
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

2007/08 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN: REPORT OF THE ANNUAL PLAN HEARINGS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Purpose of Report

An outline of the submissions made to the Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee for the 2007/08 draft annual plan (DAP) is presented. The minutes of the hearings are also presented for receipt.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note the minutes of the Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee attached at appendix one.*

3. Background

The Council is required to use the special consultative procedure as part of its adoption of the annual plan. As part of that process the Council is required to offer submitters the chance to speak and to hear those that wish to.

Seventy five submitters took up this opportunity and presented their submissions over a four day period. This paper summarises the main issues that were presented.

3.1 Subcommittee Format

This is the second 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 its informality 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 chairs. 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 DAP. The majority spoke to one item. Others spoke to a range of items within the DAP.

In general, the issues raised at the hearings were indicative of the overall tenor of the written submissions. The proposed increase to fees and charges (particularly marina fees), the request for Council assistance for Crossways community house, and proposed Crown investment in Council housing all received significant comment. The full set of written submissions has been distributed and has been made publicly available. All written submissions have been analysed and summarised in the *Consultation Feedback* 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 Crossways community house

Crossways community house in Mt Victoria is owned by St Andrews Presbyterian Church who plan to sell the building by September 2007 to raise capital to earthquake strengthen St Andrews Church on the Terrace.

Crossways is used by a variety of community groups and the Council provides funding for a house coordinator.

Submitters argued that the facility is well utilised by the community, has functioned well since its inception, provides a valuable community service and provides a 'heart' to the suburb of Mt Victoria.

Submitters did not wish to see the site sold and developed into multi-story units and noted that the building was to be assessed for its heritage status later this year.

Submitters predominantly sought a solution to retain Crossways in its current state. Options included: Council contribution of \$350,000 over three years for a community trust (yet to be established) to purchase the building with remaining funds to be raised by the community; and Council funding a commercial lease

on the building until such time as the Trust could purchase the building. One submitter requested the timeframe for Council financial support be extended to five years.

Submitters included individuals, community groups and those that use Crossways community house.

4.2 Fees and charges

The proposed increases to fees and charges received substantial comment through the hearings process. Fee increases relating to marinas were most common, while those relating to pools and libraries were also commented on. Submitters spoke against the fee increases.

Evans Bay Marina

Submitters argued that:

- the increase was too severe and should be at the rate of inflation
- Council needed to demarcate what constituted the marina and what did not. Some of the facilities are used by the public and commercial boat owners i.e. the car park, boat ramp and toilets are used by members of the public, and the breastwork is used by commercial boat owners
- the facilities were basic and could not be compared to other marinas
- there is no evidence of investment to warrant the fee increase as the facilities are generally run down and poorly maintained
- the marina overheads as listed by Council were not all required and considered excessive
- it is illogical for a fee structure based on berth size to be introduced as proposed as there is no additional infrastructure required for larger berths and therefore there is no extra cost incurred by Council
- the process for allocating berths and boat sheds needed to be made transparent.

The chair of the Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee advised all submitters that officers would undertake further work to identify facilities at Evans Bay marina that were also used by the public and that this would be considered by elected members as part of the final annual plan deliberations.

Clyde Quay Boat Harbour

Submitters argued that:

- the increase was too severe and any increase should be at the rate of inflation
- there is no evidence of investment to warrant the fee increase as the facilities are generally run down and poorly maintained
- the Marina could not be compared to other marinas in the area as it had no jetties or finger jetties
- there should be no depreciation costs as the Boat Harbour was gifted to the Council
- the boat harbour is an iconic area and a much loved part of the Wellington landscape and frequently used by members of the public – especially since the upgrade of Oriental Bay beach

- if the boat harbour was to be 100% funded by users that they should have greater control over how the marina was run.

Pools and libraries

While comments on pools and libraries were infrequent, submitters expressed concern that the increase to pool fees would have a negative effect on lower income families and that any increase might see a drop in pool attendance, thereby reducing income.

The establishment of a fee for periodicals/magazines also got mentioned and concern was expressed that these contain a vast wealth of information not always found in books, and that they cannot be renewed and only held for one week. Any fee would result in reduced access, particularly for those on a low income it was argued.

4.3 Crown investment in Council housing

The Council proposal for Crown investment of \$220 million to upgrade Council's housing stock received a considerable amount of favourable comment. Some issues raised by submitters in relation to the proposal include:

- concern that any upgrade would result in a review of rents and that any such increase would have a significant negative effect for those on low and fixed incomes
- requests for rents to be income related were made
- a number of submitters stated that any reconfiguration had to be handled carefully and not result in tenants being made homeless during the reconfiguration period or in a reduction of the total housing units
- comments on the type of configuration required for future housing ranged from those that wanted a continuation of single bed sits to accommodation configured to suit larger families.

Some of the submitters indicated they wished to be involved/consulted in the process going forward.

4.4 Anti-graffiti flying squad

The Council proposal to establish an anti-graffiti flying squad aims to provide a quick graffiti removal service from Council as well as private and commercial property.

While the proposal received largely favourable comment, with a number of submitters offering their time to help address the graffiti problem, a few submitters asked Council to investigate and address the underlying social problems that are the cause of graffiti and tagging. The Consultancy Advocacy Research Trust requested funding allocated to the flying squad be made available to them to extend their existing anti-graffiti programme.

4.5 Funding requests

A number of requests for funding were made at the hearings. They included:

- The Basin Reserve Trust requested funding of \$370,000 to replace the irrigation system and enhance media facilities

- Supporters of Crossways community house requested \$350,00 of funding support from Council over three years to secure Crossways until the community can raise the required funding
- The Centre for Photography requested the continuation of existing funding but noted it will only deliver on a reduced number of shows/exhibitions
- The Film School requested \$40,000 per year (for ten years) for growth and development and training of people in the film industry
- The Aro Valley Community Council requested funding for the development of the Aro Valley Community Centre
- Paula Warren requested \$10,000 to fund a coordinator for a marine bio blitz on Wellington's south coast
- The QE2 Trust requested a fund be established by Council to protect biodiversity on covenanted land
- EnergySmart Ltd requested a \$20,000 contribution from Council for their Healthy homes project
- The Boys and Girls Institute requested that existing funding allocated towards Spinks Cottage be 'rolled' over for two years until the Environment Court gave a final determination on Spinks Cottage
- The Thorndon Society requested \$30,000 for a heritage study to be done in Thorndon.

Requests for funding and officers' recommendations for those requests are detailed in the *prominent issues* report on this agenda.

4.6 Miscellaneous

Many submitters commented on existing activities and work programmes or 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 Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee met over a four day period to receive submissions on the DAP. In keeping with its terms of reference a report consisting of a summary and minutes of those hearings is presented for receipt.

Contact: *Cr Alick Shaw, Chair of the Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee*

Appendix One