

Report 10.631
Date 30 November 2010
File WRS/09/01/01

Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee
Author Melanie Thornton, Project Leader

Wellington Regional Strategy Office Update

1. Purpose

This report is to provide the Committee with an update on activities of the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) Office since the last report to the Committee in September 2010.

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. Work Programme

Since September 2010 the Wellington Regional Strategy Office has had its major focus on:

- Developing a new WRS website
- Refining indicators for the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) report and establishing software to host the GPI online.
- Hosting and participating in the regional Broadband Operational Group (BOG).
- Published the WRS Annual Report 2009/2010.
- Hosting the WRS Projects Forum in October.
- Facilitating the regional open space working group and sub-groups.
- Facilitating the regional urban design working group and continuing to progress the work outlined in the Wellington Region Urban Design Action Plan and Stocktake.
- Assisting Hutt City Council to progress the regional industrial land project.

- Working with the WRS Review team.

4. **Genuine Progress Index**

The Genuine Progress Index (GPI) working group has been continually refining the indicators to ensure that they are robust and provide accurate data. This has involved consulting experts and analysing new indicators.

The group is also working with a software developer to create a website for the GPI so that it will be easily accessible and understandable for anyone wishing to view. It is anticipated that this website will be ready to go live early 2011.

5. **Broadband Operational Group**

A separate report on the broadband project is on the Committee's agenda.

6. **Annual Report 2009/2010**

The 2009/2010 Annual Report was published in October. The Annual Report provides an update on the activities of each of the workstreams and what was achieved over the past year. Copies of the Annual Report were sent out to the WRS Committee in October, prior to the elections.

7. **WRS Projects Forum**

The first WRS Projects Forum was a half day event held on 14 October at Greater Wellington Regional Council. The forum was for council officers and other members of each of the WRS working groups to get an update on the WRS workstreams. It also provided an opportunity for all working group members to ask questions and provide input into those workstreams. This was a very successful afternoon, with around fifty attendees from councils and other organisations across the region.

8. **Open Spaces**

Sub-groups have been established to drive the four major areas of work identified under this project. These are:

- **Walking tracks information portal:** this sub-group is establishing a portal on walking tracks in the region. This portal has established the top walks in the region and is now looking at how best to place this information on-line in a user-friendly way for the public.
- **Biodiversity:** this sub-group has identified the top 50 biodiversity sites in the region (those with good access and high biodiversity values). An information portal for these sites is being established, and will include the name of the site, a location map, photos, opening hours and entrance fee (if applicable), web site, description, habitats, activities, highlights/special features, and other attributes. This portal will be available on the WRS website, with links from other council websites.

- **Motorised access and conflicting uses in open spaces:** this sub-group has developed a stocktake of regional rules and existing tracks with a view to potentially aligning them. The group is looking at putting together a regional brochure on tracks in the region, with the brochure including a map of the different areas and a consistent legend, showing for different uses. It would also provide ‘Tread Lightly’ principles and other relevant safety information.
- **Sports fields:** this sub-group is looking at issues around quality of turfs and availability for codes across the Wellington region. The sub-group has met with the Wellington Regional Sports Forum (WRSF) which provides fields for sporting codes across the region. The WRSF also look into strategic issues such as the future provision of fields. The WRS sub-group is looking to work with WRSF and other organisations such as Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) to identify the elite sports, where the existing venues are, where the gaps are and to then review this with users.

9. Urban Design

The Urban Design working group is working on information sharing initiatives:

- The urban design information hub on the WRS website is being regularly updated to provide useful links to regional, national and international urban design-related websites, courses and documents.
- The second ‘walk and talk’ session was held in Wellington on 14 September. Wellington City Council officers discussed key urban design issues and examples of best practice. It focussed on the Wellington CBD, waterfront and Te Aro, looking at current urban design projects, private developments, and some of the aspects being studied by the Wellington 2040 Central City Framework. The session was open to practitioners, urban design champions and councillors from across the region.

10. WRS Review

The WRS Review team has met with the region’s mayors and chief executives, the WRS Office and a list of key stakeholders. It has established a project plan which outlines its process for the next few months. It has identified three case studies for more detailed examination. These are briefly outlined below.

10.1 Business Centres of Excellence

The Centres of Excellence programme is an initiative identified in the Strategy, and being undertaken by Grow Wellington. This case study will look at the process of developing Centres of Excellence. This includes the Screen and Digital Technologies, Biotechnology and Life Sciences (HERC – Health Education and Research Collaborative), and the Clean Technology Centre.

10.2 Priority Good Regional Form Projects

This case study will look at the two priorities identified in the WRS – “Strong CBD and sub-regional centres” and “Regional Focus Areas”. The case study will test what progress has been made on a sub-regional level, and what region-wide issues have arisen and whether the WRS structures have dealt with such issues. It will also consider resourcing issues and the prioritisation process relating to regional priorities, the role of the WRS Committee and governance arrangements, alongside existing planning functions and decision-making.

10.3 Broadband

The WRS highlighted high speed and affordable broadband as being one of the key factors that will position the region to participate in the global economy. Subsequently a number of workstreams have been carried forward by the Broadband Operational Group (BOG) on region-wide policies to facilitate the deployment of broadband. The case study will measure progress against regional intentions, explore “Effective Leadership and Partnership” in the context of this initiative, and provide an assessment of any lessons learnt. In addition some comparison with the readiness of other regions for high-speed broadband deployment will be considered.

11. Communication

Communication on matters relating to the workstreams above will happen as relevant information is identified.

12. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Melanie Thornton
Project Leader

Nicola Shorten
Manager, Strategic Planning

Jane Davis
General Manager,
Strategy and Community Engagement