
CHAIR'S REVIEW – ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ARTS COMMITTEE

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines the Economic Growth and Arts Committee programme up till June 2014.

2. Recommendation

The Chair recommends that the Governance, Finance and Planning Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*

3. The Purpose of the Committee

The focus of the Committee is on delivering sustainable long-term economic growth, increased employment, promoting the city's visitor attractions, delivering high-quality events, and supporting the development of smart businesses in the city. The Committee will also work to build Wellington's unique identity, bolster business confidence, raise the city's international profile, and ensure Wellington continues to be New Zealand's arts and culture capital by supporting a range of opportunities for entertainment and expression. There will be a continuing focus on the ICT and Digital sectors.

The Committee has responsibility for Arts partnerships, Community arts and cultural support, City promotion, major events and attractions, Business support, and galleries and museums.

4. The Focus up till June 2014

The focus of the Committee in this period has been in maintaining an informed view on economic activity and issues in the region, and keeping abreast of the economic growth initiatives being progressed by the Council and the work of our key economic growth CCOs.

In particular, the Committee has strong interest in the progression of the 8 Big Ideas, and the specific actions identified in the Economic Development Strategy (EDS).

The 8 Big Ideas have been project programmed into workstreams and progress is being made on all, with the Convention Centre proposal (with recommendations) on the Council agenda for its meeting of 24 June.

In terms of progressing against the EDS, focus has been maintained on the high priority actions: e.g.:

- ‘Open for Business’ has established key partnerships with retailers, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, and the hospitality sector. We have also provided support for a Christmas initiative in 2014/15.
- Smart Capital has undertaken considerable work and research, and will be reporting to Council in coming months on a recommended form and management of a Tech Hub.
- Destination Wellington continues to work closely with NZTE and the Council to attract and retain key business investments. There has been international focus and support provided to the Mayor and Councillors with the recent trade and education delegation to Japan and China. In addition, the DW partnership with PWT recently launched the new Wellington portal which, for the first time, consolidates key investment information along with telling the ‘Wellington Story’, and links both lifestyle and job offers.

4.1. Our Monitoring Programme

Our monitoring programme has focused on the following work programmes, in addition to reviewing the quarterly report in areas that relate to this Committee.

The Research and Evaluation team has briefed the Committee on the local economy, including updating us on the Wellington City Annual Economic Profile, the Quarterly Economic Monitors, and the Business Survey results. This has enabled us to have a good understanding of the drivers in the local economy.

Economic Initiatives

The Committee has received oral briefings at each meeting on the major economic initiatives being progressed by the Council.

CCO

Positively Wellington Tourism, Positively Wellington Venues, Wellington Regional Stadium Trust, Wellington Museums Trust, and the Basin Reserve Trust report to, and are reviewed by, this committee. We considered the draft statements of intent for 2014/15 and the letters of expectation to these organisations. We also reviewed the quarterly reports for the 2013/14 year and had presentations to the Committee from the CCOs. In addition, the Committee reviewed quarterly reports and the Annual Reporting from Wellington International Airport Ltd.

The consolidation of the economic growth CCOs - Positively Wellington Tourism, Positively Wellington Venues, and Grow Wellington - into a single regional economic development agency will be a major step forward in terms of increasing effectiveness in this area.

SMEs

A focus of our SME programme has been the establishment of the BID programme.

- The Miramar BID is now underway, and has established a work programme with the local business community. The first initiative undertaken by the BID has been the installation of free wi-fi - the first suburban centre to do so, and a public-private venture.
- The Khandallah BID steering committee, having received grant funding, has engaged a consultant to establish a BID with a poll planned for later this year.
- The Hataitai business community has held initial discussions to establish an association, and are discussing the prospect of a BID.
- The Kilbirnie Business Association hosted a meeting chaired by the Honourable Annette King to investigate support for a BID. A further meeting will be held in July with officers to brief.

Another important focus has been on the economic vitality of the CBD.

- We have attended the monthly CBD Stakeholder Group meetings hosted by NZ Retailers Assn and also attended by Wellington Employers Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality NZ, Inner City Association, and other stakeholders as required. Issues being addressed include: city activation through the festive period, alternatives to address impact of parking on business activity, and challenges/opportunities unique to particular areas of the CBD, such as Cuba Street.
- The Council partnered the development of the 'OurCBD' online forum with First Retail Group, providing an important channel for communication between CBD retailers and the Council. The success of the first meet-up (on online commerce methods) means others will be held in the coming months.
- We have supported the allocation of funding to Urban Design Brokerage to support developing businesses through installation into vacant street level premises, with a focus on the festive season.

We also received a briefing on the Local Government New Zealand Business Friendly Guidelines, which are part of the package being used to guide how the Council is positioning itself as 'open for business'.

4.2 We have built stronger relationships

We have continued to grow our relationships with the business community.

We have received briefings from a range of key stakeholders in the city, including the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Gibson Group, the Basin Reserve, Westpac Stadium, and Grow Wellington as well as anticipating a presentation from Air New Zealand.

We received a presentation from the community on making Wellington the Urban Mountain Biking 'Capital of the World'. The supporters of this proposal have applied for funding to the WEID fund to develop this proposal further.

4.3. Our Portfolio work has included

During this period we received few decision making reports.

The Council has a well-defined economic development focus. The Committee is the driver of the City's key economic growth projects. As such it monitors, at each meeting, progress being made towards these projects' successful implementation.

We were briefed on the BID programme, the 'OurCBD' web portal, Settlement Support, and updated on the Destination Wellington programme. The 'Our CBD' web-portal is an important element in how we can support local businesses in the city.

We received an oral report on the City Vision Identity refresh, which resulted in this identity being modified, before the final design was agreed.

We have also considered and approved grants from the Arts and Culture and Business Improvement Districts Development Funds.

We are aware of a number of initiatives across Council involving our tertiary institutes, in particular Victoria and Massey Universities, including development contribution agreements, resilience research, design school paper integration with Council activities, as well as research and internship programmes.

City Arts continued to support our community and public art work, with four community arts projects and six public arts projects in the first six months of 2014. Other activities include work on a review of the Toi Poneke Arts Centre, with the findings report due at the end of 2014.

City Events continues to invest in a wide range of events that deliver significant economic benefit to the City. A selection of the events that have been invested in in this six month period include: Capital Classic Ocean Swim, International Cricket ODI, Sevens Wellington, NZ Festival, Homegrown, National Masters Hockey, Caffeination, NZ Track & Field Championships, Festival of Education, Wellington Fashion Week, NZ International Comedy Festival, St Kilda AFL, Wellington Jazz Festival, Handmade, and the Wellington Marathon.

City Events continues to work on the planning and preparation of a number of significant major events that will be hosted in the City over the coming 12 months, including the World of WearableArt, Cricket World Cup 2015, ANZAC Day 2015 commemorations, and the FIFA U20 World Cup 2015.

5. The Key Focus for the next six months

The next period will have a key focus on driving forward the economic growth initiatives for the city.

The Committee is expecting that the key initiatives being pursued by the Council including the Film Museum, the airport extension, and the tech precinct will continue to be developed, and that the Committee will continue to be briefed on the progress of these initiatives.

The consolidated regional development agency and regional event funding is expected to provide greater impetus and focus on regional economic growth.

*Councillor Jo Coughlan
Chair Economic Growth and Arts Committee*