
REPORT 1
(1215/12/IM)

UPDATE ON CHANGES AT TAWA SERVICE CENTRE

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Tawa Community Board on proposed changes to the Tawa Service Centre.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Tawa Community Board:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note the proposal to exit Building and Consent Licensing Services from the Tawa Service Centre.*
- 3. Note that approved community organisations will fill the space vacated by Building Consents and Licensing Services.*

3. Background

As part of the 2004/05 Annual Plan, Council agreed to a proposal for community and recreational use of the existing Tawa Service Centre at 5 Cambridge Street and voted \$35,000 for minor modifications to allow this to happen.

This project has so far:

- Undertaken some limited consultation with local groups about accommodation requirements
- Developed a plan (through Recreation Wellington) for the use of the adjoining old bank building.
- Scoped the physical works required
- Developed a draft management plan whereby initially Tawa Recreation Centre will facilitate the delivery of programmes and hireage of the facility and provide day to day management

While the original plan did not require the exit of the BCLS activities, the changed use does present an opportunity to re-centralise under-utilised regulatory services and lease the vacated space with approved community organisations.

The only other current building uses are:

1. a meeting location for the Tawa Community Board (this will be retained but will also be available to community organisations resident in the building)
2. WEMO uses the site for storage of emergency equipment and this facility will be retained
3. Knowledge Solutions and WEMO have identified this as an alternate site for Council activities in the case of the Council offices in the Civic Centre being usable in an emergency (community leases and user agreements will provide for this emergency use)

4. Building and Consent Licensing Services

Building Consent and Licensing Services (BCLS) has been operating from the Tawa Service Centre since 1989 when the Tawa Borough Council was incorporated into the Wellington City Council. This is the only satellite location for these services – the rest of the city is serviced by staff in the Civic Centre.

Currently there are three full time equivalents staffing the centre. This staffing level is required to meet health and safety requirements (at least 2 officers need to be on the premises at any one time). The staff resource requirement is disproportionate to business demand. For instance:

- In the six months to October 2004 there was an average of 14 consent applications each week
- Building enquiries are low -in a survey conducted last year officers at Tawa had a combined average of just 1 hour 27 minutes spent responding to face to face enquiries each day

Work is sent daily to Tawa to keep staff workloads at a reasonable level.

The current situation is inefficient and unsustainable, particularly with the increased accreditation requirements (which will mean removal of staff for training purposes) and the likely regionalisation of services that will probably see Porirua and Kapiti providing regional coverage of building services.

While there may be some community reaction to the withdrawal of a long established service, there will be no diminution of service levels to Tawa except for the face-to-face customer presence. In mitigation BCLS can offer:

- A drop box in the library for consents - cleared daily
- Specialised clinics as required for specific areas of business activity
- Advertising of the existing dedicated BCLS phone line and information on the internet

BCLS have an additional concern that if their activities run alongside community organisations they may become the “de facto” front of house reception for these organisations.

There will be cost and efficiency benefits arising because of the re-centralisation of services. They will include savings in staff transportation, courier costs, elimination of duplicate support functions, consumables and office equipment, IT network, telephone and data services costs etc. Potentially these savings could realise \$38,000.

5. Recreation and Community Service Activities

The limited physical works allowed by the budget will occur before the end of this financial year. These changes are mainly to develop a link between the old bank building and the service centre. It is intended that recreation programmes will start in July and that leases for community organisations will be done through a contestable process early in the new financial year. A plan is attached as Appendix 1.

Eligibility for community leases will be done on a similar basis as entry to the Betty Campbell Centre and access to the Accommodation Assistance Fund.

6. Conclusion

The development of the Tawa Service Centre as a location for community and recreational purposes offers an opportunity to meet the needs identified in the Tawa Community Facilities Study and for an under-utilised facility to be improved.

BCLS can exit the building and centralise their customer services into the central city without altering services and delivery times for consent services. The planned usage is more sympathetic with local community needs.

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