



Report 07.521
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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee
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Regional Policy Statement review timetable

1. Purpose

To outline changes to the timetable for releasing a proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

After a series of workshops with councillors and appointed members throughout April and May, a set of draft provisions (issues, objectives, policies and methods) for inclusion in the next RPS were agreed upon as being ready for distribution to all key stakeholders. On 8 June 2007, Greater Wellington released the draft provisions noting that comment was sought up to 13 July 2007.

Full copies of the draft provisions were sent to all chief executives, mayors and senior policy staff at the region's city and district councils, along with key stakeholders. A newsletter summarising the content, including how to request or view full copies of the provisions, was also sent to all city and district councillors, council staff, stakeholders involved in the development of the provisions, and a wide range of interested parties. A press release and an article in Elements (delivered to all households) also advertised the availability of both the Newsletter and the provisions, and that the Council was seeking comments.

During the consultation period Councillors Chris Turver and Sally Baber and staff (myself, Nigel Corry and/or Nicola Shorten) visited each city and district council. We provided an overview of the draft provisions and their likely effect, and answered questions.

4. Discussion

While the ‘formal’ consultation period closed on 13 July, it became apparent when visiting each city and district council that a number needed further time to respond. As key stakeholders in the review process, it was appropriate that additional time was made available and this was communicated to all councils and others who contacted us requesting further time.

At the time of writing this report, Greater Wellington is still receiving comments from a variety of parties, and a few key submissions have yet to arrive. This includes formal submissions from Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Carterton District Council and the Department of Conservation.

Accepting formal submissions had yet to be received from some parties; several key messages have emerged through consultation to date, either formally or informally. These have included requests to:

- Provide an assessment of the costs of compliance for city and district councils
- Clarify that Greater Wellington will take a leadership role in research and investigation where issues are of regional significance
- Carry out wider community consultation; and, most significantly
- Prepare and consult on a fully integrated draft RPS.

Specifically, Kapiti Coast District Council and the draft comments from Porirua City Council and Hutt City Council request that a proposed RPS **not be** released in October. They state that releasing a proposed document at that time is not appropriate given the themes above and the perceived speed of the process to date. There is also concern about the statutory weight that would need to be given to a proposed RPS in October (i.e. it would need to be considered when changing plans, processing resource consents or designations when proposed).

Staff believe that there is a need, where appropriate, to address or respond to the key messages and concerns. In the end this will only strengthen the next RPS and minimise litigation on issues that can be resolved prior to releasing a proposed document. It is also noted that there is no risk to delaying, in a statutory sense, and that while it is disappointing that many comments have been received late, there is significant benefit in ensuring that the regions city and district councils continue to be engaged.

The current timetable of recommending changes in time for a workshop on 6 September, then completing the proposed document for consideration at the next Policy Finance and Strategy Committee meeting on 27 September is now very unrealistic.

For the reasons outlined in this report, it is recommended that staff work towards preparing a draft RPS ready for wider public consultation in February 2008. This will allow time for any new Councillors to be briefed about the process and content as well as ensuring the release of a robust fully integrated document. A recommended revised timeline for the review of the RPS is outlined below.

September to November 2007: Continue to work with territorial authorities and other stakeholders to address issues of concern raised in consultation to date; noting Greater Wellington is yet to receive formal feedback from a number of key stakeholders.

December 2007 and January 2008: Hold workshop(s) with Greater Wellington councillors and appointed members to highlight changes to the draft RPS, taking into account feedback from territorial authorities and other stakeholders, and present an integrated draft RPS.

Mid February 2008: Release of a *draft* RPS for consultation.

June/July 2008: Formal adoption of a *proposed* RPS.

5. Communication

The matters in this report will be communicated to all city and district councils in the region, key stakeholders and other interested parties.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee recommends that Council:

1. *Receives the report; and*
2. *Notes the content.*

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