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GATHERING PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE DISTRICT PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

To outline how the District Plan Team intends to gather information from the public on their views of the effectiveness and efficiency of the District Plan, in response to questions raised by the Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC).

2. Executive Summary

Every council has an obligation under the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA) to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of any plans developed under the RMA. Monitoring of the 'built environment' aspects of the District Plan has recently been carried out, with the results reported to SPC in June 2005. The results were based on work by council officers and technical experts. The Committee requested that the District Plan Team investigate options for including information from the public on their views of the District Plan.

The Council already collects information that reveals some of the public's views of the District Plan. It is proposed to supplement that information with other projects designed to gather more specific information. These projects include: questions in the August Residents Satisfaction Survey, focus groups and feedback forms on the public monitoring report cards. In addition, the Central Area chapter review and the Urban Development Strategy will involve consultation, which is likely to generate information on people's opinions of the effectiveness and efficiency of the District Plan to date.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to the proposed actions, outlined in section 5.2, for obtaining information from the public on their views of the effectiveness and efficiency of the District Plan.*

4. Background

Every council has an obligation under the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA) to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of any plans developed under the RMA. Councils must also make this information available to the public at least every five years.

The District Plan Team presented a report to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 9 June 2005 (1215/52/IM), which summarised the results of the monitoring completed to date. The monitoring focussed on the built environment policies and rules. The recommendation in the paper sought that the results be made publicly available.

Many of the monitoring projects completed were carried out by Council officers and technical experts (eg. urban designers, heritage and conservation architects). Questions were raised during the presentation of the paper, and later in debate, regarding how public views of the District Plan would be incorporated into the District Plan monitoring programme.

Accordingly, a new recommendation to that report was passed (outlined below) and this report fulfils this requirement.

3. *Request officers to report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee on how public views on District Plan effectiveness, efficiency and process can best be obtained and considered.*

5. Discussion

The District Plan Monitoring Programme has, to date, been implemented by officers and others with relevant expertise, for example urban designers, noise consultants, heritage advisors and conservation architects. This is because many aspects of the District Plan and the resource consent process rely on such technical advice (eg. assessment of a proposal against the design guides, noise rules or the heritage rules). It is also necessary to engage such experts to assess whether the built outcomes as a result of District Plan processes are consistent with the objectives of the Plan.

Another important monitoring avenue is the community's views and perceptions of the Plan. The District Plan is an expression of how the community wishes to see the city develop. The Plan was developed through a public process and Wellingtonians have an on-going interest in it and how it is implemented.

5.1 Existing sources of public views on the District Plan

There are number of sources of information that currently exist within Council, which give a sense of how the community thinks the District Plan is working. This information includes:

- February Residents Satisfaction Survey - the Built Environment performance measures have direct relevance to the District Plan objectives.
- Environmental Complaints – all complaints relating to activities controlled by the District Plan are investigated by the Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement

Team. All complaints are recorded in a database. The database is a source of information on problematic areas of the District Plan, or its implementation through the resource consent process.

- ‘Further work’ file – This District Plan file contains all correspondence from any person who has identified errors or more generic problems with the Plan or its implementation. It is regularly referred to when changes to the Plan are being contemplated.
- Community Outcomes research – Focus groups were facilitated in June 2005 as part of the process adopted to formulate Council’s Long Term Council Community Plan. The summary report of the focus groups showed that some District Plan issues were discussed in those groups eg. residential intensification and infill, and preservation of heritage and character values.

While this information is already fed into reviews of the District Plan by officers, more detailed information on the public’s views of certain aspects of the District Plan would add value to the work of officers and experts.

5.2 Proposed actions to gather information on public views

5.2.1 Specific District Plan questions in the August Residents Satisfaction Survey

The Residents Satisfaction Survey is carried out four times a year, with the main survey being conducted in February. The remaining three surveys can be utilised by different groups in the Council to seek more specific information on a particular topic. It was decided, following the outcome of the June monitoring paper, to develop some questions for the August Survey.

Given the timeframes involved, this project has already begun. Questions were required to be drafted in late July, in time for the survey which was conducted in early August.

Six major questions are included in the survey. These were designed to seek the public’s views on the topics from the District Plan that have been monitored already and reported to SPC in June 2005 (ie. urban form, central city design and land uses, residential amenity and multi-unit developments/residential infill).

5.2.2 Focus groups

The District Plan Team has also identified a need to use focus groups to better understand the perception of effects of residential infill on existing residential character. Another topic to be explored by the focus groups will be people’s perceptions and understanding of the value of urban design in planning.

5.2.3 Feedback forms on the proposed public monitoring reports

As noted in the June monitoring report to SPC, the Council is required by the RMA to “*compile and make available to the public a review of the results of its [plan efficiency and effectiveness] monitoring*” (s35 RMA). This must be done at least every five years. Councillors agreed that officers prepare and publish a summary of the monitoring results. The report cards are currently being formatted and designed for publication.

It is proposed to develop a feedback mechanism as part of the report cards, whereby members of the public can react to the information provided and send us their views on

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the issues discussed. Such feedback will be incorporated into the policy development process currently being carried out by the District Plan Team.

5.2.4 Consultation process on the Central Area chapter review and the Urban Development Strategy

It is anticipated that very wide community consultation for both the Central Area chapter review and the proposed Urban Development Strategy will take place in early 2006. More than ten years have passed since the last major consultation programme on the Proposed District Plan. Given the significant changes in Wellington's population distribution that have occurred over the previous ten years, it is likely that there will be fresh ideas from people who haven't previously been involved in District Plan matters.

5.2.5 Results from these projects

The information gathered from these projects will be considered and reported alongside existing monitoring information to inform future reviews of the District Plan. It is likely that the information may highlight issues that need to be prioritised. Where this is the case, the District Plan work programme may need to be adjusted accordingly.

Another monitoring paper is scheduled to go to SPC at the end of September 2005. Some results from these projects will be ready to be reported in that paper.

6. Conclusion

The Council already collects some information that informs us of the public's views of the District Plan. A number of additional projects have been identified that will augment this. These projects include questions in the August Residents Satisfaction Survey, focus groups, feedback forms on the monitoring report cards and the wider consultation processes that will occur for the Central Area chapter review and the Urban Development Strategy.

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Supporting Information
<p>1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome The District Plan supports a wide range of strategic outcomes particularly under the Built Environment and Transport KAA's.</p>
<p>2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact Project C533 – District Plan. The costs incurred by the Monitoring Programme are included in this project.</p>
<p>3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations All District Plan work is required to take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (refer: Section 8 Resource Management Act 1991).</p>
<p>4) Decision-Making The decisions required are not significant, but will provide support for the proposed work to be carried out by the District Plan Team as party of its monitoring responsibilities.</p>
<p>5) Consultation a) General Consultation Consultation is not required for this type of 'feedback' report. b) Consultation with Maori Both the Wellington Tenth Trust and Ngati Toa have been provided with the results of the monitoring information previously. The Tenth Trust has already responded to that information and this feedback was included in the June Monitoring Paper to SPC.</p>
<p>6) Legal Implications None.</p>
<p>7) Consistency with existing policy N/A.</p>