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## **BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS**

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### **1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to introduce the results of the recent survey of Wellington businesses. A full presentation of the survey results will be given at the meeting.

### **2. Executive summary**

Wellington City Council recently undertook a survey of businesses operating in the City. The survey had an excellent response rate and uncovered several strong themes including a generally positive outlook, challenges around operating in Wellington and opinions on interactions with Council. The results of the survey are being used to inform the Open for Business programme of work, which aims to improve the offering for Wellington businesses.

### **3. Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Economic Growth and Arts Committee.

- 1 Receive the information noting that there will be a full presentation of the results at the meeting.*
- 2 Note that the findings from the survey are being used to inform Council's work including the Open for Business Programme.*

### **4. Background**

As part of the implementation of our Economic Development Strategy, Council undertook a survey of business operating in Wellington City in late 2013. It sought to understand the issues for businesses operating in Wellington, measure businesses' perceptions of, and experiences with, Wellington City Council and their intentions for the future. The survey, which was completed online or via mail, was sent to over 2000 Wellington businesses and yielded 683 responses.

### **5. Discussion**

The survey benefitted from an excellent response rate, and several robust themes were uncovered including:

### **The mood among businesses is relatively buoyant**

The majority of businesses foresaw an improvement in their own businesses, and their outlook for the national economy was positive. Opinions on the outlook for Wellington were also positive but more muted.

### **Challenges**

The most prominent challenge businesses cite is the size of the local market and the logistics of having significant operations outside Wellington. Other themes included parking, seismic issues and concerns pertaining to the leadership of Council.

### **Open for business?**

Only one in four businesses currently perceive the Council positively when it comes to being 'open for business' and comments highlighted that there is a perceived lack of understanding of business in Council. Businesses clearly want the Council to focus on making it easy to operate and they are willing to engage with the Council.

### **Losing businesses to other locations is a risk**

Relocation or closure is being actively considered by a small number of businesses – around 4% of the sample. Reasons for this include the perception of greater opportunities elsewhere (particularly Auckland), as well as costs.

## **6. Conclusion**

These results are being used to inform the Open for Business programme and to benchmark our performance. The survey will be repeated annually.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

*This survey was undertaken to inform the Open for Business programme which seeks to improve the offering for business in Wellington City.*

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

*Nil*

### 3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

*There are no specific Treaty considerations.*

### 4) Decision-making

*No decision sought.*

### 5) Consultation

*This survey was undertaken understand the views of Wellington businesses. 2073 businesses were invited to take part.*

### 6) Legal implications

*Nil anticipated.*

### 7) Consistency with existing policy

*Not applicable.*