

Engagement / Governance

‘Governance’ includes all those roles and responsibilities that support Council decision-making and ensure that Wellingtonians have a meaningful say about the city’s direction.

It includes the election of councillors, running of meetings, and supporting councillors’ decision-making by providing information and advice. It also includes engaging with Maori and stakeholder groups, informing residents, seeking feedback on Council work, and dealing with queries and complaints.

THE OUTCOMES WE’RE SEEKING

Our long-term aims are to make Wellington:

- More inclusive – which means residents will be more involved in determining the future direction of their city and communities
- More actively engaged – (a) by having an open, honest decision-making process that generates confidence and trust (b) by recognising the special position of Maori in the city’s history and reflecting this in current relationships, and (c) by ensuring Wellingtonians can easily get information about the Council and city.

STATE OF THE CITY

Residents feel reasonably well informed, but not actively engaged with Council decision-making.

According to our February 2007 resident survey, 71% of Wellingtonians think Council information is easy to access (through sources such as www.Wellington.govt.nz, our contact centre, and newspapers). The contact centre, website and our annual report have all been consistent winners of national awards in recent years.

While just over half (54%) of residents agree that decisions are made in the city’s best interests, a significant minority (26%) believe they are not. Only 43% believe they understand how we make decisions. And a significant minority (44%) think they have only a small amount of influence or no influence at all over Council decision-making.

Of our two treaty partners, one is very satisfied with their relationship and the other is quite satisfied.

With local elections coming up, raising levels of engagement is an important challenge.

Less than half of Wellington's residents voted at the last local elections in 2004, and the numbers are declining (from 48% in 2001 to 42% in 2004 – this compares with 86% at the 2005 national elections). This is consistent with nationwide trends in local authority elections.

The key challenge we face is to increase participation levels and build trust and confidence in civic decision-making. Over the 2006-09 period we've prioritised improving the transparency and quality of processes for public involvement in civic decision-making, and increasing participation rates in democratic processes.

THREE-YEAR PRIORITIES

For the period 2006-09, we've identified the following three priorities for our governance work. These priorities are important stepping stones towards our long-term outcomes:

- We will improve the transparency and quality of processes for public involvement in civic decision-making.
- We will improve communication with communities.
- We will increase participation rates in democratic processes.

LOOKING FORWARD

A key challenge is to raise participation rates in the 2007 local body elections. We'll also continue to work on ways to improve opportunities for public input and engagement about Council services and the city's future direction.

ENGAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE

Maori engagement (including mana whenua)

We acknowledge the special place of Maori in Wellington's history.

Wellington has a long history of occupation by Maori, and this creates responsibilities for the Council. We want to see the special position of mana whenua (i.e. iwi with customary authority over the area) acknowledged and reflected in the way we make decisions about the city and its resources.

So our governance arrangements include formal opportunities for mana whenua to contribute.

We work with the city's two mana whenua organisations – the Wellington Tenth Trust and Ngati Toa Rangatira – to ensure their views are represented in decisions about the city, and to ensure their contribution to Wellington's heritage is fully and publicly recognised. Our responsibilities to these groups are outlined in memoranda of understanding.

WHAT WE DID

We sought the views of mana whenua organisations on issues facing the city.

We asked for the views of both treaty partners on a multitude of issues including the proposed management plans for Council reserves in the city's northern suburbs and on management of Otari-Wilton's Bush, a proposed District Plan change for Owhiro Bay, and resource consents for the Moa Point Wastewater Treatment Plant and Carey's Gully Sludge Dewatering Plant.

We hosted Waitangi Day commemorations at Waitangi Park, with a festival that included traditional kapa haka performances by Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Nga Mokopuna and Ngawari Hauora, Wellington East Girls College and Rongotai College. Samba, salsa, pipe bands and performances from Congolese musician Sam Manzanza, the African Rhythm Band and the Shenanigans added a world music vibe to the day.

We signed a new memorandum of understanding with Ngati Toa on 6 March 2007 and continue to negotiate terms for a service level agreement.

During the year, the Council waka, Te Raukura, was re-hulled and discussions took place with mana whenua regarding its ongoing management and use.

HOW WE PERFORMED

MANA WHENUA PARTNERSHIP (7.2.1)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	TARGET	COMMENTS
Interviews with both mana whenua partners covering a range of issues relating to the Treaty Partnership. (Source: WCC Planning, Performance and Research)	-	Very satisfied/ quite satisfied	Very satisfied / quite satisfied.	<i>Quite satisfied</i>	From our annual survey with mana whenua representatives we sought 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 in our memorandums of understanding. Overall, feedback indicated they were 'quite satisfied' to 'very satisfied' (measured on a five point scale).

WHAT IT COST

OPERATING EXPENDITURE (\$000)	2007			2006
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
Mana whenua partnerships (7.2.1)				
Expenditure	100	110	10	60
Revenue	-	-	-	-
Net expenditure	100	110	10	60

ENGAGEMENT / GOVERNANCE

Information, consultation and decision-making

We aim to keep residents informed, provide opportunities for input, and make sound decisions in line with community aspirations.

Democratic local decision-making is important for its own sake, because we exist to represent the collective will of the people we serve. It is also important for the benefits it brings, such as higher levels of community engagement and higher confidence in local decision-making.

We aim for a culture of openness, in which residents can get information about the city and how it is run, and feel they can make their views known. We'd like to encourage greater levels of engagement in local decision-making. One example of this is the weekly 'Our Wellington' page in the *DominionPost*. It's a cost effective way of outlining our activities for that week in one easy to access place.

WHAT WE DID

We reviewed the way we go about seeking feedback and involving residents in decision making.

During the year, the Council adopted a new Engagement Policy setting out how we involve people in our decision-making. The policy aims to build public confidence and trust in our decision-making, encourage input from people and groups interested in or affected by our actions, improve the way we interact with communities, and encourage high quality, well informed decisions.

We also prepared and consulted on other policies and bylaw changes, and sought feedback on issues affecting residents. This included:

- reviewing our Footpath Management Policy and Gaming Venues Policy – these were adopted by the Council in March following public input
- seeking public input on our Draft Annual Plan setting out priorities and spending plans for 2007/08 – just under 1000 submissions were received and considered before councillors adopted the Annual Plan for the year
- completing four resident satisfaction surveys to guide our decisions and measure how we are performing
- reviewing our representation arrangements (including ward boundaries and number of councillors) to prepare for the October 2007 local body elections – a summary of this review process is provided in the Governance and Management chapter.

Our 24-hour-a-day Contact Centre and our Service Centre staff answered queries, handled complaints... and won awards.

We expanded the services offered by the Contact Centre, including a new booking service for the 'learn to swim' programmes. The centre has also developed new revenue streams by offering partnerships to manage after hour calls for Hutt City, Walkwise and Transfield.

The quality of the service that is offered was again recognised in the CRM Contact Centre Customer Service Awards 2006, with awards in the city council and online (web/email) customer service categories. One of our customer service representatives shared the individual award for most outstanding customer service representative nationwide across all industries.

We also provide information through a wide variety of media, including newspapers, radio, Council publications, and our award-winning website.

Our website www.Wellington.govt.nz was nominated as one of the world's best government websites in the 11th Annual Webby Awards, a leading international award honouring excellence on the internet. The awards celebrate outstanding internet work and are regarded as the internet Oscars. The awards received a record 8,000 entries from more than 60 countries. Our website was the only non-US website in the government category.

The website also won the best New Zealand plain English category at the inaugural Writemark New Zealand Plain English Awards.

In recent years we've added to the ways that people can use our website to get involved in local affairs. e-Petitions is the latest planned addition. This allows people to easily gain 'signatures' for their ideas online and have these presented to the Council. The service should be available on the website during 2007.

"[The Council website's nomination is] a testament to the skill, ingenuity, and vision of its creators" – Webby Awards executive director David-Michel Davies.

In November 2006, *Wellington: Biography of a City*, by historian Redmer Yska, was published. Commissioned by the Council, the book is a lively account of the city's growth and development from 1839 to the present. The popularity of the book exceeded initial expectations and a second print run was undertaken to meet demand.

"Researching the book opened my eyes to the layers under my feet. We've got the most wonderful stories around us. We just need to open our eyes and start seeing it all." – Redmer Yska, author of *Wellington: Biography of a City*.

The council's annual report once again took national honours.

The 2005/06 report won the supreme award at the 2007 NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants Annual Report Awards – the second year running that the report had taken top honours. Wellington is the only

local authority to have won the supreme award, and the only organisation to have won the award in consecutive years. The report also won the local government category and was commended for its governance section. Judges said the report had substantial content, was clearly written for its target audience, and reported with integrity on issues the city has faced or will face.

HOW WE PERFORMED

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION (7.1.1)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	TARGET	COMMENTS
Residents (%) who are satisfied that the Council consults with them the right amount. (Source: WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey)	52%	56%	58%	55%	Over the last three years we have seen gradual increase in level of resident satisfaction with Council consultation.
CITY GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING (7.2.2)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	TARGET	COMMENTS
1. Residents (%) who are satisfied with the way the Council involves people in decision-making. (Source: WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey)	35%	39%	36%	40%	We have failed to maintain the improvement of previous years with regard to resident satisfaction with involvement in decision-making. Although there is considerable room for improvement this result should be assessed in light of the fact that another 35 percent of residents were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
2. Council and committee agendas (%) that are made available to the public 5 days prior to the meeting (statutory obligations mean that all agendas need to be available to the public at least two working days before the meeting). (Source: WCC Democratic Services)	-	-	93%	75%	We exceeded our targets for making Council and committee agendas available to the public 5 days prior to the meeting. This was a new measure for 2006/07.
CIVIC INFORMATION (7.2.3)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	TARGET	COMMENTS
1. Business transactions carried-out at the Service Centres. (Source: WCC Wellington City Libraries)	144,580	152,267	147,752	155,386	We achieved our target for the Contact Centre, but failed to meet the target for the number of transactions at the Service Centres. The reduction in business transactions at Service Centres can be attributed to on-line transaction options being introduced during the year. We're review the target for future years.
2. Telephone calls (%) answered within 30 seconds at the Contact Centre. (Source: WCC Contact Centre)	76%	76%	80%	80%	

WHAT IT COST

OPERATING EXPENDITURE (\$000)	2007			2006
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
Consultation and communication (7.1.1)				
Expenditure	47	125	78	-
Revenue	(2)	(3)	(1)	-
Net expenditure	45	122	77	-
City governance and decision-making (7.2.2) ¹				
Expenditure	7,696	8,631	935	7,859
Revenue	(337)	(327)	10	(143)
Net expenditure	7,359	8,304	945	7,716
Citizen information (7.2.3)				
Expenditure	5,109	5,149	40	4,827
Revenue	(567)	(509)	58	(314)
Net expenditure	4,542	4,640	98	4,513
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (\$000)				
City governance and decision-making (7.2.2)				
Actual cost	101	126	25	-
Budget to carry forward to 2007/08	-	-	-	-

¹ Expenditure is below budget due to vacancies.