

Chairperson and Committee Members

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

7 AUGUST 2014

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Information

KĀPITI ISLAND GATEWAY CENTRE FEASIBILITY REPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the attached feasibility study for the Kāpiti Island Centre Gateway for the information of the Committee.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

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

BACKGROUND

- 3 The possibility of a gateway to or visitor centre for Kāpiti Island (located on the mainland) has been discussed on and off over the years. A feasibility study was carried out by Tourism Resource Consultants in 1992 for the Kāpiti Coast Promotions Council which concluded that a visitor centre was a viable proposition and that the most favourable location was the Paraparaumu Beach front near the Kāpiti Boating Club.
- 4 The concept was raised again in 2013 in the light of the Department of Conservation's (DOC) review of the concessions for taking visitors to Kāpiti Island (the Island). DOC has changed the way in which concessions are managed. In summary, the changes introduced were:
 - the granting of a third tourism concession (Kapiti Island Nature Tours) in December 2012
 - increasing the permitted number of visitors to the island (from 50 to 100 at Rangatira Point and 36 to 60 at the North End) in December 2012
 - handing on the permitting function from the Department to concessionaires to enable 'one-stop' shop booking for visitors in February 2013
 - an increase in the price of the concession fees in February 2013 to \$28.75 per adult which included the visitor permit fee. Children received a 50% discount
 - significant investment in upgrading visitor facilities on the Island. This includes a new visitor shelter, a new wetland boardwalk, and new public toilets 2012/2013.
- 5 The new procedures were the subject of a lot of criticism. As a result they were reviewed resulting in a decrease in the price of the concession fees in July 2014

to \$10 per adult which includes the visitor permit fee. There is no DOC fee for children under 18.

- 6 In 2013 Council provided some initial support by facilitating two meetings of a working group consisting of the concessionaires, interested councillors and community board members, iwi, the Kāpiti Boating Club, and other individuals and groups with interests in the Island who want to progress the gateway concept. The outcome of those discussions was a commitment to investigate further the potential for a gateway and departure point for the Island on the mainland that can operate as an entity independent of DOC and the Council.
- 7 It was considered that a gateway could serve a number of purposes including providing:
 - a space which would promote the attractions of the Island and contribute to an increase in visitors to the district. This would include information on history and ecology;
 - a designated departure point for visitors to the Island;
 - space for visitors to meet and shelter prior to a trip to the Island;
 - a retail outlet for tickets and permits to the Island;
 - café space;
 - space for conducting biosecurity checks;
 - space for arts, educational and interpretive material;
 - associated space for parking.
- 8 The working group was of the view that the building should ideally be:
 - high quality;
 - architecturally designed;
 - distinctive;
 - evocative of the special attributes, stories and history of Kāpiti Island;
 - multi-purpose - capable of accommodating a variety of activities.
- 9 On 31 January 2013, the Council approved additional funding of \$15,000 for a feasibility study for a Kāpiti Island Gateway Centre. The Department of Conservation (DOC) also contributed \$15,000 for this study. After a contestable process, TRC Tourism was contracted to lead a team to carry out the study. The team comprised TRC Tourism, Destination Planning and Pynenburg and Collins Architects Ltd.
- 10 The Council was briefed on this report along with members of the working group, referred to in para 6, on 15 April 2014.
- 11 Since receiving the report, the idea of relocating the District's major i-SITE to any eventual gateway building has been raised and has formed part of recent discussions.

CONSIDERATIONS

Issues

Feasibility Study Findings and Conclusions

- 12 The feasibility study (study) is attached as Appendix 1.
- 13 The study identified four gateway options:
 - 1) a substantial new Gateway Centre housing a mix of compatible and synergistic functions on the Boating Club site to be managed by a new organisational entity;
 - 2) a modified version of (1);
 - 3) modifying the existing Boating Club to provide for a departure lounge for trips to the Island;
 - 4) slightly modifying the existing Boating Club to provide a space for bio-security and briefing procedures.
- 14 TRC Tourism identified (1) as the option which best meets the terms of reference for the study and the aspirations expressed by the working group. As a result the feasibility study examines that option in more depth than the other options and identifies it as the preferred option.
- 15 The estimated cost of building the preferred option is approximately \$14.8 million (see page 35 of the study). It should be noted that the estimates of cost, demand, and return on the preferred option are preliminary. More detailed investigation and analysis would be needed if Council wants to consider funding this project, whether in full or in part.

Comment

- 16 At this stage, Council has made no commitment to supporting this project beyond funding the feasibility study. No funding has been earmarked for further work.
- 17 Further involvement could be considered as part of the review of the economic development strategy alongside the implementation of the review of the visitor information network. This would allow Council to include future expenditure in the 2015 Long Term Plan should it wish to.

Financial Considerations

- 18 There are no financial considerations arising from this report.
- 19 Any further support for a gateway centre would need to be addressed through the 2015 Long Term Plan.

Legal Considerations

- 20 There are no legal considerations at this stage.

Delegation

- 21 The Committee has the delegation under Clause 7.1 of the Governance Structure and Delegations: 2013-2016 Triennium (November 2013) to:

“develop policies and work programmes that support the social, economic, environmental and cultural interests of the community; and

undertake all matters not specifically delegated to Council officers or other committees concerning or involving community development and interests, including but not limited to the development, implementation, advocacy, and monitoring of social policies relating to community facilities”.

Consultation

- 22 At this stage, no consultation is required. However, the feasibility study should be made available to all interested parties, such as community boards and members of the original working group.

Policy Implications

- 23 There are no policy implications as this stage.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

- 24 Kāpiti Island is of considerable importance to tāngata whenua. The feasibility study will be presented to the next meeting of Te Whakameninga o Kāpiti.

Publicity Considerations

- 25 No communications are required at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 26 That the Committee receives the Kāpiti Island Gateway Centre Feasibility Study as attached in Appendix 1 to report SP-14-1150.
- 27 That the Council works with key stakeholders and potential funders to explore opportunities for creating a Gateway Centre.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

Philippa Richardson

Stephen McArthur

Strategic Projects Manager

Group Manager Strategy and Partnerships

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Kāpiti Island Gateway Feasibility Study: Final Report