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REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Greater Wellington is the promotional
name of the Wellington Regional Council

STATEMENT OF POSITION ON TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME REVIEW

By Cr Glen Evans
Chairman,
Passenger Transport Committee
Greater Wellington Regional Council

1. While the response that follows to the Total Mobility (TM) Scheme Review consultation document has not been before the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC), because of time constraints, it will be reported to the full Council for comment. This response is based not only on the views of the writer, but also that of the Council Chairman and of the GWRC Passenger Transport (PT) Committee when the issue came before it at its meeting on 7th April last. Eight Councillors were present. The Committee received a presentation on the Review from Ms Jan MacKay of the Ministry of Transport. A copy of the minutes of that meeting is attached.
2. The overwhelming response of the PT Committee was of concern that the Ministry of Transport was presenting it with a policy document, for its comment, that would effectively nationalise the delivery and terms of the TM scheme.

TM had been understood to specifically be a voluntary ad hoc Regional Council response to an awkward predicament in the delivery of its transport services. While clearly Regional Council comment is being sought, the nature of the document, and the way the questions are framed, leaves the Regional Council with the conundrum of either rejecting a scheme we pioneered, or accepting it on a basis that we conform with nationally imposed standards, and provide enhanced funding from ratepayers.

3. Currently, the subsidy to the Council for its TM expenditure is 40% of the 50% of the taxi fare which the Council pays. In other words, the Council pays 30% of the total cost of the scheme.

4. The whole issue **of** funding for accessible public land transport, **of** which TM is part, was discussed at a Regional Council Forum convened by the Human Rights Commission in Christchurch on 22 March this year. A copy **of** the minutes **of** that meeting is attached. It will be noted on the first page under “Funding issues” that:

“It was generally agreed that the funding issues which underpin the Inquiry recommendations were a matter **of** key significance given the contingency **of** some major recommendations **to** additional or supplementary funding.”

Under the heading “The Total Mobility scheme (“**TM**”)", the comments under bullet points **4,5, 6,7** and **8** are all of particular relevance.

5. Any enquiry into TM should first start with, and resolve in a satisfactory manner, the issue **of** funding. It is entirely inappropriate that the review should proceed on the details **of** the scheme, before the fundamental issue of funding has been addressed. While dealing with the special needs **of** the disabled in relation to access to transport is a matter which necessarily falls to Regional Councils in an operational context, this should not obscure the fact that it is a human rights issue which requires a **whole of society response**. There is no reason why ratepayers should subsidise these special needs. It is quite inappropriate that a Government agency should propose to impose national standards on a Regional Council voluntary scheme, the **cost** of which is already causing considerable anxiety.
6. Nor does the standardisation of the scheme necessarily represent the best and most economic answer to the problem it is dealing with. There should be incentives to look at whether specialist services of another kind may not be more appropriate and /or more efficient, e.g. special services for **access** to shops or health services which could operate at specified times and **carry** a significant number **of** people.
7. **My** position, and **I** believe that **of** the GWRC, is that the Review should first deal with funding issues, and only when these are satisfactorily resolved, **so** that society as a whole funds **a whole of society** problem, should the present Review proceed. Even then it should **look** at other and more sophisticated responses to the problem. If the current funding regime continues, then the appropriate bodies to be carrying out a Review are the Regional Councils themselves.
8. The comments on details in the Scheme Review which follow are made so as to not seem completely unhelpful, but are entirely subject to and without prejudice **to** the comments **above**.



Cr Glen Evans



greater WELLINGTON
THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Report 05.146

7 April 2005

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Report of the Meeting of the Passenger Transport Committee held in the Wellington Regional Council Chamber, The Regional Council Centre, 142 Wakefield Street, Wellington on Thursday, 7 April 2005 at 10.45am

Matters for Council Decision are shown in bold type and enclosed in a box.
Matters for Information of Council are in italic type.

Present

Councillors Evans (Chairperson), Aitken, Buchanan, Glensor, Greig, Kirton, McDavitt and Wilde

Also Present

Councillor Turver

Officers Present

Messrs Budd, Cross, Darroch, Grace, Rhona Nicol, Karen Richardson and Dr Watson

Public Business

PT 20 **Presentation – Land Transport New Zealand**

Jan MacKay, Land Transport New Zealand gave a presentation on the Review of Total Mobility.

Jan MacKay said that submissions close on 24 April when the submissions would be analysed and presented to the Minister of Transport.

Members expressed reservations about the process and asked that their thoughts be considered by Land Transport New Zealand as the process continued.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

CR T G G Evans
Chairperson

Date

Wellington Regional Council – 2 May 2005

To be moved

That the report of the meeting of the Passenger Transport Committee held 7 April 2005, Items PT17 to PT25 inclusive, be adopted.

Inquiry into Accessible Public Land Transport
Regional Council Forum
Christchurch: Tuesday, 22 March 2005

Programme:

10am	Welcome and introductions
10.15am	Presentation of Inquiry findings and recommendations
11-11.45am	Open discussion of Inquiry recommendations
11.45-12.15	Focus session 1: Regional Council own initiative actions
12.15-12.45	Focus session 2: Legislative changes
1.45-2.15pm	Focus session 3: National standards
2.15-2.45pm	Focus session 4: Total Mobility
2.45-3.15	Focus session 5: Funding issues
3.30-4.00pm	Summary

Objectives:

- To discuss the findings and draft recommendations from the Inquiry.
- To identify any issues that may arise in the implementation of the recommendations as they relate to regional councils.

Participants:

- Human Rights Commission:
Rosslyn Noonan, Judy McGregor, Robyn Hunt, David Peirse, Jessica Ngatai, Terry O'Neill
- Regional Councils:
Renee Smith (Horizons Regional Council), Valda Patton (Horizons Regional Council), Stephen Cairns (Otago Regional Council), Wayne Scott (Otago Regional Council), Bill Rossiter (Northland Regional Council), Nicky Wagner (Environment Canterbury), Jill Atkinson (Environment Canterbury), Anthony Cross (Greater Wellington Regional Council), John Anderson (Greater Wellington Regional Council), Judith Aitken (Greater Wellington Regional Council), Glen Evans (Greater Wellington Regional Council), Liz Lambert (Hawkes Bay Regional Council), Sue Collis (Environment Waikato), Gary Maloney (Environment Bay of Plenty)
- Apologies received from:
Auckland Regional Land Transport Committee, Environment Bay of Plenty, Environment Southland, Gisborne District Council, Taranaki Regional Council

Regional Council feedback

➤ **Funding issues:**

- It was generally agreed that the funding issues which underpin a number of the Inquiry recommendations were a matter of key significance given the contingency of some major recommendations to additional or supplementary funding.
- Debate concerning the utility of the *contestable fund* mechanism (recommendations 5 & 6). It is possible that the 'capped' nature of such funding could prove to be restrictive. Rather, relatively unrestricted potential lay in accessing existing funding mechanisms. Or, that 'segregated' funding models have negative potentials – the primary objective is to identify/ embed 'mainstream' funding opportunities and mechanisms
- For example, the 'Regional Land Transport Priorities' mechanism offers an existing funding source which could, perhaps relatively

easily, be exploited by simply suggesting a new category within the current funding template. Such as – ‘Give effect to the interests of....’

- Noted, that earlier funding initiatives such as ‘Kick Start’ (not now available) provided Regional Councils (“RC’s”) with the necessary flexibility to develop and trial transport initiatives
- It is likely that additional leverage around funding issues could be gained by emphasising the synergies between 1. disability and 2. an aging population.
- The central challenge: To ensure that 1. ‘access’ and 2. ‘mobility’ are both properly quantified *and* are afforded adequate status/ weighting
- Agreed, that:
Recommendation 5 be amended to include (or similar) ‘remote and significantly disadvantaged’
- Noted: That a priority task is to identify an appropriate and effective funding mechanism – and to address the increasing pressure being placed upon RC’s to fund disability-related services such as TM from rates – services which have traditionally been construed as the responsibility of central government. (Suggestion: 1. review all relevant Acts 2. ensure access and mobility references/ substance/ weighting)

➤ Research issues:

- RC’s require robust, contemporary and coordinated research which can 1. be applied to current decision-making and 2. feed into, and inform, RC planning cycles
- Noted: That there is a relatively large amount of current research available which could be applied to the Transport Inquiry
- Noted: The utility of the research available per the Waikato PHO

➤ The Ministry of Transport (“MoT”) (general role and, specifically, re National Standards)

- Careful consideration needs to be made about any recommendation which attributes a policy-making role to the MoT on the basis that 1. unrealistic or onerous timelines may be embedded in such policy and 2. the affordability of policy is an area of on-going concern for RC’s.
- Suggested recommendation amendment: That the MoT be recommended as the ‘lead *coordinating* agency to develop, implement and monitor the establishment of

➤ Minimum Standards:

- RC’s need a mechanism to ensure the enforcement of minimum standards.
- While the Transport Services Licensing Act (“TSLA”) currently provides for not registering a service which would have a materially detrimental effect on an existing service, the TSLA requires strengthening to allow for:
(1) Non-registration on the basis that a minimum standard has not been met, and
(2) Capacity to deregister currently licensed operators.

➤ National Standards:

- (See, above, suggested amendment to recommendation 2 in relation to the MoT)
- Here, emphasis upon national standards relating to timetabling, design elements etc

- Noted: A particular area of concern is the provision of WAT by taxi providers
 - Agreed: To retain the current emphasis upon 'National Standards' (rather than the more vulnerable 'Guidelines')
 - (See reference to National standards in Rural Public Transport section)
 - Noted: That national standards need not be constricting – it is possible to design appropriately national standards which embed necessary flexibility
- Rural public transport:
- Agreed: Rural transport services are an area of particular difficulty which requires further discussion among RC's and central Government/ agencies
 - For instance, the exploration with Ministry of Education ("MoE") of use of MoE school fleet for broader (out of school hours) rural transport requirements
 - Noted: particular areas of concern exist in the rural sector regarding national standards (issues which may also apply to small provincial towns)
 - (See also reference to volunteer driver licensing issue)
- 'Disability':
- Agreed: That the Final Report/ Recommendations should define disability as broadly as possible.
- The 'whole of Government' approach:
- Agreed: Ensuring a whole of government approach is an ongoing challenge
- District and local councils:
- Noted: Political imperative to implement 'high visibility' transport initiatives/ improvements
 - Another factor: The structures utilised by 'Works Departments' to prioritise their work – priorities commonly compromise disability-related tasks
 - However, district and local councils are still accountable – although the gap between accountability and practice needs to be explored and a suitable mechanism identified to progress key issues
- Driver training:
- Agreed: That systematic implementation of driver training is a crucial 'lever' and would deliver almost immediate benefits.
 - Noted: That while there were complex reasons while the goal of systematic driver training had not yet been reached the training implementation imperative could not be ignored – noting also that driver training would likely provide an array of ancillary provider and consumer service benefits.
 - Tender and/or contractual mechanisms provide a key opportunity to articulate, and regulate, clear expectations around 1. driver/ staff training and 2. customer service protocols (including disability awareness/ service elements).

- Noted: That the Taxi Federation's training resource is a current exemplar of best practice (while also noting that a very low proportion of taxi drivers had so far engaged with this training)
- Voluntary driver licensing issues:
 - Agreed: A highly significant current issue which must be addressed given that a number of existing volunteer driver-dependant services are likely to be compromised by changes to driver licensing regulations.
- An achievable mechanism for ensuring input from disabled people in transport planning:
 - Agreed: That this would be most effectively achieved through the existing (Health, x21) Disability Service Advisory Committee mechanism.
- Land Transport New Zealand:
 - Recommended: Further contact between the HRC and CEO Wayne Donnelly
- The Total Mobility scheme ("TM"):
 - Agreed: While there is a general perception that TM should be generally nationally available to all potential users, TM delivery across the country is in fact inconsistent
 - National Guidelines which describe 'fair consistency' are required.
 - Also required: a better appreciation of where consumers stand in relation to TM
 - Currently, the delivery of the TM service involves very significant costs for RC's – and for RC's TM is often an area of intense operational pressure
 - RC perception/ experience: That RC's are obliged to provide the TM service but without any additional central government funding.
 - Dilemma: RC's reluctant to advertise TM because increased patronage would inevitably attract costs to ratepayers (and, commonly, the 'Transport' elements of rates is already approaching its maximum percentage)
 - The affordability of TM is an ongoing issue but, generally, the current 50:50 (provider/ consumer) split is endorsed. Affordability must be measured against the possible potential to abuse the TM service (if consumer costs are lower than 50%)
 - RC perception that ratepayer subsidisation of TM amounts to a form of indirect income supplement for TM consumers – and that this is, more properly, a central government role.
 - The current MoT review of TM (the latest in several TM reviews) incorporates some human rights elements. Some connections should be established between the MoT review and the HRC Transport Inquiry.
 - Noted: That even small improvements to the consistency and accessibility of the public transport fleets would quickly result in a noticeable decline in requests for TM services
 - Agreed: Amendments required for:
 - (1) Recommendation 3b
 - (2) Recommendation 3c (also under internal HRC discussion)

NB: Further discussion required regarding Wellington rail issues

Total Mobility Scheme Review

SUBMISSION BOOKLET

March 2005

Submissions close in Wellington, at 5pm on Friday 29 April 2005

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been developed to guide those individuals and organisations wishing to make a written submission on the *Total Mobility Scheme Review - Consultation Document*, a draft proposal to improve the Scheme in New Zealand.

The submission booklet follows the structure of the *Total Mobility Scheme Review - Consultation Document*. We suggest you read the consultation document before completing the submission booklet - you may need to refer back to the consultation document when completing the booklet.

Each section of the submission booklet is designed to include your comments and suggestions on any issues regarding the proposed improvements as well as positive feedback.

Please answer as many questions as you can. You are also welcome to comment on any other issues relevant to the *Total Mobility Scheme Review - Consultation Document*, or to use another format to make a submission.

The Ministry of Transport is subject to the *Official Information Act 1982*, which means your submission may be available to members of the public if they make a request under the Act. You can be assured that any personal information included in your submission would be withheld from public scrutiny.

Instructions for completion

Options for completing this submission booklet

Write your responses to the questions in the electronic version of the submission booklet and send the completed hard copy to the Ministry of Transport by post or fax, or email an electronic version to us:

POST:

Freepost 192064
Total Mobility Scheme
Ministry of Transport
PO Box 3175
Wellington

FAX:

Fax the completed submission booklet to: **04 498 0678**

EMAIL:

Save this submission booklet to your computer, write your responses, save again and email the completed submission booklet to:

totalmobility@transport.govt.nz

If you have any questions about how to complete this submission booklet or the submission process, please telephone **Michelle Barnes** on **04 498 0612** or email your questions to **totalmobility@transport.govt.nz**

For more copies

For more copies of *Total Mobility Scheme Review - Consultation Document* or this submission booklet, please:

- Telephone **Michelle Barnes** on **04 498 0612**
- email **totalmobility@transport.govt.nz**, or
- download copies from **www.transport.govt.nz** and save them to your computer.

The submission closing date is Friday 29 April 2005.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

This submission was made by:

Name: **Cr Glen Evans**

Postal address: **PO Box 11646**

Organisation (if applicable): **Greater Wellington Regional Council**

Role/position (if applicable): **Chairperson, Passenger Transport Committee**

Questions

SCHEME PURPOSE

1. Do you agree with the possible purpose statement? –Yes or No

Yes

2. Why, or why not?

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) is supportive of the proposed statement as it incorporates the changes to national policy e.g. New Zealand Disability Strategy and the New Zealand Land Transport Strategy.

However GWRC has concern over two areas of the proposed statement:

- Eligibility – for the scheme to be sustainable, eligibility must be clearly defined for user, agencies and councils.
- Appropriate (transport) – if alternatives to the current taxi service operators are going to be considered, it is essential that a clear definition of what is appropriate must be provided. The policy framework must also provide adequate subsidy to these potential non-fare providers of transport services e.g. community route services, dial-a-service, trust services, community shopper services

3. Do you have any other comments?

4. Do you agree with the possible eligibility criteria for the Total Mobility Scheme? – Yes or No

Yes

5. Why, or why not?

The eligibility criteria broadens the scope of the scheme and opens it to all those who are transport disadvantaged as stated in the Land Transport Management Act 2003. As the scheme is subsequently extended and the user numbers increase, GWRC has concerns over funding availability to manage these additional costs.

Clear definitions of the eligibility criteria must be provided to ensure national consistency. For example:

Riding securely: finding a secure position – this can be a common complaint among regular public transport users as a result of possible overcrowding

Identify where to get off – eligibility should not be granted when there is a lack of destination familiarity.

It is essential that travel training is given to individuals before eligibility is granted e.g. use of pictorial travel cards could help with communication with bus/train staff, explanation on timetables and how to obtain travel information can also be provided.

It is also not stated that someone can be eligible if only one of the criteria is met or all criteria must be met. GWRC would recommend that there are key criteria that all users must meet.

- 6. Should people living in areas that do not have bus, train or ferry services be eligible for the Total Mobility Scheme? For instance, should people who live in rural areas be able to use the Scheme when they visit urban areas where it operates – Yes or No**

Yes

- 7. Why, or why not?**

Those meeting the eligibility criteria should be able to access the Total Mobility scheme wherever it operates. However it must be made clear that while some one is eligible (to use the scheme) this will not ensure door-to-door transport.

Door to door transport will have an impact on funding and rural area ratepayers will have to accept that, for the scheme to be made available to these individuals, a local share of costs will be expected.

- 8. Should people with non-accident related short-term impairments be able to use the Total Mobility Scheme (eg people recovering from surgery or stroke)? – Yes or No**

Yes, if there is no other realistic and affordable alternative.

- 9. Why, or why not?**

There is a need to clarify the definition of short term impairment and implied additional administration requirements for this scheme e.g. these people will have immediate needs but for whom administration processing could not deliver vouchers immediately.

Time to assess these individuals eligibility appropriately will be needed and assessors will need to determine time-scales for individuals to be on the scheme or when re-assessment is required.

Administration issues with temporary registrations:

- (Sensible) time period to be registered on scheme

- re-assessing issues, additional workload for assessors
- ease of removal from scheme
- User would have to define travel pattern in order to calculate any voucher requirement for the limited time they are on the scheme.

The cost impact of administrating this area of the scheme, plus the additional travel cost of the potentially large number of users, would require additional funding.

ELIGIBILITY

10. Should people living in residential care settings be able to use the Total Mobility Scheme? – Yes or No

Yes

11. Why, or why not?

People in care have individual travel needs and many rest homes only provide group travel schemes. Residential care at present only takes care of limited medical care (under current DHB Health Contract). Greater Wellington Regional Council subsidise other social needs of the individual – see attached sheet.

12. Should children be able to use the Total Mobility Scheme (for travel other than trips paid for by the Ministry of Education)? – Yes or No

Yes, if they are otherwise able to travel independently.

13. Why, or why not?

This would also imply an age issue. A baby should not be registered. The GWRC definition is more flexible – the capacity for independent travel should not be the only pre-requisite e.g. very young children with heavy equipment needs, severe emotional disturbance, or disability issues which would limit the ability of the caregiver to transport the child.

Access to the Total Mobility scheme should only be used for normal socialising as funding for education needs are provided by other agencies e.g. Ministry of Transport.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Education uses Total Mobility operators to contract service for school runs, which removes the vans from general access for other users. Thus Greater Wellington subsidise this service as they have paid for installation of hoist equipment.

- 14. Should people who have an impairment (that prevents them from using buses, trains or ferries some of the time) be able to use the Total Mobility Scheme for the other times? (For example, a person who can travel independently when it is daylight but, due to vision impairment, cannot travel at night could be eligible to use the Scheme at night. and a person who requires low step buses could be eligible if those buses are not in service.) – Yes or No**

Yes

- 15. Why, or why not?**

There are logistical problems in how Greater Wellington Regional Council monitor and limit the use of the scheme. Use of TM may be self limiting as the scheme is more expensive for the user than public transport. Use of the scheme would need to be very clearly defined and worked through before such items as financial implications were implemented.

Clear and sensitive assessment decisions would need to be made when considering clients for part-time membership of the scheme. We have had claimants wanting access to the scheme because there were no public transport services available to them during the weekend period. Membership should be based on lack of mobility based on physical or mental impairment rather than a lack of mobility because of a limited transport service.

- 16. Should a handbook for assisting assessors interpret the eligibility criteria be developed? – Yes or No**

Yes

- 17. Why, or why not?**

Clear guidance is essential to ensure consistency in interpretation and implementation. The handbook should be developed by the Ministry of Transport and be reviewed on a regular basis with input from a working group of agencies, councils and assessors.

Centralised training of assessors should be considered to ensure national consistency.

18. From the five groups listed below, which group do you think would benefit most from the development of a nationally consistent approach?

- **People living in areas without bus, train or ferry services**
- **People with impairments who are able to use buses, trains or ferry services some, but not all of the time**
- **People with non-accident related short-term impairments**
- **Children who could otherwise reasonably be expected to travel independently**
- **Eligible people who live in residential care settings**

All.

19. Do you have any other comments?

See below key issues which Greater Wellington Regional Council see as issues for groups to be included in the scheme.

Group 1 - Should have access in centres only where scheme actually operates.

Group 2 - Provide clear definition of which users are eligible and when they can use this scheme

Group 3 - Provided no other scheme is available to them and the scheme is only available for a limited time.

Group 5 - Provided caregiver assistance and management is available e.g. Alzheimer's

Due to budgetary constraints it may not be feasible for all groups to have access to the scheme.

ENTITLEMENT

Fare Subsidy

20. Should the fare subsidy for trips under the Total Mobility Scheme be standardised at 50 percent throughout New Zealand? – Yes or No

Yes

21. Why, or why not?

- This is consistent with GWRC current practice
- A high proportion of users are on a benefit and transport still remains a costly item (luxury item).
- Expensive for high users e.g. workers plus additional cost if travelling in a hoist van where a typical mark up is \$10 call out charge before actual fare is charged (must ensure that users are aware of this, some taxi firms have this as a hidden charge).

22. Do you have any other comments?

ENTITLEMENT

Maximum and Minimum Fares

23. Should there be a nationally consistent method for deciding maximum subsidised fares for the Total Mobility Scheme? – Yes or

No

Yes

24. Do you have any suggestions about what a consistent method could be?

This should ensure users have consistent treatment across the country ie any distance calculation would unfairly compromise Auckland however some sort of distance (and registered fare combination) may be suitable as registered with LTSA. Kilometre rate is not standard within a region or taxi companies and these would need to be constantly reviewed as fares change frequently.

25. Should there be a minimum subsidised fare for the Total Mobility Scheme? – Yes or No

No

26. Why, or why not?

A minimum standardised fare would be unfair to users however this may be an issue in taxi companies as general small fares over short distance may not be viable.

Some taxi operators (within the Wellington Region) charge a hoist van minimum fare. Should hoist vans be charged at a higher subsidy rate for users or should we pay the standing charge and user pays 50% of travel cost.

27. Do you have any other comments?

ENTITLEMENT

Number of Trips

28. Should there be a nationally consistent method for deciding the number of vouchers allocated to each person? – Yes or No

No.

29. Do you have any suggestions about what a consistent method could be?

GWRC does not control voucher use. Generally 25 vouchers are handed out every three weeks but, if a user requests more, there is no limit and most users are happy with 25 vouchers. Higher users tend to be full time workers or high medical users and rest home visitors (spouse). As the cost to the user is relatively expensive GWRC find use of the scheme is self-governing.

30. Should there be a restriction on the purpose of the trip? – Yes or No

No.

31. Why, or why not?

The only restrictions that should be applied are when the purpose of the trip could be eligible for funding from other agencies e.g. residential care should fund access to health providers and employers pay for work related travel.

32. Do you have any other comments?

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

33. Should a contribution towards the costs of assessments be provided? – Yes or No

Yes.

34. Why, or why not?

GWRC could have a contract with assessors which specified competencies and set a certain level of training, bearing in mind that assessors need to have a direct relationship with the Total Mobility Co-ordinator.

35. Should assessors be required to attend regular training? – Yes or No

Yes.

36. Why, or why not?

Regular training is essential in order to maintain consistency especially around how eligibility is defined. Assessors also need to have a good understanding of the local public transport network to educate users that an accessible and cheaper mode of transport maybe available to them.

37. Should potential users of the Scheme have to pay for assessments? – Yes or No

No.

38. Why, or why not?

Although repetitive requests for assessments (by the user) should incur some cost to user. Initial assessment and any follow up assessment, (as required by GWRC), would be funded by GWRC e.g. auditing process of monitoring user eligibility.

39. Should potential users of the Scheme have to join an assessment agency? – Yes or No

No.

40. Why, or why not?

GWRC do not see a need for a potential user to join an agency in relation to the scheme. However GWRC find it is useful for administration purposes (if they are a member of an agency) as there is a third party who has close relationship with user. Core users also tend to prefer this e.g. Parkinsonism, MS, Stroke, Blind Foundation etc.

At present GWRC refer individuals to specialist agencies for assessment or agree to assess these directly if an individual requires this service.

41. Do you have any other comments?

Once the eligibility criteria are widened then assessment becomes a large issue. Ideally GWRC would prefer a small number of competent full time assessors who are under contract to the Council.

Assessors must have a good knowledge of other local transport opportunities e.g. routes that the user can access. The personal safety of assessors may become an issue especially around home base assessments; note – psychiatric assessment needs to be carried out by mental health clinics or other appropriately qualified service providers

ADMINISTRATION

42. Should an administration system be developed that could be used by all local authorities? – Yes or No

No.

A national system may be possible however larger centres have differing administration requirements and user numbers than smaller regions so a 'one size fits all' approach may not be appropriate.

Currently the scheme is highly labour intensive so a move to electronic card would reduce administration time.

National Co-ordinators need to put a regional forum in place while Regional Authorities need to assist with funding which would allow staff to meet regularly. Regions also need to adopt common practices and ensure consistency is managed. Liaison around these issues should include a LTNZ/MOT representative to ensure policy framework is being managed appropriately.

National Users Guidelines need to have a higher profile for users.

43. Should the Total Mobility Scheme be publicised – Yes or No?

Yes, there is clearly a significant need to extend the historically low profile of the Total Mobility Scheme.

44. If yes, how?

Publicity would be a positive thing but only after eligibility, additional funding, administration and assessment procedures are in place. Clear guidance must be included in any such publicity.

With a large advertising campaign there is a risk that GWRC could be overwhelmed with enquiries while the costs of any such campaign could

be too great for the local ratepayer. A targeted incremental publicity plan would be more manageable if supported by additional funding.

45. Do you have any other comments?

TRANSPORT OPERATORS

46. Should there be guidelines for contracts between Local Authorities and Total Mobility Scheme taxi operators? – Yes or No

Yes.

47. Why, or why not?

It is essential to develop good working relationships with taxi operators and having contractual guidelines will aid this.

These could include

- Requirements for training drivers
- Auditable service delivery aspects
- Taxi companies must comply with a quality pre-qualification programme before contracting (would provide measure of protection and quality for users)
- Ensure that there are enough taxis to provide service in area, include a percentage of trained drivers, electronic ticketing options and hoist vans.

48. Should wheelchair accessible taxi services be improved? – Yes or

No

Yes.

49. Do you have any other comments?

There is a definite need to expand the service (ie number of vans while maintaining the current quality of service (operators/driver).

To be commercially viable additional subsidy should be provided for hoist vans and for loading times e.g. someone with arthritis using a normal taxi may take additional time. This may include full funding call out charges and loading times.

Market viability has not been acknowledged. School contracts are essential for taxi companies to continue to provide services as these contracts provide a secure income basis for drivers. GWRC notes this limits service availability to Total Mobility users during peak service times.

Users often demand that hoist vans are available outside of normal work hours (when community vans/retirement vans are not available). These 'off peak hours' are not commercially viable for the taxi companies as they may only be called out once an hour. (This is a particular problem in the Kapiti area).

It is also difficult to find suitable hoist van drivers as certain attributes are essential to provide this service e.g. typical attributes - patience, compassion, respect (dignity), friendly, fun, empathetic and physically capable. Such a wide range of requirements can limit the availability of a sufficient number of van drivers in an area even if subsidy for hoist installation is available

Safety is also an issue as hoists do not currently require a Certificate of Fitness so there is no assurance that the hoists are being maintained. The cost of providing this service (by the taxi companies) is already high and this could discourage the funding of new hoist vans.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES?

50. From the six key, as identified for possible change in the consultation document, what area do you think is the top priority for improvement?

- **Purpose**
- **Eligibility**
- **Entitlement**
- **Assessment services**
- **Administration**
- **Transport Operators**

Eligibility

51. Why?

GWRC is finding it increasingly difficult to establish eligibility under the current scheme especially with an aging population and shift of costs from education and medicare to total mobility.

Clear guidelines and well defined scope of system is urgently required.

ENDS