

Governance and Citizen Information

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Governance and Citizen Information

WHAT WE DO

Our governance work includes:

- running local elections
- holding meetings of the Council and its committees, and of community boards
- producing annual plans and reports, along with policies and strategies to guide our work
- working with mana whenua to ensure they have a say in the development of the city
- seeking feedback on our proposals from members of the public, Maori and stakeholder groups
- providing information and answering queries about our services and activities, and about property within the city.

KEY CHALLENGES

It's our job to 'facilitate democratic local decision-making' – in other words, we have to make sure people can have their say and know it will count.

In general, people are less trusting of public institutions than they used to be. This, along with time pressures, mean levels of involvement are declining.

Fewer people vote in local elections, and only a small proportion of residents take advantage of opportunities to have input into our decisions.

The key challenge we face is to increase participation levels and build trust and confidence in civic decision-making.

CASE STUDY: CONSERVING TE ARO PA

We worked with iwi and developers to preserve the remains of a historic Pa.

Three ponga structures – believed to be the remains of the original Te Aro Pa - were unearthed during development work for an apartment complex at 39 Taranaki Street.

The find is unique, as excavations rarely uncover the ruminants of Maori structures of this nature in a built-up metropolitan area.

Following months of investigations by engineers and archaeologists and discussions between those affected, a plan to preserve the site was agreed.

The plan involves redesigning the 58-unit building in a way that protects the important site. Members of the public will be able to view two of the three structures during daytime hours seven days a week. Access to the third will be by arrangement.

The agreement to preserve the site is an example of the working partnership between the Council and mana whenua.

Te Aro Pa was occupied during the 19th century by hapu from the Te Atiawa Taranaki whanui, Ngati Ruanui and Ngati Mutunga iwi. It stretched along Wellington's foreshore from what is now Cambridge Terrace to Frank Kitts Park. Gardens stretched south from the pa site to what is now Buckle Street.

At the time the agreement was reached in March, Wellington Tenth Trust acting Chief Executive Liz Mellish said it was the best result the trust could have wished for.

"It shows what can be achieved by working closely with developers and local authorities."
The developers, Washington Ltd, won a merit award at the 2006 Wellington Conservation Awards.

"We are very excited about what has been achieved and are greatly encouraged by the commitment of the developer and the Council to preserving the homes of our ancestors."

- LIZ MELLISH, ACTING EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WELLINGTON TENTHS TRUST.

KEY FACTS

The Council is made up of the Mayor and 14 councillors. They are elected to make decisions on behalf of the people of Wellington, in line with community aspirations.

Each year, we hold more than 130 meetings of the Council and its committees and subcommittees. Only 42 percent of eligible voters cast votes in Wellington's 2004 local elections – down almost six percentage points from the previous election.

Our contact centre answers more than half a million calls each year.

WHAT IT COST		Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
		2006	2006	2006	2005
Net Expenditure/(Revenue) by activity \$000					
9.1.1	Mana Whenua Partnership	60	110	50	110
9.2.1	City Governance and Decision Making	8,266	8,387	121	8,155
9.3.1	Citizen Information	6,011	5,957	(54)	5,419
Operating Expenditure		14,337	14,454	117	13,684

		Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
		2006	2006	2006	2005
Capital expenditure \$000					
9.1.1	Mana Whenua Partnership	-	-	-	-
9.2.1	City Governance and Decision Making	-	-	-	80
9.3.1	Citizen Information	-	-	-	-
Capital expenditure		-	-	-	80

OUTCOME 9.1 MANA WHENUA PARTNERSHIP

Through partnerships with mana whenua organisations the Wellington Tenth Trust and Ngati Toa Rangatira we aim to fulfil our obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME

We judge the health of the relationship through ongoing discussions with mana whenua representatives. We also carry out an annual survey of those organisations seeking their comments on how effective we are at consulting with them on resource management issues and policies, and how we have performed in relation to the terms of our memorandums of understanding with them. Overall, feedback indicated they were 'quite satisfied' to 'very satisfied' (measured on a five-point scale) with the health of the relationship with the Council. This is an improvement on last year's feedback of 'quite satisfied'.

Specific issues raised through the survey will be considered as part of the coming year's work programme.

Source – Planning, Performance and Research, Wellington City Council, Interviews with Treaty partners

9.1.1 Activity: Mana whenua partnership

Maori have had a continuous presence in the Wellington area for well over 500 years. The history of Maori settlement is rich and diverse. Since the occupation by Pakeha in the 19th century the area has been dramatically changed. This change affected not only the environment but also the make-up of people who came to settle here. The drift of Maori to the area increased after the Second World War as education and employment opportunities arose in the city at a time when rural employment was in decline. Today Wellington is home to Maori from all over Aotearoa but there remain strong links for Ngati Toa Rangatira and for Wellington Tenth Trust. Both of these groups are recognised by the Council as mana whenua and we have special partnerships with them.

We recognise and act on our obligations to develop opportunities for Maori to contribute to our decision-making processes. In 2005/06, we continued to foster partnerships with mana whenua and build relationships with the wider Maori community through effective consultation.

These relationships are supported by a dedicated Treaty Relationships team. This team provides the Council with advice and administrative support on treaty-based relationships.

We have memoranda of understanding with Ngati Toa Rangatira and the Wellington Tenth Trust. These outline how they participate in decisions on policy, protocol, regulatory and service delivery issues. These organisations also have ex officio membership on the Council's Strategy and Policy Committee.

What we did

- We signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Wellington Tenth Trust. The signing of this memorandum reinforces our joint commitment to our city.
- We hosted a hui at Te Papa in early May that focused on the promotion of Maori arts in the city.
- We worked alongside iwi, developers and the Historic Places Trust to find a way to preserve intact remains of a historic pa site in central Wellington.

How we performed

INTERVIEWS WITH BOTH TREATY PARTNERS COVERING A RANGE OF ISSUES RELATING TO THE TREATY PARTNERSHIP

We judge the health of the relationship through ongoing discussions with mana whenua representatives. We also carry out an annual survey seeking their comments on how effective we are at consulting with them on resource management issues and policies, and how we have performed in relation to the terms of the memorandums of understanding. Overall, feedback indicated they were **'quite satisfied'** to **'very satisfied'** (measured on a five-point scale) with the health of the relationship with the Council. This is an improvement on last year's feedback of 'quite satisfied'.

Specific issues raised through the survey will be considered as part of the coming year's work programme.

Source – Planning, Performance and Research, Wellington City Council, Interviews with Treaty Partners

What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	60	110	50	110
Revenue	-	-	-	-
Net expenditure	60	110	50	110
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Expenditure	-	-	-	-

OUTCOME 9.2 CITY DECISION MAKING

Our aim is to encourage people to participate in decisions affecting the city.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2001	2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We monitor the voter turnout at local elections every three years. The last election was held in 2004. The turnout was modest compared to national elections and earlier local authority elections. Next year, we will develop ways to increase public involvement in local elections by taking steps to raise the profile of the elections and to make the voting process simpler. We held a by-election during the year for a seat on the Makara/Ohariu Community Board where more than 62 percent of eligible electors voted. This is a high turnout, particularly for a by-election. 	Wellingtonians who vote in local elections (%)	48%	42%
	Wellingtonians who vote in regional elections (%)	49%	43%
		2002	2005
	Wellingtonians who vote in national elections (%)	81%	86%

Source - Department of Internal Affairs

9.2.1 Activity: City governance and decision-making

This activity covers our decision-making and accountability processes. It includes managing local elections every three years and holding public meetings of the Council. It also includes developing plans, policies and strategies to promote the city's well-being. As we develop these plans, we take several steps to inform residents and give them opportunities to influence our decisions. Notable plans are flagged in advance through various means such as advertising, media interviews and releases, public displays and public meetings. These documents and Council agendas are widely available, and we provide opportunities for residents to make submissions and appear before the Council. We also report to residents about whether we have done all we said we would. This Annual Report is part of that process.

Many aspects of this work are subject to legislative requirements. We generally exceed these requirements to find the most appropriate and effective means of informing the public and generating feedback.

What we did

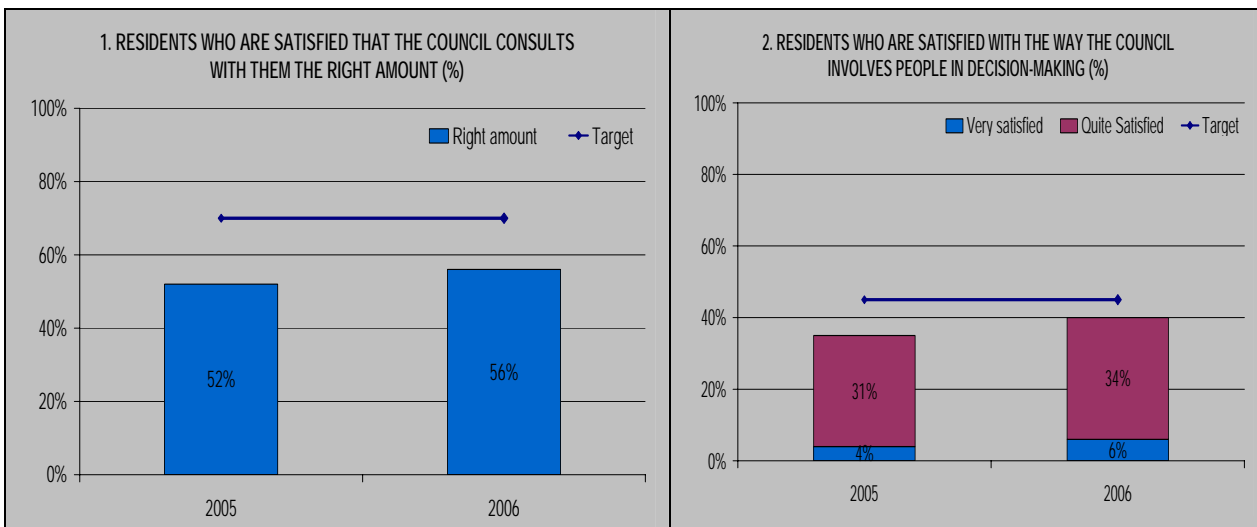
- We held a by-election on 10 June 2006 to fill a vacancy on the Makara/Ohariu Community Board caused by the resignation of one of the members elected in October 2004. The successful candidate was Craig Shepherd and he was sworn into office on 22 June 2006.
- We started a review of Council's representation arrangements, including a review of community boards, to be completed in time for the 2007 election. Some "pre-review" consultation was undertaken to seek feedback from the public on issues before commencing the formal statutory process. We adopted our "initial" proposal on 28 June 2006 and will now notify and invite public submissions on that decision. We are required to make our final decision by 6 October 2006.
- We held over 100 meetings and briefings of the Council, its committees and subcommittees. The vast majority of these were open to the public though some agenda items are confidential or private in nature and the public are excluded from those parts of the meeting.

- We launched a web-alert initiative to automatically notify subscribers of new content (such as meeting agendas, draft policies for consultation) placed on our website.
- We undertook an extensive strategic exercise that resulted in the adoption of seven distinct strategies and a set of priorities that set a new direction for the city.
- In June, after extensive consultation, we adopted the Long Term Council Community Plan 2006/07 – 20015/16. The plan provides a clear direction for the city and a useful platform to measure the organisation’s performance in the coming years.
- Our Annual Report for 2004/05 was awarded the prestigious Supreme Award at the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants Annual Report Awards. We also won the Local Government category for the second time in three years.

How we performed

We monitor resident perceptions of our engagement and decision-making activities to assess how well resident needs are being met. Although we have seen some minor improvement in this area during the year, neither Annual Plan targets were achieved.

Though a significant proportion of residents surveyed stated the Council does not consult enough, more are taking part in public consultations – particularly the Marine Conservation Centre resource consent process and the long-term plan consultation exercise.



Source – Resident Satisfaction Survey, Wellington City Council

What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	8,414	8,583	169	8,753
Revenue	148	196	(48)	598
Net expenditure	8,266	8,387	121	8,155
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Expenditure	-	-	-	80

OUTCOME 9.3 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Our aim is to allow people easy access to council information and services.

9.3.1 Activity: Citizen information

Information is important for several reasons. It allows people to have an input into decisions, or take advantage of entertainment or recreation opportunities, or make decisions about their own property, or simply to know what's going on in their local area. Open, honest communication about public services is part of any healthy democracy.

We provide information, answer queries and address complaints through our 24-hour-a-day Contact Centre and our City Service Centre. We also give members of the public information on property values, and to the vast amount of historical information found in the Wellington City Archives. With the exception of the archives, which charge a fee for accessing some information, all these services are provided to the public free of charge.

What we did

- We started a review of the payment services that we provide at our City Service Centre and at the Kilbirnie, Newtown, Johnsonville and Tawa Libraries. Our preliminary assessments indicate that we could expect savings in the order of \$360,000 a year by adopting new payment channels. In making a decision, we'll ensure that payments can continue to be made in a convenient way.
- We placed second in two categories of the 2005 CRM Contact Centre Awards. The categories were: the New Zealand-wide all industries (Web/Email) category; and the City Council Sector (all channels) category.
- We set up a partnership contract with Capacity, Hutt City Council and Wellington Waterfront Ltd to take their after hours calls.
- The Archives experienced the greatest number of external customers since opening in 1996.
- The Archives developed an online database to enhance access to the collections. This will be launched in the new financial year. Work also began on a web module to present information from early ratebooks in an online, searchable format.

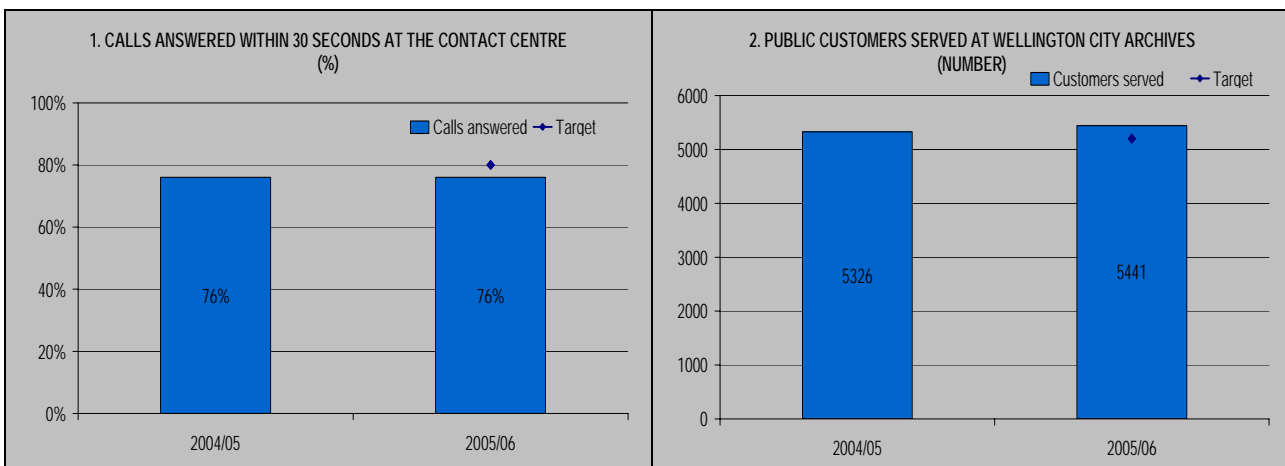
- Our website was a finalist in the NetGuide Web Awards 2006, for best government or community site. We have continued to develop services available on the website, such as:
 - Paying rates online
 - Fix it – if residents want to request repairs to Wellington City Council property
 - Property search – residents can view property and rates information
 - Community directory – a comprehensive list of community based groups and organisations in Wellington.

How we performed

We monitor performance in this area to ensure information is readily available to the public.

Our Contact Centre has an Annual Plan target that 80 percent of calls are answered within 30 seconds. This target was not achieved with 76 percent of calls being answered within this timeframe.

Wellington City Archives have seen an increase in the number of customers accessing archive services, surpassing our Annual Plan target.



Source – Communications and Marketing and Knowledge Solutions Business Units, Wellington City Council

What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	6,477	6,487	10	6,201
Revenue	466	530	(64)	782
Net expenditure	6,011	5,957	(54)	5,419
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Expenditure	-	-	-	-