the Paekākāriki Community Board

Remuneration:

Membership is a voluntary role, and there will be no remuneration for members' time, or attendance at meetings.

Processes and Support:

The Stakeholder Group will:

- meet at least twice. Meeting times will be structured to enable timely comment to Council staff and Council.

Secretarial support and a workshop facilitator will be provided by Council.

The role of the facilitator is to:
- facilitate a workshop that enables the Stakeholder Group to consider the options and provide robust advice;
- facilitate input from all members of the group, so that every voice is heard
- suggest ways to work with differences of views;
- where appropriate support the group to develop a consensus view of the advice that the group provides to Council.

Council will make available meeting rooms and any Council-owned presentation equipment required for meetings.

Council will provide secretarial support to the group. Staff time including secretarial and facilitator support will be met from existing Council operating budgets.

Output

By 15 August 2014 to have endorsed a written summary of workshop which reflects the advice of the group. Where there is not a consensus view on options all stakeholder views will be reflected in the summary.

Communication:

Any public statements about the Stakeholder Group will be made by the Council

Appendix 2 to SP-14-1329: i-SITE Rationalisation Visitor and Community Stakeholder Group Workshops and Recommendation

The Stakeholder Group Workshops

At the commencement of the workshops the Stakeholder Group was given an overview of:
- how the rationalisation project fitted into the wider context of Council investment in the visitor sector;
- the current review of the Economic Development Strategy; and
- development of the Long Term Plan.

The Group was asked to focus on options that would apply to the period from 2015 to the completion of the Mackay's to Peka Peka Expressway in 2017.

Staff noted that any issues raised by the group about Council's future investment in tourism and visitor services would be passed on to the team working on the Economic Development Review.

The workshops noted:

- that visitors to a destination still value personal recommendations of things to do and places to stay by qualified locals;

- the local community does use the sites to obtain information on local attractions and events for friends and family who are visiting;

- the sites are part of a national network which provides information all New Zealanders with information about activities in other parts of the country. For locals this means they can obtain information about other parts of the country to visit. Locals in other parts of the country can obtain information in their sites about Kāpiti attractions;

- that once the M2PP Expressway is complete, Paraparaumu is the optimal location for a single site;

- should development of the Kāpiti Island Gateway proceed the appropriate physical location for any future i-SITE would be within that development.

- Post expressway, if a Kāpiti Island Gateway does not proceed the single Kāpiti i-SITE should be relocated to be readily accessible from the Kāpiti Road egress to the Expressway.

- while the current Paraparaumu tenancy is not in the ideal location at present, there will be significant changes in traffic flows as a result of the construction and completion of the expressway. The cost of moving to an interim location until the completion of the expressway, would be difficult to justify.

The Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce was unable to attend the second workshop, instead providing written comments for the workshop consideration. This was that the i-SITE rationalisation should take a wider perspective with the physical sites and online presence to enhance economic development rather than just tourism. As their view goes beyond the terms of reference for the i-SITE Stakeholder Group, their view has been referred to the Economic Development Strategy Working Party for its consideration.

Stakeholder Group Recommendation

The Stakeholder Group recommendation was that the district still needs one i-SITE and that the way in which the Kāpiti story is told needs to be improved. The Group considered that a strong web digital presence is important as is enhancing the physical displays and collateral (e.g. maps & brochures) available in the remaining site.

The Group could accept the closure of the of the Ōtaki i-SITE if these matters were addressed and some provision was still made for the Ōtaki community to have some form of visitor information in Ōtaki.

Prudent design of improved displays/story boards for an improved Kāpiti site at the current Paraparaumu i-SITE location now, could enable this material to transition and be relocated into any future Gateway or post expressway tenancy.

The Stakeholder Group recommended that:

The i-SITE Rationalisation Visitor and Community Stakeholder Group recommendation is that:

1. One i-SITE/Visitor Centre is needed for Kāpiti.

2. The Group support the concept of the Kāpiti Island Gateway and that if that proceeds visitor information should be provided within it.

3. In the event that the Gateway does not come to fruition, post the construction of the Mackay's to Peka Peak Expressway, a new location should be considered for the single Kāpiti i-SITE which is easily accessible from the Kāpiti Road egress from the Expressway.

4. Prior to the completion of the Expressway, a single Kāpiti i-SITE should be retained at the current location of the Paraparaumu i-SITE;

5. That the closure of the Ōtaki i-SITE is accepted if the way that the Kāpiti Story is told is improved, digitally and in the physical displays in the remaining i-SITE and some form of visitor information provision is retained in Ōtaki.

6. That the current funding Council provides for the Ōtaki i-SITE be redirected to address:
    - digital communication,
    - improvements to the displays in the single remaining Kāpiti i-SITE; and
    - visitor information needs in Ōtaki

The group had a split view on wording of points 5 and 6. Equal numbers of the group supported the following alternate wording

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7. That the closure of the Ōtaki i-SITE is accepted if the way that the Kāpiti Story is told is improved **with emphasis on the individual towns and their identities**, digitally and in the physical displays in the remaining i-SITE and some form of visitor information provision is retained in Ōtaki

6. That the current funding Council provides for the Ōtaki i-SITE be redirected to address:
    - **enhanced** digital communication **across the district**,
    - improvements to the displays in the single remaining Kāpiti i-SITE **emphasising the individual towns and their identities;** and
    - visitor information needs in Ōtaki.

Appendix 3 to SP14-1320 – Recommendations of the Ōtaki and Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Boards and Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti.

Resolution of the Ōtaki Community Board – Ōtaki Community Board (OCB 14/09/334)

RATIONALISATION OF THE i-SITES (SP-14-1278)

MOVED (Papps/Pearce)

That the Ōtaki Community Board recommends to Council that

a. They support the advice of the Community and Visitor Stakeholder Group that:

   I. One i-SITE in the district is still needed;

   II. That Ōtaki i-SITE be closed and the current funding be redirected with a portion of the funding being retained for some form of visitor information in Ōtaki and the rest to improving how the Kāpiti Story is told both digitally and within the remaining i-SITE (emphasising the story of the individual towns and their identities); and

   III. That Council issue a request for expressions of interest in the future use of the Old Ōtaki Courthouse building prior to the i-SITE closing;

b. That the Ōtaki Community Board requests that if the Ōtaki i-SITE is closed, Council ensures that the 'Resident Inquiries', identified in the Review, are still being supported and addressed, for example at the Ōtaki Library Service Centre or by other relevant providers.

CARRIED

Resolution of the Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board 16 September 2014 (PRCB 14/09/086)

I-SITE RATIONALISATION (SP-14-1279)

MOVED (Spiers/Morris-Travers)

That the Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board supports the advice of the Community and Visitor Stakeholder Group that:

- One i-SITE in the district is still needed;

- That Ōtaki i-SITE be closed and the current funding be redirected with a portion of the funding being retained for some form of visitor information in Ōtaki and the rest to improving how the Kāpiti Story is told both digitally and within the remaining i-SITE (emphasising how the story of the individual towns and their identities); and

- That Council issue a request for expressions of interest in the future use of the Old Ōtaki Courthouse building prior to the i-SITE closing.

- That the Board notes this as an interim solution until the completion of the review of the economic development strategy.

CARRIED

Recommendation to Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti Meeting on 7 October 2014

1   Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti received report SP-14-1320 and endorsed the position of ART as set out in paragraph 31 of that report.

Paragraph 31 of SP14-1320 stated:

"ART has been part of the rationalisation workshops for the current i-SITES. ART supports:

- the reorganisation from two sites to one, retaining the Paraparaumu site;

- Renaming the Paraparaumu i-SITE, the Kāpiti i-SITE;

- the closure of the Ōtaki site providing there is an allocation of funds to ensure that the Ōtaki community are still able to promote tourism in and around Ōtaki.

ART understands the unique position iwi has within the Kāpiti Coast and would like to be part of any further discussions on how this can be supported".

Appendix 4 to SP-14-1329: The Kāpiti Company comments on the Strategic Review of the Kāpiti Visitor Information Network (i-SITE) and the Community and Visitor i-SITE Rationalisation Stakeholder Group.

The Kāpiti Company Limited
PO Box 145
Paraparaumu 5254

15 July 2014

Jane Hewitt
Senior Advisor
Kāpiti Coast District Council
Private Bag 60 601
Paraparaumu

Dear Jane,

Strategic Review of Kāpiti Visitor Information Network

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the strategic review of the Kāpiti Visitor Information Network. As mangers of the two sites, we are especially proud of our team and the fact that the Paraparaumu i-SITE received a mark of 87% when independently evaluated by Qualmark NZ and in its 2013 Tourism NZ mystery shopper report, the Ōtaki Centre received a mark of 81% - 7% higher than the national average of 71%.

The Strategic Review of Kāpiti Visitor Information Network by Destination Planning limited is a great start to the process of understanding the purpose, role and value of the local visitor information network and we congratulate the Council for undertaking this piece of work.

In response to points raised:

Locals make up 50% of all users.

- While this is correct, the New Zealand Regional Tourism forecast 2010-2016 for the Kāpiti-Horowhenua RTO highlighted that in 2009, visiting friends and relatives was the main purpose for visiting the district by 59% of International and 49% of domestic overnight visitors. The number of day trippers coming to visit friends and relatives was similar with 51% of International, and 46% of domestic day visits attributed to visiting friends and relatives[i].

- What this highlights is that most people visiting the Kāpiti Coast in 2009 were here to visit a friend or relative. Those locals may have used the i-SITE to find activities to entertain their guests, who as a result, didn't need to visit the i-ISTE themselves. We feel that measuring the success of the i-SITE based on the proportion of locals vs domestic and international visitors doesn't tell the full story of the Kāpiti Coast visitor sector.

Rate payer contributions as compared to other regions

- While this is a useful measure, we feel this fails to take into account the spending that takes place in the district as a result of the i-SITE activity, although without the need for direct contact. A great example of this is the way the team at the Kāpiti Coast i-SITES work in the wider marketing area. They manage the event promotions, engagement with local operators, and other marketing initiatives such as the distribution of the weekly Friday Flash.

- Taking that into account, Destination Planning compares the Councils funding cost per i-SITE enquiry at the Ōtaki i-SITE ($10.72) with Stratford in Taranaki ($4.18). If you look at the overall annual tourist expenditure in Taranaki ($250m) per resident (109,000) you get around $2,293 per resident, while in Kāpiti and Horowhenua, the total spend ($260m) per resident (80,000) is around $3,250 per person – 42% higher[ii].

- We feel that the fact that the i-SITE is involved in much of the non-contact tourism marketing and management should be considered in this review.

Interior look and feel

- We feel that Destination Planning makes a good point about the interior look and feel at the i-sites. We do however believe that this is a result of the centres lacking a clear purpose and long term strategy. In 2011, Luhrs and Company assessed the Ōtaki i-SITE on behalf of the previous managers – Nature Coast Enterprise. Luhrs and Company recommended a concept they called "Justice" - a concept that was bigger than either a café or shop, or a visitor information centre. It would be a "strategic move to address a number of Council strategies and priorities". In particular, in line with sustainability, community wellbeing and economic development strategies, it would involve the upgrading the heritage building and surrounding reserve into:
    - An exemplar site for innovation and sustainability.
    - A showcase for the region's award winning foods and beverages.
    - A showcase for the Kāpiti region and what it has to offer visitors.
    - A ticketing agency.

    Luhrs and Company proposed that once the building was upgraded, it could be leased to a commercial operator. They suggested that with smart marketing, it could become a hub that draws people to Ōtaki for the good of all retail businesses. They also suggested that by doing this, the KCDC subsidy for the visitor centre could be phased out over time as the centre benefits from capital expenditure and marketing investment and becomes self-sustaining.
- Without a clear purpose and commitment to a long term strategy, it would be very difficult to understand the best interior layout for the centres.
- We feel that the centres should be thought of as 'a window to our community' and each centre should reflect the essence of its unique community and that should come about through a long term vision for the local network.

Multi-channel communications

- We agree that the way visitor's access information is changing. We also agree that all communications must be multi-channel, however we would like to suggest that with all visitor information the accuracy and timeliness of communication is extremely important. The team at the Kāpiti Coast i-SITEs communicate with visitors across multiple channels now, and would be a key resource in generating and verifying content that is accessible to visitors. Without them, it could become very difficult to manage visitor information without conflicts of interest and inaccuracies.

The use of other service outlets

- We feel that it's overly simplistic to assume that other service providers, such as library's and Council service centres could provide the service that is presently provided by the Kāpiti Coast i-SITEs. This is especially important in a region where many visitors will be enquiring about visiting Kāpiti Island or the Tararua Forest Park – both of which require an understanding of the risk posed by both activities.
- Ultimately the i-SITE staff are trained professionals. They know all the best things to do, places to stay and ways to get there, plus they'll take care of the bookings. Every person who works at i-SITE is a travel expert for their own home town, and are Travel Industry qualified with national certificates in Travel issued by Service IQ.

Funding mix

- We agree with the suggestion made in the report that consideration should be given to splitting the Council funding between economic development and community services
- This becomes clearer where the i-SITE assists with events such as the Kāpiti Arts Trail where the majority of attendees are locals.

The use of unmanned visitor information outlets

- We strongly advise caution when considering unmanned visitor information outlets. In our experience, i-SITE customers value the human contact. This is evident when most i-SITES provide internet accesses, yet the customer still prefers to talk face to face with a consultant
- In our experience, unmanned information sites are targets for vandals and often have out of date information. Examples include Levin and Upper Hutt.


Images above: Levin Information booth, and Upper Hutt information booth

Wider considerations

- We feel that to appropriately evaluate the best location for the provision of visitor information service in Kāpiti, consideration must be given to the future provision of visitor information within the greater Wellington region. Ultimately, when taking into account future tourism flows, locations such as Masterton and Ōtaki could become significant gateways to Wellington city. Wellington will always be a key visitor hub given the location of the National museum, Parliament and the interisland ferry services.

- Consideration should be given to the need for both centres to be accredited members of the i-SITE Network. Locations such as Lake Tekapo and while not accredited, still provide excellent service, however there are not subject to such stringent rules relating to opening hours and staff qualifications and also don't require an annual membership fee and Qualmark assessment.

- The Ōtaki i-SITE is a unique heritage building on State highway one. Once bypassed, Ōtaki will likely become more of destination. We suggest further thought is given to the restricted potential use of the building given its heritage classification, its appeal to the other potential tenants, and the impression that an empty building on that location would give visitors to the Kāpiti Coast.

I hope that this information is useful, and thank you very much for the opportunity.
Do not hesitate to contact me to discuss.

Yours sincerely
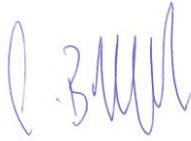
Chris Barber
Managing Director

From: Chris Barber
Sent: Monday, 22 September 2014 7:44 a.m.
To: Jane Hewitt
Subject: I Site review -Ōtaki

Hi Jane

Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback into the i-SITE review, and in particular, the discussions with the Ōtaki Community Board.

We stand by our initial comments in our letter of 15 July 2014.

The only further comments we would like to make relate to representation amongst the stakeholder group, the present locations and how Council funds the network.

- Local event organisers who use the I-SITE to help with event marketing and administration would add value, as would visitors to the region that use the I-SITEs and more representation from the tourism sector
- That the present location of the I-SITES and Councils role in making that decision be further considered in any rationalisation decision
- That the present funding breakdown (Economic Development vs Community Development) be considered in any rationalisation decision

Thank you very much for this opportunity. We would be happy to discuss these points further in person

Appendix 5 to SP-14-1329 : Current inquires at the i-SITEs

Resident inquiries:
- Intercity bookings – ferries & buses
- Local events and things to do – (especially free ones)

- Event ticketing in the Wellington regional
- Local train & bus services

- New residents – advice on local (including Council) services and facilities e.g. Kāpiti Kids Connect
- Information on health shuttles, Red Cross, Cancer Society, Citizen's Advice
- Directions – to sports facilities, services, Council offices and libraries, general street directions
- Courier drop off

Visitor inquiries:
- Intercity bookings – ferries & buses
- Local attractions and things to do. - (especially free ones)
- Brochures on walking, tramping, camping and best beaches
- Accommodation & cafes/restaurants
- General street directions within the district and other locations
- About the DOC estate – tracks, huts, camping grounds and Kāpiti Island
- Advice on things to do in adjacent regions

- Information on Freedom Camping

- Use of the internet – but generally visitors are seeking free WiFi

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[i] Source: NEW ZEALAND REGIONAL TOURISM FORECASTS 2010-2016 KĀPITI-HOROWHENUA RTO AUGUST 2010 | www.tourismresearch.govt.nz

[ii] Source: MBIE Regional Tourism Summaries.