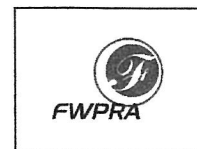


# **Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents' Associations**



C/- 134 Hanson St  
Newtown  
Wellington

8 March 2011

Strategy and Policy Committee  
Wellington City Council  
PO Box 2199  
Wellington

Councillors

## **DEPUTATION TO THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL 8 MARCH 2011 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2011 – 12**

(Tom Law speaks)

The Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents' Association over quite a number of years has been consistent with its messages that it has conveyed to the Strategy and Policy Committee and to Council.

One of these messages has been regarding consultation and engagement with the community. Indeed on 17 May 2009, the Federation, commenting on the Draft LTCCP 2009-19 stated regarding consultation/community engagement "This is an area where Council is perceived by members of the public to be a poor performer." The Federation also acknowledged that the engagement for the LTCCP was "much improved". However, there appears from the perception of our members and members of the public that the Council has moved away from an openness and transparent mode to one that is all the antonyms, that keep members of the public out of the process. This is hardly conducive to a positive engagement scenario.

We believe that the integrity of the Council, as an organisation, you as a committee, you as individual councilors are at risk. In the lead up to the last local body election, you all promised at one point or another to be more open, more transparent and to engage with the Community better. You still deal with things in "public excluded sessions" and hold briefing sessions/workshops that are not publicised. There have been no changes. It seems that you have been "nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal".

The Federation is concerned that the tools that enable meaningful consultation or public engagement (such as IAP2 systems) are not used. We continue to be concerned that there appears to be an ethos in council not to engage with the public. To have a report presented to this committee where staff ask you to note that consultation with the public is not necessary,



and then for you to agree to that, is an indictment on you as a committee and you individually as Councilors. Further, what does that say about the staff attitudes. The IAP2 process would have been ideal to implement in that particular instance.

As you can tell, the Federation has real concerns about your commitment as Councilors, and about council staff commitment to community engagement, that is why we again stand before you.

Councilor Eagle, you have been given the portfolio of Community Engagement. This includes community engagement across the spectrum of portfolios. The Federation believes that you have been given a hospital pass. A pass that we hope doesn't end you in the A & E ward at Wellington Regional Hospital. You clearly do not have the support of your colleagues, despite their promises.

At staff level there is an officer, the Director of Community Engagement who likewise appears to be in a position that is unsupported by Council staff and management, unable to do the job.

What is needed? A change in the attitude of Council staff to engagement with the community and a change to the attitude of you folk around this table. The integrity of you all as councilors, as our representatives and council staff is in real jeopardy. Bring about your promises made to the people of Wellington a few months ago.

(Bernie Harris Speaks)

Following on from this understanding of the need for good contact with the community's interest in planning for the future of Wellington, meaningful consultation is imperative. In 2009, six submissions to the LTCCP were treated dismissively in the final document. I was inflamed, just to put it mildly.

In 2010, I returned to the fray as my absence had been noted by many of that observant audience we call the public. My only submission was relevant to a concern noted in today's report i.e. interest and depreciation. At the time I was assured that it had been read and referred to Council officers for their attention. The annual plan had no reference at all to my submission on behalf of the FWPR, as their finance portfolio member. Attached was a letter dated 9 May 2010 to the Controller and Auditor General with the following headings:

- (a) Legislation – sections 100, 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 2002
- (b) Depreciation of revalued assets per IPSAS 17
- (c) Revenue and Financing Policy
- (d) Conclusion seeking attention before the audit clearance of the WCC Annual Plan 2010/11

No official written reply was received although a phone discussion took place with an accounting officer of the OAG. My submission and attachment will be with an officer of WCC somewhere.



It is therefore disconcerting to read Report 2 before you all today, in which 5.2 Weathertight Homes Funding proposes to ignore the requirements of sections 82 to 90 of the local government legislation regarding consultation, and particularly Special Consultation Procedures. Members of the FAR working party will be well aware that under their Terms of Reference 1(a) draws attention to be guided by the requirements of the Local Government Act and 1(e) recommending any changes to financial policies in section 102. I therefore quote section 102 (6) "A policy described in this section may be amended only as an amendment of the long term council community plan" Section 102 (4)(a) states that a local authority must adopt a revenue and finance policy, which Report 2 encompasses.

Councillors recall that in our deputation to this committee on 2 December 2010, and last Thursday 3 March 2011 the statutory requirements relating to the leaky homes consultation, and the faulty draft minute of that comment, by quoting from my address notes.

Combined with the omission of my 2010 submission and the two recent reminders, Councillors are cautioned as to accepting this report without assurances that all legislative requirements are suitably incorporated.

To continue our co-operative relationship with councillors and council officers we can only reiterate our belief, expressed on many occasions since 2004 that the Revenue and Funding Policy be prepared independently to ensure political bias is avoided in determining both revenue and funding proportions of all council activities.

In making this recommendation for independent objectivity with this policy, it is nevertheless in full accord with the separate portfolio leaders' roles in regard to this policy.

The FWPR is happy to make its resources available to you and Council to assist in your engagement with the community of Wellington.

Sincerely



T. E. Law Secretary

and



B. Harris Treasurer

