

Council 25 June 2010
Tabled Information
Reference 087/100(A)

Wellington City Libraries

WCC 2010/11 Annual Plan (AP) and the Community Facilities Policy (CFP)

- The Libraries budget is reduced in the AP (down 8.5% from LTCCP).
- Some Council members have said publicly that all other parts of Council have taken cuts, just like the Libraries. This is not true: some Council budgets have been cut, but not as severely as the Libraries; other budgets have been increased. For example, while budget amounts and sources differ, figures from the LTCCP and Draft AP for 2010/11 show the following changes:
 - Galleries and Museums funding reduced by 1.6%
 - Governance funding reduced by 4.8%
 - Environmental conservation attractions (zoo, sanctuary) funding reduced by less than 1%
 - Tourism Promotion funding increased by 10.3%
 - Events Attraction & Support funding increased by 6.8%
 - Business Support funding increased by 17.7%.
- I wrote to all Councillors on 15/6/10 about these figures. None has queried them.
- Libraries management has already cut services and programmes in recent years. There is no fat left to cut.
- At the same time Council has drawn up the Community Facilities Policy which provides guidance on (among other things) how many libraries the City will have and where. CFP uses a range of criteria to decide on 'desired future service levels', including population size, distance to another centre etc. There are also general criteria for closing a facility.
- Using the 'within three kilometres' rule in CFP, branch libraries under three kilometres from the City or hub (Johnsonville, Kilbirnie) do not fit within the desired scheme (Newtown, Miramar are examples; under this Policy their libraries will go). Wadestown is also projected in the Policy not to have a library in future, on the basis of its population.
- After public objections the Council has now added a new sentence to the Policy '*the general approach will be to continue with the existing provision of community facilities, including libraries....*' This is ambiguous. The only other library-related change is three words in Table 2.
- There is a conflict here. On one hand the Council and Mayor say they 'have no plans' to close libraries or reduce hours or services. On the other hand Council severely reduces Libraries funding AND adopts a Policy which is a blueprint for closing or reducing library services.

Please:

- (1) *Reconsider the Library budget cuts*
- (2) *Seriously revise the Community Facilities Policy to protect existing libraries, hours and services (the revisions already made are, unfortunately, ambiguous)*
- (3) *Listen to the many thousands of residents who use and value our libraries (79% of the population).*

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