
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

LONG TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2009–19: REPORT OF THE HEARINGS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Purpose of Report

An outline of the submissions made to the Hearings Subcommittee on the draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19 is presented. The minutes of the hearings are also presented for receipt.

2. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note the minutes of the draft Long Term Council Community Plan Hearings Subcommittee meeting of 5 May 2009 (attached at appendix one).*

3. Background

The Council is required to use the special consultative procedure as part of its adoption of the long term council community plan. The process requires the Council to offer submitters the chance to speak and to hear those that wish to.

This year 138 submitters took up this opportunity and presented their submissions over a five day period. This paper provides a brief overview of the main issues that were presented.

3.1 Subcommittee Format

This is the fourth year that Council has used a subcommittee to hear submissions on its long term and annual plans. The subcommittee structure is designed to be an inviting format for submitters and this approach is seen to provide greater opportunities for engagement than hearings of the full Strategy and Policy Committee.

3.1.1 Membership

The Subcommittee comprised each of the portfolio leaders, with the Governance portfolio leader as chair. This ensured a range of perspectives were present. A number of Councillors who were not members were also frequently present to hear submissions. Attendance is noted in the attached minutes.

The Subcommittee has no decision making powers. Its delegations require it to report to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

3.1.2 Summary of themes

The hearings were an open forum and submitters were free to comment on any items associated with the draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19. The majority spoke to one activity, though a number of submitters discussed a range of themes.

In general, the issues raised at the hearings were indicative of the overall tenor of the written submissions. Support for the Wellington Community Net, access to recreational facilities, and continued opportunities for engagement (including urban maori and business) were common topics.

The full set of written submissions has been distributed and has been made publicly available. A summary of the main themes from consultation is provided in a separate report on this agenda.

4. Discussion

The following section summarises some of the key and recurring themes that were raised at the hearings.

4.1 Recreation facilities

The demands placed on the city's recreational facilities were raised by a number of submitters - most notably by representatives of sporting codes and clubs. The focus was particularly on sports fields and swimming pools.

The programmed introduction of synthetic surfaces was welcomed. The introduction of these was seen as an effective way of: managing growth in player numbers; improving ball skills in junior football players; and of reducing the impact of cancellations caused by bad weather.

There was also a common request that the programme of synthetic surfaces be accelerated – that more fields be introduced over a shorter time. It was acknowledged that funding models, including an increased user pays contribution, would need to be considered.

Demand for pool space was also commented on. Discussion at the hearings was largely limited to the issue of capacity with the solution restricted mainly to the

improvement or construction of additional facilities although there was comment on the priorities given to different swim groups.

Specific provision of facilities for surfing at Lyall Bay, inline skating, and indoor walking (primarily for the elderly) were also raised.

4.2 Digital divide

A number of submitters – users and providers of the service – discussed the Wellington Community Net and encouraged the Council to continue its support of the internet hosting site.

The fact that it offered a complete hosting service was noted, as was an acknowledgment that a subscription fee, while not desired, would be accepted and not stop groups from having a web presence.

4.3 Engagement

The question of engagement with the Council was a thread that ran throughout the hearings. Those that spoke in support of the arts praised the Council for its recent work to engage with the sector on the future of arts in Wellington and encouraged its continuation. The sports codes and clubs also thanked the Council for its ongoing support.

A number of submissions were also received on the desire for there to be increased dialogue between urban Māori and the Council. Māori saw benefit in creating a regular platform, such as a forum as a way of achieving this. Those that spoke acknowledged the important place of mana whenua.

A similar desire for a regular forum was raised by some business groups.

The consultation process, associated documents and decision-making were raised intermittently. Submitters were generally appreciative of the opportunity to participate. A number thanked the Council for its work in developing the plan and for presenting that in a clear way. Other submitters would have welcomed more detailed information on some projects. The need for the Council to balance its budget and trade off between often competing views was acknowledged by most submitters.

4.4 Accessibility

A small number of oral submitters also commented on accessibility issues. The importance of keeping pedestrian areas and crossings safe was raised and this extended to those with disabilities. Improved access to the website and higher presence of New Zealand Sign Language were also encouraged. The Disability Reference Group also noted a number of matters that would reduce barriers for people involvement in and around the city.

4.5 The environment

A number of submitters spoke on the environment and about the continued need for sustainable practices. Topics covered biodiversity, the tracks networks and continued support for the work of volunteers. The Enviroschools programme – seeking continued support – was also discussed and included presentations by students from Ngaio School.

4.6 Funding requests

Requests for funding were made by a number of submitters. These requests, and officers' recommendations to them, are detailed in the *prominent issues* report on this agenda.

4.7 Miscellaneous

A number of submitters commented on existing activities and work programmes, while an equally large number commented on relatively specific and operational matters. These comments are provided to business unit managers who will assess the information/request against existing work programmes. In all cases a response will be provided to submitters.

A summary of all oral submissions is provided in the attached minutes.

5. Conclusion

The Hearings Subcommittee met over a five day period to receive submissions on the draft Long Term Council Community Plan. In keeping with its terms of reference a report consisting of a summary overview and minutes of these hearings is presented for consideration and record.

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