

Early Engagement Report

Introduction

In early 2009 the Council ran a broad programme of engagement with the community to identify community views to inform the draft LTCCP. The programme had dual objectives of raising the awareness of the community and seeking input from the community to the draft LTCCP.

Mechanisms used within the programme were:

- The Mayor and Councillors Hotline – each Thursday night from 14 January to 26 February, people could ring elected members between 7pm and 9pm. The number of calls received gradually increased, starting with 20 on the first night and peaking at 56 on Thursday 19 February
- Roadshows – information and banners were taken to events and to Johnsonville Mall and the Reading Cinema complex. Officers and sometimes elected members and members of the Youth Councils discussed the LTCCP with passers by. (12 Roadshows)
- Workshops – 8 workshops with a particular focus were held – 2 each with the arts (33 people); environmental (50 people) and sport (96 people) sectors; and with the Disability Reference Group (9 people)
- Roundtable discussions of about two hours were held six times – 84 people attended. One had an economic focus, one had a social focus and the remainder were general.
- A Residents' Panel was established. The Panel is made up of about 40 people who are a) from Council stakeholder groups, b) self nominated and c) drawn from the community by a research company with a view to composing a diverse panel that reflected the demographic characteristics of the Wellington community. The Panel has met twice and a separate report of panel members preliminary views is being presented to this meeting
- Ward Clinics were held in each ward
- Presentations outlining the process and challenges were given to nine groups, for example the community boards, Ethnic Council and Pacific Advisory Group
- E-engagement – this included discussion boards, a budget simulator and a Facebook group which attracted 268 friends.
- An online survey of 504 people by AC Nielsen to explore how people's opinions on the options that the Council has proposed.
- Booklets providing an overview of the approach to the LTCCP and of Council activities and spending were produced (about 1500 were distributed). Feedback sheets reflecting the contents of the booklet were also produced.

In addition there was a programme of Maori Engagement. Focus groups were held with kaumatua, Maori with urban perspectives, rangatahi (youth) and service providers. The Chief Executive met with the Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira Inc to discuss input to the LTCCP.

The engagement programme was premised on the basis that there were different levels of input that people would have. At a high level people were asked to what extent they agreed with the Council's approach to setting its budget, that is:

- The aim to cap any rates rise to 4%
- That it should maintain Wellington's vibrancy
- That services should be trimmed rather than cut
- That essential infrastructure is maintained
- That external funding should be leveraged.

At a lower level people were asked for their views on spending in strategy areas and at a more detailed level people were asked for their advice on options proposed by the Council at an activity level.

For each level of information people could respond to the Council's view or suggest other issues or positions. This report is set out with that framework in mind. Through the course of data analysis it became clear that there were some general themes emerging that applied across more than one strategy and sometimes to all strategies.

This report:

- Describes overarching themes that emerged from the engagement programme
- Presents a summary of the Maori engagement programme
- Describes responses to the Council's approach to the LTCCP and the level of rates rise
- Outlines input to each strategy area including activities.

Overarching Themes

The following themes were identified as being relevant across more than one strategy or were concerned with principles that Council could use to consider options and proposals. Some of these themes were raised through most channels of engagement and no theme could be said to be universally supported.

Response to Recession

As unemployment is expected to increase there are implications for the changing importance of affordable services and amenities. People are at risk of social isolation so community activity is an important intervention. The Council can promote local jobs for local people with its own contracting and initiatives. If the Council makes cuts to service levels because of the recession it needs to ensure it reinstates services as the economy improves.

Council's role

A common theme through discussions was that the Council has a leadership role in fostering relationships and establishing partnerships. It could do so as an advocate or as a facilitator. Council has a key leadership role in promoting Wellington and its needs to central government and working closely with

other local authorities in the region. It can use its position to leverage as much as possible from other agencies. The Council could take more of an educative role to change people's behaviour – this applied to water management, demand management for services and facilities and recycling and encouraging local communities to maintain their own infrastructure. People encouraged the Council to look at ways of doing business differently to save money.

Volunteers

Volunteers who worked with the Council are a critical resource and the Council could utilise volunteers more. For example, Friends of Wellington's Botanic Gardens note that the Council could be more pro-active in using groups such as theirs to develop and fund projects. The role of volunteers should be acknowledged and supported as Council gets good value for money from its volunteer network and needs to be cognisant of de-motivating volunteers through any reduction in spending which could result in reduced service from the volunteers.

Community Engagement

There was general support for the engagement programme and indications were that the community would like such programmes to continue. It can be noted that there were some people who were cynical about the engagement programme and suspicious that the Council would not listen.

Bi-cultural city

Increasing the bi-cultural nature of the city should be a priority. Initiatives should include higher visibility of Maori culture through the public art programme, bi-lingual signage and greater diversity in engagement with Maori.

Maintain city foundations

Provision of infrastructure was seen as a core role for the Council and its maintenance was a priority. Health and safety implications of deferring any maintenance were raised as an issue.

Maori Engagement Programme

Introduction

A Maori engagement programme was established as a component of the engagement programme. Focus groups were held with

- 12 Kaumatua
- Maori with an urban perspective (ten people who had a particular interest in presenting their views as Taura Here - people who are affiliated to iwi outside the Wellington region)
- rangatahi (youth) and
- service providers.

The Chief Executive met with the Tenths Trust and Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira and discussed the LTCCP and its challenges. In addition the Roadshow was at the Maori Women's Welfare League Family Day and at Waitangi Park for Waitangi Day.

Two roadshows were held, the first was at the Maori Women's Welfare League held a picnic at Wahine Park on Saturday 31 January. Officers along with Councillors Gill and Ahipene-Mercer talked with about 40 people – predominantly Maori women over 40 years of age. At Waitangi Park on Waitangi Day, officers had conversations with around 150 people.

Input from the service providers hui is not included in this report as the hui had not been held at the time this report was prepared. Officers will include a summary of that hui as part of their oral presentation to the Committee.

Maori have also contributed to other engagement mechanisms. The selection process for the Residents' Panel took account of the need for Maori participation and Maori provided input at other workshops and roadshows. Ethnic statistics were not collected.

The information in this report is drawn from all of the Maori engagement activities. Some comments may come from only one activity and therefore should not be seen as representative of the entire Maori engagement programme. Where opposing view points were presented, the report notes both view points.

Overall Feedback

Generally Maori who participated supported the approach the Council was taking to trim spending rather than stop services. Common themes included that Maori culture did not have high visibility in the city, the proportion of Maori in Wellington is growing – particularly younger Maori, and that partnerships and engagement with the wider Maori community were critical to going forward.

Arts and Culture

Wellington needs to be more visibly bi-cultural. The place of Maori as first people is important to sense of place and therefore Maori culture needs to

attract more interest and investment. To increase the visibility of Maori culture in the city, Maori sculpture and public art should be prioritised and signage could be bi-lingual. The issue of visibility of Maori was consistently raised as a critical issue.

“If you go to Gisborne – you know you have entered Porou country. If you go to Rotorua – you know you are on Te Arawa turf. When you come to Wellington there isn’t a sense of presence/authority (mana) from the iwi here. I don’t believe that iwi are solely to blame for this.”

Wellington is a great city with a diverse range of arts and entertainment. Cultural festivals and events are important to the city and the Council should continue to have a role in funding/sponsoring these. However, the number and range of events that have a Maori theme should increase – perhaps a specific Maori day/event and also events for young people. In addition mana whenua ventures could be initiated separately from the Council.

Arts and culture is the essence of humanity and any reductions in spending in this area needs to be approached cautiously.

Options proposed by Council:

- Do not charge out of towners entry fees to museums and galleries because Museum knowledge should be free. One workshop suggested that the Council should consider asking people for donations/koha. (This already occurs.)
- Agree that Archives should be more discerning in what it accepts. Perhaps other organisations or clubs could retain information or volunteers could assist in archiving.
- Arts Hub – supported the idea but thought Council should explore whether other spaces could be used.

Social

Library hours and services should not be reduced. Those services are essential to some in the community who would have difficulty accessing the library without a late night. Perhaps there is scope for the community to use the libraries for meetings so that those facilities can be utilised to a greater extent. The rangatahi workshop noted that it would be preferable to close the library during quieter hours during the day than to remove evening hours.

The Indoor Community Sports Centre should proceed at Cobham Drive however transport issues need to be resolved. (Kaumatua workshop) Ngati Toa considered that a better site would be close to the Railway Station and rangatahi said that it should be deferred.

The Kaumatua workshop did not support the Khandallah Town Hall redevelopment whereas the workshop with urban Maori, after some discussion including the co-use of nearby facilities, concluded that the Khandallah Town Hall redevelopment should proceed. Urban Maori also

suggested that Council might like to consider an urban marae facility owned and managed by Council for kaupapa Maori.

Transport

Roading is important and it seems that savings could be made with better coordination thereby reducing rework.

Agree with reallocating money from footpaths.

Support for provision of cycling lanes.

Urban Development

Agreed with heritage grants being removed.

Governance

Maori engagement is very important and should be increased. The Council should look at ways to increase its engagement with a broad range of Maori residents and ratepayers not just with Mana Whenua. There is a need to capture the diversity of Maori perspectives.

The Council needs to consider the ways in which it disseminates information. It becomes outdated very quickly.

Environment

Parks and gardens are an important asset to the city and should be well maintained however it is not a priority to develop new walking tracks.

The Council could reduce funding to the Zoo and Zealandia (the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary).

Water meters are supported to reduce wastage and control demand through user pays. More citizen education is required around recycling, water wastage and public transport. Council needs to look at other incentives or interventions to reduce water usage.

Economic Development

- Agree with regional amenities levy
- Agree to reduction for Move to Wellington website
- Support events as they differentiate Wellington from other cities
- Could APW become more self-sufficient?
- Alternative accommodation in Wellington, such as camping grounds, would encourage more visitors, particularly those with bigger families.
- Agree that support from central Government is required for Broadband.

There were concerns about the recession and its impact on unemployment. Comments were made that there needed to be an emphasis on projects that would generate employment particularly for Maori.

Council's Approach

There was strong agreement that Wellington was a vibrant city and its unique characteristics or points of difference should be maintained. There was also strong agreement that services should be reduced rather than stopped. Some felt the Council was being overly pessimistic about the economic climate.

Two key engagement mechanisms that tested views on the Council's overall approach were the AC Nielsen survey and the Budget Simulator. These two mechanisms are in this section of the report to give a context for the remainder of the report.

AC Nielsen Survey

The AC Nielsen Survey explored people's response to the areas of potential savings that the Council had identified in late 2008. AC Nielsen reported that while some Wellington residents favour all the initiatives proposed, they are less likely to favour initiatives that require personal sacrifices to achieve savings. Gains made from a more prudent and efficient management or by obtaining additional funding from sources other than rates are received more favourably than others.

Respondents were told that the Council has identified areas of potential savings that will keep a rate increase to no more than 4%.

They were then asked "in principle, are you in favour of, or opposed to, Council pursuing each of the following proposals?" The following table indicates the level of support or opposition there was to each option.

	Support:	Oppose:
Reduce the availability of casual swimming at pools in favour of the learn to swim programmes	25%	54%
Retain day time hours but reduce the number of nights that the central library is open and not offer evening hours for branch libraries (currently one night a week)	30%	50%
Charge out of town visitors a modest entry fee for galleries and museums	39%	45%
Reduce the frequency that we mow and maintain parks and gardens	32%	40%
Stop the Plimmers Ark preservations project.	39%	26%
Reduce the spend on public art over the next three years	56%	23%
Focus on reducing water use rather than building new infrastructure	58%	20%
Hold off upgrading public spaces and focus on maintaining them over the next three years	64%	16%
Maintain existing walking tracks but don't build any new tracks for the next three years	68%	15%
Offer waivers on consenting fees for heritage buildings but stop providing heritage grants to developers (both	50%	10%

are currently offered)		
Explore options to access government funding to support high speed broadband throughout the region	69%	9%
Decommission the Evans Bay Patent slip jetty (this is a narrow jetty that is in need of repair - it is estimated to cost around \$1million to fix up)	60%	9%
Explore options for a regional amenities levy. This would see all council's in the region making a contribution to activities that benefit the whole region	68%	7%
Reduce the printed quality of some of our publications	83%	5%

The options attracting the most opposition in this survey are

- Reduce the availability of casual swimming at pools in favour of the learn to swim programmes
- Retain day time hours but reduce the number of nights that the central library is open and not offer evening hours for branch libraries (currently one night a week)
- Charge out of town visitors a modest entry fee for galleries and museums.

These options also drew significant comment through the engagement process and similar views were expressed.

Budget Simulator

The budget simulator is an interactive application tool that allows people to share their spending priorities with the Council and see how trade-offs need to be made to keep the city vibrant and affordable.

The starting position in the simulator was an average residential rates increase of 5.2% - this factored in the impact of levelling out the business differential. The Budget Simulator allowed people to adjust the expenditure for activity cluster by up to plus or minus 10 percent. Users also had the option to submit comments with their 'budgets'.

We received 168 'budgets' with 23 people also providing comments. The average rates increase submitted was 4.8% - this is lower than the starting increase of 5.2%.

It is interesting to note that notwithstanding extreme individual submissions (those that request increases or decreases in the order of 10%) the average result for the activity clusters was around zero as outlined below:

Activity Cluster:	Average Result
Waste minimisation and climate change	+0.31%
Transport planning and networks, and parking	+0.30%
Open spaces, gardens, and beaches	+0.03%
Wastewater, stormwater, and water	0.00%
Libraries	-0.04%
Community support, housing, and safety	-0.46%

Building and development control and urban planning	-0.85%
Recreation facilities and programmes	-0.93%
Community arts, heritage, galleries and museums	-1.17%
Information, consultation, and decision-making	-1.47%
City promotion and events, and business support	-1.57%

It can be inferred that there is no one activity cluster that is universally supported for increased expenditure nor one activity cluster that is universally perceived as not having value.

Looking at marginal differences in the results, there is a trend for people to support additional expenditure in activity clusters that would be considered as supporting the City's foundations. This is reinforced by the fact that 15 of the 23 comments expressed a sentiment along the lines of "increase spending on 'core' services".

There was also support for the Council to undertake strategic trimming – as evidenced by the overall reduction in the rates increase result - especially in areas that were considered to be "discretionary". Respondents identified spending on cultural well-being, governance, and economic development as discretionary.

Rates Rise of 4%

Generally there was agreement that around 4% was a reasonable level of rates rise. There was also a significant number of people who felt that the rates increase should be the same as the inflation or CPI rate and another group of people who considered that higher levels of rates rise were affordable and acceptable if the Council was delivering the services that the community was asking for.

People who didn't want rates to rise commented on keeping costs down by doing fewer events, stopping Our Wellington page and investigating a region wide council amalgamation.

The AC Nielsen survey asked people "as a general principle how do you think the Council should approach the work it does for the city in the coming few years?" 68% of the 504 respondents said increase rates at a level broadly in line with inflationary pressures (which would lead to a reduction in services for some areas) while 32% of respondents said Maintain rates at the current level (which would lead to an even greater reduction in services the Council provides).

Strategic Areas

Cultural Well-being

Themes

The importance of 'local' and identity

There was a need to be vigilant about sustaining what is unique about Wellington's cultural scene (the compact nature of the City and the collaboration across arts groups this environment supports, experimentation and fringe activity, the concentration of arts education institutions and arts activity in the CBD) and maintaining local artists and arts institutions based here. This was seen as vital if Wellington is to retain its vibrancy and 'cultural capital' status. In the recession, retaining support for existing initiatives and groups should be prioritised over exploring new initiatives.

Providing leadership and facilitating partnerships

There was consensus in arts sector workshops that Council could play an important role providing leadership, fostering relationships and facilitating partnerships (both with the Council and between arts organisations), as a conduit for information (the proposed hub at Toi Poneke was supported as a good way to do this) and encouraging the sector to explore ways it can support itself through the recession (sharing administration requirements, diversifying the products/services they offer).

Access

Access to information for both visitors to the City and Wellingtonians wanting to be involved in the local arts scene and established arts practitioners to share and disseminate knowledge is important. There was also comment about the need for good, affordable spaces for teaching and rehearsing. Charging entry fees for museums/galleries was not supported as there was wide-spread feeling that door charges would affect visitation and maintain social exclusion.

Response to Council Options

Charging out-of-town entry fee to galleries and museums

There was general opposition to an out-of-town entry fee. Opposition to charging was particularly strong in workshops with the arts sector and in feedback sheets (77% of the 31 respondents disagreed with the proposal to charge). There were suggestions that the Council look at extracting revenue from value-added activities from free facilities.

Nielson Survey: 39% support/45% oppose.

Keep funding for cultural festivals and grants at 08/09 levels

There was significant support for at least maintaining (if not increasing) funding for cultural festivals and grants as local cultural festivals were seen as a primary way the range of cultures/communities were made visible and

celebrated in Wellington (80% of the 32 respondents on feedback sheets strongly agreed or agreed with keeping funding at current levels). Local festivals were also seen as significant contributors to Wellington's vibrancy, social inclusion and identity as a welcoming, multi-cultural city. There were a number of comments about the importance of free events for families and visitors to the City.

Nielson Survey: 64% support/9% oppose.

Be more discerning about what City Archives accepts

The majority of feedback form respondents agreed with the need for Council to be more discerning about what the Archives accepts (79% support from 29 respondents).

Reduce spend on public art over the next three years

People were supportive of reducing funding for public art for the next three years as a way to save money within the Cultural strategy area. However, many commented that they would like funds reinstated after that period as they saw public art in Wellington as a strong contributor to the City's appeal and attractiveness to visitors and locals. There was also comment that the City should ensure it can maintain the public art that is already installed.

Nielson Survey: 56% support/23% oppose

Establish an Art Hub within Toi Poneke

The majority of respondents in feedback forms and at workshops were supportive of establishing an Art Hub within Toi Poneke (69% of 29 respondents on feedback forms). The hub would provide a focal point for visitors and residents (arts practitioners and the general public wanting to be involved) to share arts information and promote events and employment/learning opportunities available across the City. The hub was also seen as an important way the Council could promote collaborations and strengthen the arts infrastructure in Wellington.

Consider options around the future preservation of Plimmers Ark timbers

There was minimal comment about the future preservation of Plimmers Ark timbers across all engagement techniques. No comment at all was made in workshops and there were two requests to preserve the timbers in a feedback sheet.

Nielson Survey: 39% support for stopping considering options/26% oppose.

Other comments / suggestions

Prioritisation

There was support for Council to prioritise maintaining a broad range of offer in the City – essential arts infrastructure and pathways for arts practitioners to develop in Wellington. It was seen as very important for the Council to support its current diverse range of practitioners and core arts organisations (small, medium and large organisations) so they can sustain themselves through the recession, rather than focus on new groups in the current climate.

Social well-being

Themes

Response to recession

There was considerable discussion that during an economic recession public services such as libraries and low-cost recreation facilities would become more important to people as they had less disposable income for entertainment and education. It was broadly expected that Council should continue to provide these services and that they would remain accessible in relation to cost and location. It was recognised that the Council needed to balance services and costs and therefore, the Council needed to be responsive by customising service levels (such as opening hours) and clustering facilities to meet the needs of local communities.

Volunteers

There was widespread support for the Council to support and encourage volunteers in the community in response to the economic recession. An emphasis was placed on the Council work with these groups in partnership to provide for their communities. There was also concern that volunteers might be de-motivated through reductions in spending.

Council's leadership role

There was a strong sense that Council should take a leadership in fostering relationships and establishing partnerships as either an advocate or facilitator. It was felt that Council needed to work alongside sector and central government organisations to combat social problems through the recession. There was also an expectation that where Council could not provide a service, or solely provide a service that they work in partnership with other organisations.

Response to Council Options

Indoor Community Sports Centre

There was considerable feedback on the development of the Indoor Community Sports Centre at Cobham Park. The predominant view was that given the economic situation and the need to trim services to keep rates rises down that the Stadium project should be deferred until the Council was in a better economic position to build it. There was also support for the site of the stadium to change as well as people who supported the Council continuing with the stadium project.

A small number of people asked that the Indoor Sports Centre proposal be expanded to include facilities for smaller club sports such as ultimate Frisbee and in-line hockey. There was also a theme of localism throughout this discussion where people suggested that money would be better spent upgrading current facilities across the city (such as school halls and clubs) to a higher standard.

Synthetic turf sportsfields

The synthetic turf sportsfields option was generally supported – especially in the feedback sheets and emails. Comments in support of the option centred on the number of cancelled football games last winter due to the poor condition of the grounds because of bad weather. Some support for installation of artificial turfs was framed in respect of the health and fitness benefits and the obesity problem.

Comments against the option outlined concerns that only a small portion of the population will benefit from installing synthetic turf sports fields. Other comments asserted that if the Council were to go ahead with the option then it should look at increasing user charges or minimising cost by using volunteer labour.

There was a co-ordinated email campaign of over 75 emails supporting the installation of artificial turf. These were mainly from supporters of Capital Football and noted the restriction on growth of the game in the city due to the currently limited facilities and poor quality surfaces available to play on.

Libraries

There was a considerable response to the suggestion that library hours be reduced. The overall feeling was that hours should not be reduced as it was important that the Council continue to provide facilities such as libraries during time of economic recession as there would be greater demand on these facilities. However, the general feeling was that cuts to library hours were preferable to a reduction in the quality of resources. In respect of a reduction in library hours it was indicated that it was preferable that reductions be made at the beginning of the day rather than at the end as people were conscious of accessibility for workers outside of 'work hours' (9am-5pm).

Nielson Survey: 30% support/50% oppose.

Two of the overall themes were prevalent in feedback on libraries. There were suggestions that volunteers could assist more in the staffing of libraries to reduce costs and that branch libraries should remain open at least one night a week to support local service provision.

Safety and graffiti

There was wide support for continuing safety and graffiti removal programmes. Comments on continuing the graffiti removal programme included that more should be done to stop the problem at the root by supporting youth programmes, that graffiti should only be removed from WCC owned property and that there should be more investment in technology to stop graffiti (specially formulated paints etc).

Swimming pools and lane space

There was a strong reaction from the community against the suggestion to reduce the amount of casual lane swimming and increase the learn to swim programmes. This message came across mostly in calls to the Mayor and Councillors hotline and through emails received. This response was in contrast to the feedback sheets results where 54 percent (17 people) either

strongly agreed or agreed with reducing the casual lane swimming and increasing learn to swim programmes.

Comments against the reduction of casual lane swimming included that lane space was at a premium with recreational swimmers competing with rising number of swimmers in training for triathlons, ocean swims and 'splash and dash' events. There was also concern at the reliance on Council to provide pools for learn to swim programmes as school pools are closed down.

The majority of respondents on the issue appeared to support learn to swim programmes and water safety but did not feel it was fair to reduce the lane space available to recreational swimmers to accommodate this. There were comments that pool space in Wellington was at capacity and the suggestion that there was a need for more pool facilities that could be used solely for learn to swim programmes.

Nielson Survey: 25% support/54% oppose.

Khandallah Town Hall

This option received very little comment. Of 32 feedback responses however only one person agreed with continuing the redevelopment, while 19 people either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Comments suggested that if the redevelopment proceeded there should be community contributions and volunteer involvement. It was also commented that the \$900,000 cost was unlikely to be 'repaid' to the Council over the next three-year period even if the library was to be incorporated into the redevelopment.

Other comments / suggestions

Additional Council support

Council could facilitate partnerships between sports codes and the business sector for mutual benefit. There was input asking that Council acknowledge the value and role of minority sports codes and grass roots sport. Various clubs and sports organisation responded requesting upgrades or support for their sports codes including:

- in-line skating
- in-line hockey
- ice-skating (all requesting upgraded facilities/sole use of facilities at the Kilbirnie recreation centre and/or additional facilities to be added to the Indoor Community Sports Centre).
- football (in support of artificial turfs and requesting greater priority be given to these)
- cycling (requesting support for the Hataitai velodrome)

There were also requests for additional community facilities or resources including a community hub for Mt Cook, an upgraded community centre in the Aro Valley, financial support for upgrading community facilities in Brooklyn, and a needs assessment for community facilities in Thorndon.

Economic

General Comment

Scepticism economic development and the Council's role

Economic development did not feature as a priority in engagement activities, this was particularly evident in the Nielsen Survey and the budget simulator results. There was doubt expressed about the benefit of existing economic development initiatives and the role the Council can play in addressing an issue which many saw as a private sector or central government matter.

Events are important (but not necessarily to generate growth)

Events were identified as being important – especially during a recession. However, people saw that the benefit of events lay in community building rather than in their capacity to generate economic growth. Where events were predominantly motivated by economic considerations, people tended to suggest that the Council should look more to the private sector.

Response to Council Options

Reduce spend of economic grants

A reduction in economic grants was generally supported although the reasons varied. Some people supported the reduction on the basis of having other priorities – in particular supporting cultural, social and environmental grants. Other people were doubtful about the economic benefit generated from the grants. A final group thought that the economic grants could be picked up through funding from the private sector or central government.

Reduce spend on the Move to Wellington website

There is a strong support to merge the Move to Wellington website with another website. It was noted that there were a number of other websites promoting moving to Wellington. Some support for the reduction came from people who felt that the needs of existing residents should be prioritised over initiatives to seek new residents. There was also a view that the website does not produce results.

Continue to plan our support for the Rugby World Cup

The majority of people expressed a preference for residential ratepayers not paying for the Rugby World Cup games. Some people did not believe that there would be any personal economic benefit from the event while others saw the event as luxury that could be cut in the current economic climate.

That said, there is strong support for post-pool section games to be hosted in the City. Again, the preference was for the commercial sector to substantially contribute to the cost of hosting games as it was seen as being the primary beneficiary from the games.

Nielsen Survey: 64% in favour/11% against

Explore options for a regional amenities levy

There is general support for the Council to explore the regional amenities levy further – particularly from the arts community and from online feedback. The prevailing view being that it did not make sense for people outside of Wellington to enjoy free events and facilities without contributing to their cost.

Nielsen Survey: 68% in favour/7% against

Explore options to access central Government funding to support high speed broadband throughout the region.

The majority of people think supported the Council pursuing central government funding for broadband. Many of the comments related to internet performance in the City – something along the lines of “there are a lot of businesses around Wellington that rely on broadband but are too far away from the exchange server so their speeds are slow”. Other people focused on the role of broadband in realising our aspirations to be an internationally competitive City.

Nielsen Survey: 69% in favour/9% against

Environmental well-being

Themes

Council’s education role

There was a strong theme that Council had a key role in educating people around sustainability and this is also an important part of cost savings. That is, rather than reducing services, Council should be educating people to be less reliant on Council and change behaviours so that people take more responsibility, for example, producing less rubbish, using less packaging, reducing water consumption and the like.

Importance of volunteers

There was a general feeling that Council gets ‘good value for money’ out of its volunteers and that Council needs to be careful not to de-motivate these people by cutting often minimal amounts of funding. There was discussion about how the Council could encourage greater volunteerism in respect of the environment including adopting volunteer programmes that had been successful overseas.

Response to Council Options

Reducing water demand

There was a very strong feeling amongst most respondents that Council should encourage the recycling of grey-water and support for water-metering as a method of water conservation. This message was much stronger than support for a new water storage facility.

A consistent message that came through was that Council should be looking at grey water recycling, household rainwater collection, storm-water recycling in new developments and public education in addition to a move to water metering. It was proposed that this should be encouraged through the building consent process and as a requirement for new developments.

Some people were opposed to water meters as a tool for charging but supported them as a tool for demand management (including as an incentive to reduce leaks). There was a feeling amongst many of those who supported water metering that if it was introduced homeowners should not have to pay for the installation of meters.

Nielson Survey: 58% support/20% oppose.

There was considerable comment that currently people do not fix leaks on private property because the cost of doing so is prohibitive in comparison to leaving them. It was suggested by several people that Council may have an advocacy role in working with the Sustainability Trust (or similar) to prepare lists of plumbers who are reasonably priced/provide discounts (c.f. home energy audits).

Reprioritise maintenance programmes

A predominant theme in respect of parks and gardens maintenance was the increased importance of such public areas during times of recession when people had less money to spend on using other attractions. As such, there was a mixed response to the suggestion that parks and gardens maintenance programmes be reprioritised.

While some people agreed that it would be acceptable as a short term measure other people argued that it was unacceptable, and may become a fire and safety risk. Some alternatives were suggested to replace such spending cuts such as more natural planting in currently mown areas, replacing flower beds with more hardy shrubs, and planting more trees. There was some concern by those who agreed to reductions in maintenance that the current standards might not be re-introduced when economic times were better.

Nielson Survey: 32% support/40% against.

Volunteerism was raised frequently in respect of maintenance and suggestions included that the Council consider using local residents to do operational tasks such as mowing; cleaning out channels and in return offer a rates rebate (pro-rata amount) to those volunteers – more innovation in council using residents.

Defer programme for new tracks for three years

Opinions on deferring the tracks programme varied. There was some strong support for a deferral of three years (particularly from the Nielsen survey and feedback sheets) as long as it did not compromise maintenance and safety on existing tracks. There was also a view that tracks serve an important recreational function for people and would become more important during times of economic recession.

Nielson Survey: 68% support/15% against.

Re-schedule low-priority stormwater management and flood protection capital projects

In general people who commented on this option opposed it. This was considered by many as a 'core' Council service and should not be compromised for city 'vibrancy'.

Decommission Evans Bay patent slip jetty

There was very little comment on the decommissioning of the Evans Bay patent slip jetty. The one comment received was that jetties were not fundamentals and therefore more available to be 'given away'.

Nielson Survey: 60% support/9% oppose.

Defer some capital upgrades of parks and beaches

A reasonable level of comfort with the deferral of park and beach upgrades was reported, but again noting the importance of such 'social infrastructure' during periods of economic recession. There were comments about the importance of parks and reserves during a recession.

Climate change

There was some concern that climate change and sustainability risked being ignored in favour of short-term responses to the economic recession. It was suggested that even if it was only a 'drip feed' until economic conditions allowed some funding for climate change initiatives needed to be maintained.

A majority of those who discussed climate change thought that carbon neutrality was an artificial concept and that the Council was better to spend money on initiatives aimed at actually reducing emissions in Wellington. Healthy homes was the most supported programme. Some people wanted Council to continue focussing on meeting carbon neutrality.

Nielson Survey: 72% support/8% against.

Other Comments / suggestions

There were some comments about whether the Council provides too much financial support to Zealandia (Karori Wildlife Sanctuary) and the Zoo above local, free attractions such as Otari-Wilton's bush.

Transport

General Comment

Transport did not attract a lot of attention other than comments on public transport which were often raised in the context of sustainability. There was some general comment that the Council needs to strike a better balance between different transport modes in the City. Advocates for different transport modes (private vehicles, public transport, walking and cycling) took the opportunity to outline the reasons for increased investment in their area.

There were calls for greater investment in transportation however, there was a vast range of priorities for that additional expenditure reflecting preferences for different transportation modes. The compactness of the City was

identified as the key to encouraging ease of movement of all modes of transport.

Response to Council Options

Spread some project work over a longer timeframe so the cost is also spread out over a longer timeframe

There was general support to the concept of spreading project work over a longer time period – primarily on an affordability basis. However, there was much less support for specific programmes to be deferred. People were also concerned that any deferral in the programme did not compromise safety.

Re-allocate some funds from footpath renewals

People have a mixed view about re-allocating funds. Some people believe more money needs to be put into footpaths because if footpaths were better it would encourage more people to walk into the city. Others think the footpaths are in a satisfactory condition and do not require renewal.

Maintain parking fees at existing levels

The majority of people supported leaving parking fees at the current level. However there are a few people who think parking fees should go up as it would decrease the number of people driving motor vehicles into the city.

Other Comments / suggestions

Investment in Wellingtons transport network

There were many suggestions about specific investments in Wellington's network relating to:

- motorway improvements (most notably Transmission Gulley)
- public transport development (particularly buses)
- tunnel development (including Mt Victoria and the Terrace)
- footpath improvements (surfaces and lighting)
- walking and cycling improvements
- reviewing parking arrangements (including commuter/residents interface)
- using road reserves for parking.

Better transport planning

There was a general perception that more planning and consultation was needed around major roading projects to ensure all modes of transport are taken into account.

Basin Flyover

About a dozen comments were received opposing the Basin Flyover.

Urban Development

The early engagement programme did not include a work stream targeting stakeholders in the Urban Development strategy as there has been a substantial pre-consultation programme on the District Plan running

concurrently. As such, we have received feedback on the specific savings options identified by the Council but did not receive sufficient feedback to identify overall themes.

Response to Council Options

Heritage grants scheme

There are relatively polarised views on whether to dispense with the heritage grants scheme. Activities that asked for input in a general context (most notably the Nielsen Survey and the budget simulator) tended to generate responses that supported the idea. Whereas activities that asked for input on the Urban Development strategy area (most notably the feedback sheets, emails, and to a lesser extent the discussion board) tended to generate feedback that opposed the idea.

Nielsen Survey: 50% in favour/10% against

Urban parks upgrade programme

There is a similar spread of views on the option to defer public space upgrades. Support for deferring the programme was largely premised on general affordability considerations and the relative priority of Council expenditure. Opposition to deferring the programme was founded on concern about the inadequate number of existing urban parks. However, a significant proportion of opposition was based on concern about the impact on recreational open spaces rather than on the impact on urban parks.

Nielsen Survey: 64% in favour/16% against

Regional wide building consents service

There was little input on this issue. The comments that were received were derived from feedback sheets and tended to support the proposal to investigate a region-wide building consent process largely on the basis that it would reduce the cost and increase flexibility to applicants.

Other Comments / suggestions

Manners Mall

There was a substantial amount of feedback on Manners Mall – particularly through online mechanisms. The feedback was overwhelmingly opposed to Manners Mall being reverted to a road.

Governance

Themes

Engaging with the community

Many people expressed appreciation for the early engagement programme – especially people who attended workshops and also in blogs in relation to our e-engagement activities. There was support for further early engagement activities, utilising a variety of engagement techniques, and, to a lesser extent,

for resourcing community organisations to participate in consultation processes.

There was, however, a vein of sentiment, expressed particularly through a discussion thread, that the Council predetermines the outcome of consultation processes and therefore they were cynical of engagement with the Council.

Response to Council Options

Printed quality of our publications

There is support for the proposed reduction in the printed quality of annual reports, plans and summaries. The majority of comments on this issue identified that a reduction in quality would not adversely impact on the reach of publications.

Nielsen Survey Result: 83% support/5% oppose

Other Comments / suggestions

Reduction in catering budgets

The reduction in catering budgets was an issue that was picked up in the media and caught the attention of a number of people. All feedback received on this issue, which was predominantly through email, supported the reduction in catering budgets.