



# Draft Terms of Reference for community engagement review

Draft

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## 1. Background

At the end of last year, Councillors indicated that they wanted a review of Greater Wellington's work programmes that involved the community. There was a view that, as our "community engagement" programmes had been set up within different divisions, at different times and for different purposes, they were possibly not as effective as they could be. Concern was expressed about staff working in silos, duplication of effort, inconsistent approaches, confused outcomes and programme gaps. There was also a feeling that we could be more innovative, especially in the way in which we consult on statutory documents.

As the combined expenditure on these programmes is not insignificant, Councillors want to be confident that Greater Wellington's community engagement programmes are integrated, cost effective and achieving agreed outcomes.

Further, "community engagement" is a cornerstone of sustainability and *a sustainable region* is the vision of Greater Wellington's Proposed Long-term Council Community Plan 2006-16 (LTCCP). Indeed, one of the themes that Councillors developed to prepare the LTCCP was "working **with** and **for** the community". The LTCCP states that "sustainability requires shared effort and effective working partnerships" because "we cannot do it alone".

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the review is to develop a strategic direction and programme for Greater Wellington to engage effectively with the community.

## 3. Scope

Greater Wellington has a broad range of community engagement programmes in place, ranging from general communications to education, marketing and community activities.

The programmes can be categorised as follows. The categories are not mutually exclusive.

- **Information provision – accountability** (e.g., media releases, website). We provide information because we are accountable to our ratepayers. The community has a right to know what Greater Wellington is doing.
- **Information provision – seeking a response** (e.g., windfarm proposal). We provide information to the community because we want feedback to assist with our decision-making.
- **Raising awareness of GW** (e.g., promotions, Elements). We tell people who we are and what we do in order to gain support and to assist people to utilise fully our services.

- **Information provision – enabling** (e.g., *Metlink* public transport information, pest plant and animal information material, regional parks marketing). We provide the information to assist the community to use our services or to take certain actions.
- **Statutory requirement** (e.g., LTCCP, Regional Policy Statement, regional plans, management plans). Legislation requires us to consult with the community, sometimes using a prescribed approach. There is, however, generally some flexibility in the nature and extent of community engagement under this category.
- **Increasing resource base** (e.g., regional parks volunteers programme, *Take Care*). We work with the community to achieve common objectives, generally environmental restoration. This also helps to build relationships and foster feelings of collective ownership.
- **Changing behaviour** (e.g. *Be the Difference*, *Take Action*, *Take Charge*, *Metlink* public transport promotion, water demand management programmes, regional outdoors programme). We want to raise people’s awareness of issues and change or modify their behaviour so that we can achieve certain outcomes.

#### 4. **Background to current programmes**

Greater Wellington’s community engagement programmes have evolved as a considered response by Councils as to how we can communicate with the public and other organisations.

When the Wellington Regional Council was first formed, communications/education/promotion were very much in the traditional mode of press releases and publications. There were attempts to be “less dry”, for example, in the roll outs of our long-term planning documents, but there wasn’t an overall strategic approach to communications.

Changes came about for a variety of reasons. First, the Regional Policy Statement and regional plans, under the Resource Management Act 1991, were completed and the environment area moved “from planning to doing” through the Environment Education Strategy (*A Better Environment: an Education and Communication Strategy*) in 1999. This strategy specified the *Take Action*, *Take Care* and *Take Charge* programmes. There was a strong feeling that we would achieve better environmental outcomes if we worked with the community through education and involvement, rather than relying on regulation.

Secondly, in the late 1990s, the Council was beginning to become interested in the notion of sustainability. In its ten year plan, 2000-2010, it recognised that the only feasible way of achieving a sustainable region was to involve the community in its work. Staff focused on the concept of “community connections” and began changing their whole approach to work so that the community was included.

Thirdly, at around the same time, the concept of marketing achieved some credibility. Previously marketing had been considered the realm of private enterprise, but the benefits of marketing our regional parks, transport services, for example, were now apparent. The regional council began to employ marketing specialists –something that was previously an anathema.

Lastly, the regional council had struggled with developing a strategic approach to communications. However, in 2003, a communications strategy was prepared – for a three year period. This strategy included brand changes, divisional communications and a strategic communications programme. Perhaps the most radical inclusion in that strategy was the introduction of social marketing. A programme *Be the Difference* was introduced which was designed to bring about some behavioural change within our communities. The end of this strategy in 2006 was one of the drivers of the review of our community engagement programmes.

## 5. Approach

### 5.1 Identify key result areas

Identify the key result areas (KRAs) for Greater Wellington's community engagement activities. These KRAs will be very important as they will be integral to the strategic direction of our programmes. An example of such a KRA is "*The community will be informed about, and given an opportunity to participate in, all Council's significant decision-making which may have an impact on rates*". (This is already a target in our proposed LTCCP).

### 5.2 Access current programmes

All current community engagement areas will be assessed against the key result areas. Their effectiveness in achieving the KRAs will be gauged. Other criteria that will be used in assessing the effectiveness of current programmes will be:

- **Statutory or non- statutory** – is it something we have to do or do we have a choice about what we are doing and/or how we are doing it?
- **Effectiveness in reaching target audience**– are we reaching the number and type of people we want?
- **Cost** – is it cost effective?
- **Demand management** – are we having a positive effect on another area of our work?
- **Cost avoidance** – will it assist in reducing future costs?
- **Relationship with work programmes of other organisations** – are we helping other organisations achieve their desired outcomes?
- **Duplication** – are we duplicating work, internally and externally?

### **5.3 Identify shortcomings in current programmes**

The assessment in 5.2 will enable shortcomings in current programmes to be identified. It may be, for example, that a programme is achieving a KRA, but at an unacceptably high cost. Alternatively, we may be falling short of achieving a KRA because we are not devoting adequate resources to the programme.

The assessment will identify these issues and enable judgements to be made about the value of our current work programmes. It will also identify areas where there are gaps and where we are not effective in achieving a KRA, and thus assist in shaping a future programme. It will allow trade-offs, to be made if necessary.

### **5.4 Recommend future approach**

A future approach for Greater Wellington's community engagement programmes will be developed.

## **6. Output**

It is envisaged that a Community Engagement Strategy will be prepared bringing together all Council's community engagement programmes under one umbrella. The decision on such a strategy should be taken when the extent and nature of the "problem" is identified. It may be that existing strategies are confirmed or amended.

## **7. Management**

Regular workshops will be held with the Sub-Committee and all work will be reported to the Sub-Committee for decision-making.

The review will be undertaken by a Working Group comprising staff members from Parks & Forests, Environment Education, Communications, Transport and Secretariat. It will be convened by the Divisional Manager, Corporate and Strategy.

This Group will report regularly to the Executive Management Team and undertake joint workshops with that team.

## **8. Timeframe**

The review will be carried out between March – May 2006. Interim dates have yet to be arranged but the review will be reported to the Policy, Strategy and Finance Committee on 1 June 2006. This will allow any amendments to be made to the LTCCP 2006-16.