

ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Delivering trust and confidence in civic decision-making.

ENGAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

Our governance work includes all of the activities that support Council decision-making and ensure we are accountable to the people of Wellington. This includes: running local elections; holding meetings; informing residents about the city and our work; and seeking input from residents and engaging them in our decision-making.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Residents have many opportunities to influence decisions about the city, and generally feel well informed and reasonably well consulted (see page 79). However, there is room for improvement.

Our long-term approach is focused on:

- providing residents with high quality, relevant information about the city and Council decisions
- being open and transparent
- involving residents and groups early in the decision-making process
- involving a wide range of community advisory groups in the decision-making process
- seeking new, more relevant or meaningful ways to engage with residents and involve them in decision-making.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Wellingtonians found new ways to debate the city's long-term future.

A facebook page, an online budget simulator, website discussion groups, and a councillor phone hotline were among the many new ways provided for Wellingtonians to have a say on the Council's 2009-19 long-term plan.

The Council also involved dozens of community groups as it sought new ways to reach out to residents and seek input.

The Council efforts were complemented by those of community groups. The Wellington Progressive and Residents' Association established a long-term plan 'wiki' site and ran a range of public meetings.

Altogether, more than 500 submissions were received, of which a large proportion were from first-time submitters. In addition to formal submissions, the online consultation allowed many more Wellingtonians to provide informal feedback, which was also considered during Council deliberations.

With rising cost pressures and concerns about affordability, the plan involved some tough choices. Councillors ultimately decided on a middle path, maintaining most services at current levels and adding some new initiatives for a rates increase of 3.27%.

The consultation covered a wide range of issues including the future of waste management and recycling, plans to extend high-speed broadband throughout the city, additional funding for Te Papa, the Karori Sanctuary, and plans for more artificial sportsfield surfaces over the next ten years.

Residents opted to retain the single transferable vote (STV) electoral system for local elections.

In a poll held during September, 50.46% of voters supported retention of the STV electoral system, whereas 49.37% voted for a return to the first past the post system.

A total of 132,762 voting papers were mailed out to registered voters in the city. Of those, some 44,024 were returned – representing a turnout of 33.16%.

The result was binding on the Council and means the STV system will be used in at least the 2010 and 2013 Council elections to elect the Mayor, City Councillors and community board members.

This turnout is comparable to the 32% turnout when STV was first adopted as the city's electoral system in 2002.

Voter turnout at local authority elections has been declining for some years. At the 2007 local body elections, turnout was just 40%.

“Residents have many opportunities to influence decisions about the city.”

PROGRESS TOWARDS LONG-TERM GOALS

7.1 MORE INCLUSIVE – Wellingtonians will be more actively involved in the future direction of their communities.

Sixty-four percent of residents feel that the public has some influence or a large influence on Council decision-making. This is an improvement of 8 points since 2007.

In addition, 39% are satisfied with the level of public involvement in Council decision-making (up 3 points since 2007) and 58% are satisfied with the amount of Council consultation (no change). The Council has offered new ways for residents to have input into decisions about the city's future (see 'highlights'). Many Wellingtonians made submissions for the first time, and the total number of submissions was higher than for 2008's annual plan.

7.2 MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED – Wellingtonians will recognise the special position of Maori in the history of this place and this will be evident in current relationships.

Wellington's long history of occupation by Maori is recognised in many ways including place names, land ownership, public art and monuments.

Milestones for the year included promotion of Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori (Maori Language Week), Waitangi Day entertainment and commemorations, promotion of Matariki (Maori new year), completion of a Maori heritage trail, and the opening of the Te Aro Pa Visitor Centre.

The Council has partnerships with two groups representing iwi who occupied the city prior

to 1840: the Wellington Tenth Trust (representing Te Atiawa, Ngati Tupaia, Taranaki and Ngati Tama) and Ngati Toa Rangitira. These groups have formal input into Council decision-making (see 'Maori engagement'). Of the two mana whenua partners, one was satisfied with its relationship with the Council and one was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

7.3 MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED – Wellington will operate an open and honest decision-making process that generates confidence and trust in the democratic system.

Fifty-nine percent of residents are confident that Council decisions are made in the city's best interests (up 5 points since 2007). Forty-five percent of residents understand how Council decisions are made (up 2). During the year, the Council developed new ways to effectively involve residents at an early stage in the Council's long-term planning (see highlights).

7.4 MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED – Information required by citizens and groups will be easily accessible to enable participation in the community.

75% of residents believe that Wellington City Council information is easy to access (up 4 points since 2007).

Council information is available through a range of forums including our award-winning website (www.Wellington.govt.nz) which received more than 2.3 million hits during the year, and our Call Centre which answered more than 350,000 calls.



IN FOCUS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Over 40 Wellington residents were chosen to participate in Council decision-making for the long-term plan during the first half of 2009 as part of a Residents' Panel.

The panel brought together a wide cross-section of residents to consider the issues likely to face the city over the next 10 years and how the Council should respond.

The panel reported to the Council before public consultation on the draft long-term plan and again as part of the consultation process. The panel also met councillors to engage them and ask questions and provide views on key issues.

The panel's final report focused on several key issues: the transparency of Council decision-making, value for money, urban planning and transport, water efficiency and waste reduction, and safety.

The Residents' Panel was one of many Council initiatives to engage with Wellingtonians over the future of the city.

ACHIEVEMENT OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Of the Council's 2006-09 strategic priorities for engagement:

- **We have taken steps to improve the transparency and quality of its processes for public involvement in decision-making, and to improve communication with communities.**

In 2007, the Council completed a new Engagement Policy. It has since taken steps to improve the way it engages with residents. This includes engaging early, and with a wide range of residents, and providing a wide range of opportunities for input such as meetings, online forums, electronic petitions, and phone hotlines. Engagement on the Council's long-term plan (see highlights, page 79) is an example.

- **Efforts to raise participation in local body elections, for example through advertising, have not been successful.**

Wellington voter turnout in the 2007 election was just 40%, down from 42% in 2004 and 48% in 2001.

As noted in 'highlights', participation in the postal referendum on the electoral system for Council elections was just 33%.

Low participation rates are consistent nationwide and reflect a long-term decline in participation in national and local body elections.

“I found the process of contributing to the planning process useful and enlightening.”

Submitter on the long-term plan.

ACTIVITY

INFORMATION, CONSULTATION, AND DECISION-MAKING

This activity includes:

Consultation and communication – we keep residents informed through our award-winning website and a wide range of publications, and ask for residents' feedback on issues facing the city.

City governance and decision-making – we run elections every three years, run meetings of the Council and committees, and provide elected members with the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Civic information – our Call Centre and service centres answer residents' questions and arrange responses to their service requests and complaints.

We aim for a culture of openness where the city's residents can get information about the city and how it runs, and feel that they can make their views known.

Overall we'd like to encourage greater levels of engagement in local decision-making.

WHAT WE DID

CONSULTATION

We held a postal referendum as to whether future local authority elections should be decided using the first past the post or single transferable vote methods (see 'highlights', page 77).

We carried out a broad programme of engagement with the community to raise awareness of and participation in our 2009-19 long term plan (see 'highlights').

As well as the long-term plan, the Council conducted major consultation exercises during the year about: planning rules for suburban centres, including locations of major retail developments; the future of the Golden Mile, including bus routes and Manners Mall; the future of suburban centres including Adelaide Road, Johnsonville and Kilbirnie; cycling and walking; and waterfront development.

We received more than 25 online e-petitions on subjects ranging from the future of Manners Mall to recycling and dog walking areas.

CIVIC INFORMATION

Our Contact Centre won the customer service and Council online categories at the 2008 CRM Contact Centre Awards. This was the fourth year running in which the Contact Centre won the customer service award.

Our Contact Centre expanded its service to take bookings for plumbing/building inspections and dog enquiries, in addition to our Learn 2 Swim and general enquiries. The Call Centre received 304,000 general enquiries, 31,000 Learn 2 Swim calls, and 25,000 building/animal licensing calls. We are working to establish an online booking system for Learn 2 Swim in response to very high demand.

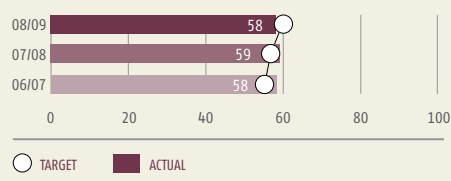
DECISION-MAKING

Council and committee work includes reviewing and adopting policies, making district plan changes, approving bylaws and setting the strategic direction and priorities for the city. Some examples for 2008/09 includes the development and adoption of the 2009-19 long-term plan, the review of the consolidated bylaw, a new policy on early childhood education and new walking and cycling policies were adopted, the earthquake prone buildings policy was reviewed, and a new road encroachment policy was adopted.

HOW WE PERFORMED

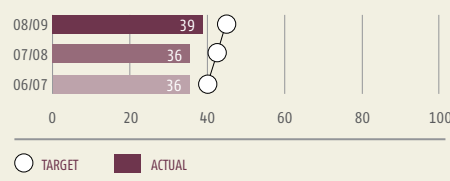
RESIDENTS (%) WHO ARE SATISFIED THE COUNCIL CONSULTS WITH THEM THE 'RIGHT AMOUNT'

Source: WCC Residents' Survey 2009



RESIDENTS (%) WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE COUNCIL INVOLVES THEM IN DECISION-MAKING

Source: WCC Residents' Survey 2009



COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE AGENDAS THAT ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AT LEAST 5 DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Source: Democratic Services

By legislation we are required to have all Council and committee agendas and reports available to the public two days prior to any meeting. We have set a higher standard for ourselves than required by legislation, and our target is to make 80% all agendas available to the public at least five days prior to any meeting. During the year we made changes to the way we measure this. The result for the first half are not available. The average for the second six months of the year was 59%.

WHAT IT COST

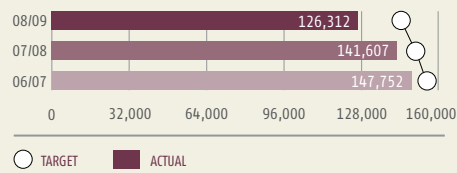
	ACTUAL 2009	BUDGET 2009	VARIANCE 2009	ACTUAL 2008
OPERATING EXPENDITURE (\$000)				
7.1.1 Consultation and Communication				
Expenditure	64	68	4	52
Revenue	-	-	-	-
Net Expenditure	64	68	4	52
7.2.2 City Governance and Decision-Making¹				
Expenditure	7,759	8,072	313	8,483
Revenue	(25)	(12)	13	(552)
Net Expenditure	7,734	8,060	326	7,931
7.2.3 Citizen Information²				
Expenditure	5,481	4,852	(629)	5,756
Revenue	(390)	(307)	83	(536)
Net Expenditure	5,091	4,545	(546)	5,220
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (\$000)				
7.2.2 City Governance and Decision-Making				
Expenditure	24	22	(2)	58

¹ Reduction in operating costs due to savings on personnel and printing costs.

² Increased personnel costs within the Contact Centre due to turnover and increased staffing levels to meet call volumes. Additional costs have also been incurred due to the delay in the closure of the service centres.

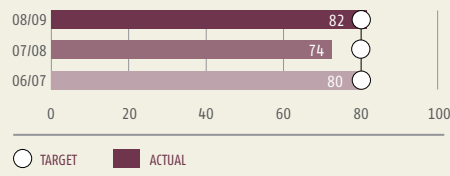
WCC SERVICE CENTRES BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Source: City Libraries



CONTACT CENTRE – TELEPHONE CALLS (%) ANSWERED WITHIN 30 SECONDS

Source: WCC Contact Centre



ACTIVITY

MAORI ENGAGEMENT

We acknowledge the special place of Maori in Wellington's history. So our governance arrangement include formal opportunities mana whenua to participate.

This includes non-voting rights on the Council's Strategy and Policy Committee, and formal consultation on land and resource management issues such as changes to the District Plan and protection of wahui tapu (sacred places).

We work with the city's two mana whenua organisations, Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated, to ensure their views are represented and their heritage and contribution to the city is appropriately recognised. We also work with the wider Maori community on issues of mutual interest.

WHAT WE DID

- We worked with mana whenua organisations to gain support for the new Naguranga Gorge gateway sculpture Te Matau a Maui – The Hook of Maui.
- We won a Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori Award for promoting the Maori language. Initiatives included promotion of Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori (Maori Language Week), Waitangi Day entertainment and commemorations, promotion of Matariki (Maori new year), and development of a Maori heritage trail which was completed in June 2009.

- We worked with the Historic Places Trust, the property developer and the Wellington Tenth Trust to preserve structures for Te Aro Pa which were uncovered during excavation for a multi-storey apartment complex on Taranaki Street. A Te Aro Pa visitors centre was opened in October 2008.
- We held a Maori Forum to provide opportunities for Maori to have input into Council planning.
- A major expansion of the City Gallery got under way. The expansion will provide three new exhibition spaces including one for Maori and Pacific art.

WHAT IT COST

OPERATING EXPENDITURE (\$000)	ACTUAL 2009	BUDGET 2009	VARIANCE 2009	ACTUAL 2008
7.2.1 Mana Whenua Partnership and Wider Maori Community				
Expenditure	116	110	(6)	100
Revenue	-	-	-	-
Net Expenditure	116	110	(6)	100

HOW WE PERFORMED

INTERVIEWS WITH BOTH MANA WHENUA PARTNERS COVERING A RANGE OF ISSUES RELATING TO THE TREATY PARTNERSHIP

Source: WCC Planning, Performance and Research

From our annual survey with mana whenua representatives, we sought comments on how effective we are at consulting with them on resource management issues and policies, and how we have performed in relation to the terms in our memorandums of understanding.

Our target was for both partners to be 'quite satisfied'. Overall, feedback indicated they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' to 'very satisfied' (measured on a five point scale).

“We work with the city’s two mana whenua organisations to ensure their views are represented and their heritage and contribution to the city is appropriately recognised.”