



Report 07.433  
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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee  
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Committee

## **Proposal to establish a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group**

### **1. Purpose**

To raise the possible establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group.

### **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**

In April this year Cr McDavitt presented the transport aspects of our Proposed Annual Plan to a public meeting held at Wellington City Council. One key matter raised at that meeting was the extent to which Greater Wellington was planning for the needs of the disabled community. A specific example was whether any real time public transport information system established would provide access for visually impaired persons.

Following the meeting I had discussions with the community members who raised the issues and undertook to meet with them at a later date to advance the discussions. This latter meeting took place in early May and was attended by myself and council officers from transport and parks. We met with the co-chairs of the Wellington Disability Reference Group and a Wellington City Council advisor.

### **4. Relevance to Greater Wellington activities**

At our May meeting we identified five areas where Greater Wellington activities had direct relevance to the disabled community. These were:

1. Regional parks

2. Transport – both public transport and strategic planning and policy
3. Regional components of urban design and the Regional Policy Statement
4. Consultation and engagement with the community
5. Access to Greater Wellington buildings

## **5. Disability Reference Group**

We discussed options for establishing a mechanism for input from the disabled community that would be region-wide, cover the range of disabilities, and cover all aspects of council activity.

Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua have existing disability reference groups. The Wellington Group co-chairs agreed to consider how a group might be formed on a region-wide basis. For example, should it be a stand-alone group or comprise representatives of existing local groups?

**Attachment 1** is the proposal that has been prepared as a result of the consideration of the Wellington group. It recommends the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group with members appointed from local networks that are currently in place. In addition, the proposal recommends the establishment of a Disability Advisor position within Greater Wellington.

## **6. Further consideration**

The establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group would provide a number of benefits for the Council. In the public transport area it would provide a basis for discussion on accessibility issues relating to rolling stock and infrastructure. However, such a group would need to be engaged across a whole suite of council activities.

Given the potential impacts of how the Council operates plus potential resourcing requirements, I recommend that the matter be referred to the Chief Executive for further consideration and reporting back to the Council.

The attached proposal is only a starting point for this consideration. For example, it proposes a link with the Disability communities in Porirua and the Hutt Valley, but does not mention Kapiti or the Wairarapa. I am sure that Council would want to be assured that any proposal would encompass the full Greater Wellington region.

## **7. Communication**

The Wellington Disability Reference Group will be sent a copy of this report and the resolutions of the Committee.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee recommends that Council ask the Chief Executive to consider the establishment of a Greater Wellington Disability Reference Group and to report back to the Council.*

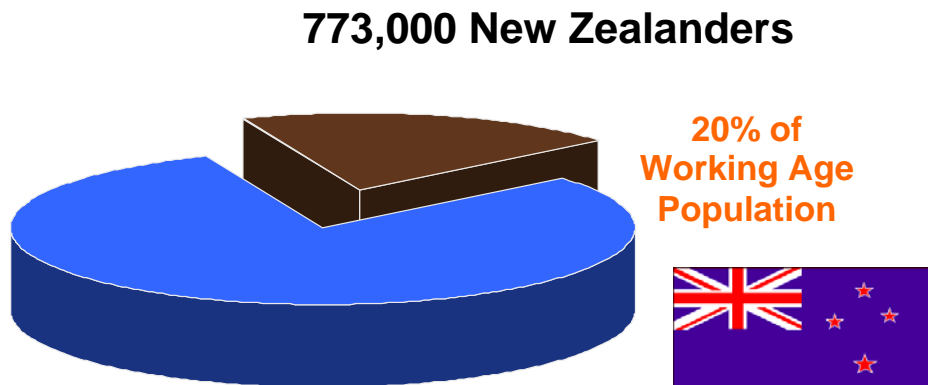
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Chair, Passenger Transport  
Committee

**Attachment 1: Proposal from WCC to establish a collaborative and consultative Advisory Group to the Greater Wellington Regional Council**

# Proposal to establish a collaborative and consultative Advisory Group to the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

NZ Census 2001, people with disabilities:



## **Background**

The Wellington City Council's Disability Reference Group was formed in 1996. The Disability Reference Group (DRG) advises the Council on issues that concern people with disabilities in Wellington. The group responds to issues raised by the Council as well as raises concerns expressed by people with disabilities.

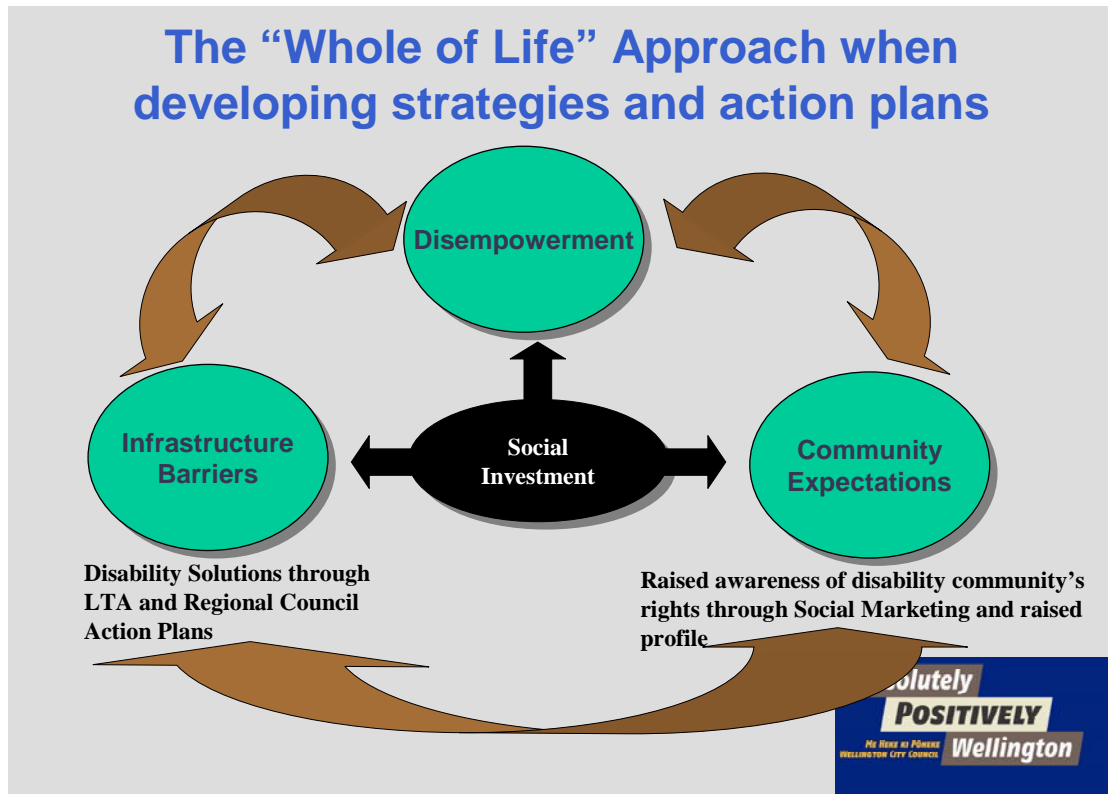
The Wellington City Council expects the DRG to advise on and assist with consultation with people with disabilities. The DRG may, when necessary, activate its own response from people with disabilities to ensure broad consultation.

The DRG consists of nine members from the community who either have a disability or who have experience of living with a disability. The group also has one Councillor Representative. As all disability groups cannot be represented on the group, it is envisaged that members have a broad knowledge of disability issues.

Members of the DRG meet once a month or if business dictates extra meetings may be called. Members are paid a meeting fee and reimbursed for travel and support costs associated with membership.

The Group is supported in Council by the Community Advisor for Disability. This full time position was created in 2002. The purpose of the role is to effect change within the Wellington City Council enabling an inclusive and

accessible city for all citizens. The Accessible Wellington Programme drives inclusion and accessibility by entering into strategic partnerships with business units and external agencies to become stakeholders in policies and projects which advance the programme.



### **Proposed GWRC Disability Reference Group**

I understand that GWRC would require a geographically based membership and to that end I have had informal talks with Disability Advisors in the Hutt and Porirua areas. They are enthusiastic and confident that people with disabilities could be appointed from their networks currently in place in their respective areas.

Furthermore, it is vital that the GRWC Disability Reference Group establishes a position (Disability Advisor) within the organisation to support the group and establish a work programme within the GWRC to advance issues and recommendations determined by the Group and the Advisor. It is envisaged that the Group and the Advisors' work programme becomes broader than merely transport issues. People with disabilities must participate in the planning, funding and implementation processes at central, regional and local government levels.

## A Regional approach to access

- A regionally co-ordinated approach the “best approach”

Through

- A Regional Disability Advisory Group

Which has

- Membership from other advisory groups or members of the community

And



## A Regional DRG can advise on:

Fundamentals of the accessible journey

**Approachability**

**Accessibility**

**Usability**

