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**REPORT 2**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

## **CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT BETTY CAMPBELL ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE FUND POLICY**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

This report asks the Committee to:

- consider feedback from the consultation undertaken on the draft Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy (formerly known as the Community Group Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy)
- refer the draft policy, attached as Appendix 1, to Council for adoption.

### **2. Executive Summary**

A revised policy to address strategic alignment and operational effectiveness issues was presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 12 October taking effect from July 2007.

The Strategy and Policy Committee agreed to rename the Community group Accommodation Assistance Fund as the Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund, and to public consultation on the following aspects of the draft policy:

- the additional targeting of groups that take a lead in providing coordination, support and guidance for other groups (to help ensure the community has enough people with the right skills to be able to meet the needs of its residents)
- possible approaches to supporting emerging groups
- removal of the ring-fencing for Maori groups
- the criteria for evaluating grant applications
- the restriction of grant offers to groups, or clusters of groups, requiring accommodation for 30 or more hours per week.

Consultation was undertaken on the draft Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy between 20 October and 17 November.

Whilst only three submissions were received, these were from significant groups. Feedback indicates strong support for the draft policy as presented.

In alignment with the consultation feedback, the draft Policy is re-presented to the Committee without change.

### **3. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that consultation was undertaken on the draft Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy between 20 October and 17 November.*
3. *Refer the draft Policy, attached as Appendix 1, to Council for adoption, with implementation taking effect from July 2007.*
4. *Delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and Social and Recreation Portfolio leader the authority to make any amendments required.*

### **4. Background**

The 2003 Accommodation Assistance Policy supported the provision of social infrastructure in Wellington by addressing barriers to accommodation for community groups needing to operate in the central city and focussing on reducing disadvantage. The total Community Group Accommodation Assistance Policy allocation for 2006/07 of \$514,000 comprises:

- the Fund of \$150,000 allocated as contestable cash grants in one or three year commitments for rental subsidy. (Expiry of an existing property agreement will boost the Fund to \$235,000 from 2007-08.)
- property agreements and associated operating costs totalling \$264,000. This includes rental costs, power and cleaning for the Betty Campbell Centre (BCC), and project administrative overheads within the Council
- one-off transition funding of \$100,000 to assist the exit from the BCC. This may include brokerage through an independent property advisor, removal expense contributions, and telephone and computer reconnection.

A number of issues had arisen in relation to policy implementation and the existing policy was reviewed for:

- strategic alignment, following the adoption of the 2006/16 LTCCP and the Social and Recreation Strategy
- operational effectiveness now that the policy has been in operation for two financial years.

A revised policy to address these issues was presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 12 October. Implementation was proposed for July 2007, in line with the exit from the BCC property agreements in May.

The Committee agreed to rename the Fund as the Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund and to public consultation on the key elements of the draft Policy, those being:

- changing the policy intent from *reducing disadvantage* to *promoting social wellbeing* in order to achieve stronger strategic alignment
- increasing the Council's facilitation role to promote group collaboration, and planning for increasing independence from the Fund where possible
- moving away from property agreements in favour of a balance between facilitation support and rental subsidies
- supporting community groups that provide direct services to promote social wellbeing for Wellington residents, and also groups that provide coordination and support for these groups
- providing some support for groups located outside of the central city area
- offering three-year agreements, except where a shorter term is seen to better meet the Council's objectives
- discontinuation of ring-fencing for Maori community groups, as wellbeing for Maori is being addressed through currently funded groups.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Consultation process**

Consultation on the draft Policy closed on Friday 17 November.

The consultation was advertised on the *Our Wellington* page of the Dominion Post and placed on the Council's website, and meetings were held with Wellington Council of Social Services (WelCOSS), the BCC tenants and a number of disability groups. Targeted community groups and organisations (including current recipients and past applicants) were provided with the weblink to the draft Policy, notified of the opportunity to comment and offered a hard copy by post.

Those providing feedback via the website or feedback form were given the opportunity to respond to any aspect of the draft policy, and were prompted to comment in particular on the following aspects:

- shifting the focus from reducing disadvantage to promoting social wellbeing
- the additional targeting of groups that take a lead in providing coordination, support and guidance for other groups (to help ensure the community has enough people with the right skills to be able to meet the needs of its residents)
- possible approaches to supporting emerging groups
- removing the ring-fencing for Maori groups
- the criteria for evaluating grant applications
- restricting grant offers to groups, or clusters of groups, requiring accommodation for 30 or more hours per week.

### **5.2 Feedback and officer responses**

Only three written submissions, attached as Appendix 2, were received, despite extensive officer efforts to encourage groups to make comment. When asked, groups

consistently stated that they were very happy with the proposed policy. This view is affirmed in the submissions received.

Officers consider the submitter groups to be highly representative of the community group environment, including the target groups for this policy. Submissions were received from:

- the Multicultural Services Centre (MSC), an umbrella group providing coordination and support for five constituent agencies offering services to refugees and immigrants. MSC also made an oral submission which was heard by SPC on 23 November 2006
- WelCOSS, an umbrella group providing coordination and support for about 80 community groups across Wellington City
- the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS), an umbrella group providing national coordination and support for affiliate groups, including WelCOSS, representing in the order of 5000 local services providers and voluntary groups across New Zealand.

MSC stated support for the draft policy, particularly in regard to:

- the promotion of social wellbeing
- support for ‘groups supporting groups’
- requiring that support be for accommodation for 30 or more hours per week.

In their oral submission MSC emphasised clustering as an effective approach to increasing small group sustainability and reducing overheads, whilst maintaining group individuality.

WelCOSS expressed appreciation of the current operational work by City Communities officers under existing policy, and provided a number of suggestions for criteria that could be considered in implementation of the new policy. It was noted that, while collaboration would be supported where needed, community groups also value their independence.

NZCOSS offered sound arguments for the continued consideration of national bodies against the criteria for support. The draft policy provides opportunity for national bodies and umbrella groups, such as WelCOSS and NZCOSS, to be considered where they:

“...contribute to building community capability and/or capacity for promoting social wellbeing for Wellington residents by providing coordination and support for other groups.”

While the benefit to Wellington residents is central to the criteria for evaluation of applications, the NZCOSS submission highlights how national bodies can contribute to this.

The submission comments are consistent with the proposed policy. In alignment with the consultation feedback, the draft Policy, attached as Appendix 1, is re-presented to the Committee without change.

## **6. Conclusion**

The draft Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy has been considered following public consultation. It is recommended that the Committee agrees to recommend the Policy, attached as Appendix 1, to the Council for adoption.

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## **Supporting Information**

### **1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

*This policy supports the Social and Recreation outcome of making Wellington more liveable, more inclusive, more actively engaged, better connected, healthier and safer, and responds to its “Creative Wellington – Innovation Capital” vision. It specifically targets the Council’s strategic priority of building community capability and capacity to promote social cohesion and strengthen social infrastructure.*

### **2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact**

*The policy has implications for the C130I annual plan project. The recommendations can be implemented immediately they are approved. However, there will be no immediate effect on funding for groups until existing agreements expire. Funding from current agreements starts becoming available for reallocation from May 2007.*

### **3) Treaty of Waitangi implications**

*There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications.*

### **4) Decision-making**

*The content encompassed within this report will not result in a significant decision.*

### **5) Consultation**

#### **a) General consultation**

*Public and targeted consultation has been undertaken in the development of this policy.*

#### **b) Consultation with Maori**

*Consultation with Maori community groups has been undertaken in the development of this policy.*

### **6) Legal implications**

*Legal advice has not been received for this report.*

### **7) Consistency with existing policy**

*The draft policy recommended in this report provides a significant shift in the policy emphasis for accommodation assistance, although generally within the bounds of the existing policy.*

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## BETTY CAMPBELL ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE FUND POLICY

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### 1. Introduction and Purpose

The Council seeks to focus its community investment where public good benefits are maximised. This is particularly achieved through projects aiming to build community capability and capacity.

This policy, formerly known as the Community Group Accommodation Assistance Fund Policy, guides the Council's approach to the provision of accommodation assistance grants for not-for-profit community groups seeking to promote social wellbeing for Wellington residents. It:

- targets the Social and Recreation outcomes of making Wellington more liveable, more inclusive, more actively engaged, better connected, healthier and safer
- supports the achievement of the Council's strategic priority of *building capability and capacity within the Wellington community to promote social cohesion and sound social infrastructure* by helping the Council to strengthen the infrastructural capability of Wellington's community services and to assist social service agencies to remain viable as part of this.

The policy provides for contestable cash grants for community group rental subsidy. It recognises the:

- role of community groups in achieving the Council's strategic outcomes
- Council as funder to support community groups in promoting social cohesion and strengthening social infrastructure, providing cash grants for rental subsidy where needed to complement funding available from other sources
- Council as a partnership broker, advocate and facilitator for, and advisor to, community groups.

### 2. Council's role

The Council's preferred role in the provision of community group accommodation assistance is through facilitation of partnerships, with provision of funding assistance where needed. The Council seeks a balance between funding agreements and facilitation support, as this has proven effective in providing the flexibility needed to ensure the Council's objectives can be met.

### 3. Partnership and facilitation

The Council's commitment to the sector in Wellington City is long term, in line with its goal of growing sustainable communities. Developing ongoing relationships with community groups will facilitate improved understanding of needs and opportunities, and help groups to:

- develop effective governance structures and processes for self-sustainability
- plan for increasing independence from the Council's support.

The Council seeks to work with community groups that:

- provide direct services to promote social wellbeing for Wellington residents (*Social wellbeing* means living in a supportive, ongoing community and having access to shelter, education, food and income.)
- contribute to building community capability and/or capacity for promoting social wellbeing for Wellington residents by providing coordination and support for other groups. *Groups supporting groups* might provide:
  - training opportunities or support services for other groups
  - support and guidance for emerging groups
  - coordination of a range of services.

#### 4. Implementation

The following principles guide management of the Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance Fund:

- Policy implementation should demonstrate accountability, transparency and alignment with the Long Term Council Community Plan.
- Allocations should only be given where help is needed. Groups should be not-for-profit and demonstrate that accommodation costs present a barrier to operational effectiveness.
- Allocations should be
  - for community groups that are located within Wellington City, as will be the target users
  - cost-effective
  - made cognisant of other policies, including universal building access.
- Allocations should promote:
  - capability and capacity development
  - community group sustainability, self-reliance and collaboration
  - efficient use of accommodation.

Eligibility is open to groups at any location in Wellington City as one type and location of property is unlikely to meet all needs and therefore the Council assistance needs to be flexible. The Council recognises that some community groups receive particular benefit from location in the central city, and some from clustered accommodation.

Affordability of accommodation remains the central issue being considered by this policy.

The funding is to be administered by officers through a contestable process as cash grants for rental subsidy and assessed against the criteria set out in the relevant operational guidelines for this policy. Agreements are intended to help community groups to secure suitable accommodation and may be made for periods of up to three

years at a time. The following criteria will also be considered in evaluating an application:

- partnership with Mana Whenua and Taura Here
- partnership with community networks. This may include clustering and other sharing of resources
- collaboration with the wider sector, including Government and philanthropic providers
- development of people's potential
- promotion of a diversity of cultures
- contribution to access for all residents to community resources.

### **5. Review**

Council officers will continue to gather relevant information to inform any future policy decisions.

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**SUBMISSIONS**

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