
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

2008/09 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 2008/09 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.

Sixty eight 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 third 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 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 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. New initiatives, fees and charges and the request for Council assistance for Crossways community house 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 Recreation facilities

A large number of the submitters made comment on Council's recreation facilities and noted that they faced significant pressure from users. The focus was particularly on sportsfields and swimming pools.

The majority of those who commented in this area noted that Council's sportsfields faced significant pressure among users groups within sporting codes but also among sporting codes. Many detailed the growth in player numbers, with many clubs increasing the number of teams for various age grades. They noted that higher participation rates were having a negative impact on the condition of the fields as many became overused through training during the week and competitions during weekends.

These submitters supported Council's proposal of establishing an artificial surface on Nairnville Park and often added that they would like to see more fields upgraded to artificial surfaces and that this occur sooner rather than later.

Demand for additional pool space was also commented on. The aquatic clubs, like their terrestrial counterparts, also have growing participation rates at their clubs and the number of teams throughout the age grades who require dedicated pool space for their training needs is growing.

Comments by submitters and any discussion at the hearings on these items was limited to the issue of capacity with the solution restricted to the improvement or construction of additional facilities.

4.2 Social support facilities

A number of submissions commented on this area of the draft plan that can be summarised into two distinct groups:

- *Request for additional facilities:*
Crossways community centre was frequently commented on this year again with the submitters stating that the facility is well utilised by the community, has functioned well since its inception and provides a valuable community service. The Crossways Trust and supporters argued that they have – through fundraising and a loan - the ability to purchase the Crossways building if Council assisted with the purchase by providing a \$250,000 grant.

Funding support to purchase land in Churton Park and ultimately for it to be developed into a new community facility was also raised by the Churton Park Community Association.

Both these requests and officers' response to them are detailed in the *prominent issues* report on this agenda.

- *Improvements to existing facilities/contracts*
A number of submitters also commented on the need for certain facilities to be improved (e.g. Newtown Hall and Newtown Community and Cultural Centre). Comments were also received on the need for community centre staff to be paid at a level commensurate with other council staff. It was argued current contract for services were too low and cost of living increases was eroding staff salaries.

4.3 Wellington's coastal belt and the environment

Evans Bay Marina tenants opposed the proposed fee increases and requested that negotiations be concluded between Council and marina tenants on what areas of the marina should exclusively be paid for by the tenants and what areas required some degree of rates subsidisation (breastwork, toilet and carpark) before fee increases were introduced for 2008/09.

Other areas of comment on the coastal environment include the request for greater erosion control of sand dunes on Wellington's South Coast as well as the upgrade/cleanup of the Cobham drive foreshore area.

Climate change was also commented on by a variety of submitters with good support for Council's current initiatives. There was a desire by many to see greater emphasis placed on this area of Council activity and for it to be made more of an urgent priority.

Odour problems from the Moa Point sewerage plant were also noted by a small number of submitters with requests that Council urgently determine the cause

and rectify the problem. This matter is discussed further in the *prominent issues* report on this agenda.

4.4 Accessibility

A small number of oral submitters also commented on accessibility issues. The importance of keeping pedestrian areas free of sandwich boards and street furniture was reiterated to ensure the visually impaired had the ability to traverse the city in safety. The need for sign language interpreters and captions at Council sponsored events was noted as important, as well as having flashing lights alongside fire alarms in Council housing and other Council owned buildings.

4.5 Funding requests

A significant number of requests for funding support were made at the hearings by submitters– more so than for previous years. These requests, and officers' recommendations to 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: *Deputy Mayor Ian McKinnon - Chair of the Annual Plan Hearings Subcommittee*

Appendix One