

Report 2016.266
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Committee Council
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Response to Local Government Commission on spatial planning

1. Purpose

To seek the Council's approval for Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) response to the Local Government Commission on spatial planning.

2. Background

The Local Government Commission (LGC) contracted Boffa Miskell to produce a high-level overview of the possible role of spatial planning in the region. GWRC provided feedback on a draft report in March 2016.

LGC are now seeking a formal response from Council on the final report: *Spatial Planning – opportunities and options for Metropolitan Wellington*. Specifically, the LGC requests a clear indication of the Council position on the recommendations in the report.

Attachment 1 is a proposed response for Council approval.

3. Comment

The final report from Boffa Miskell canvasses a number of options to advance spatial planning in Wellington. These range from the promotion of specific legislation to mandate a binding spatial planning framework, through to a voluntary and incremental approach, which might start with a stocktake of the numerous urban growth strategies already prepared by councils in the metropolitan parts of the region.

LGC is specifically seeking a Council response to three options for progressing spatial planning. If there is sufficient support for one or more options, the Commission would do further work with councils on a detailed costing and implementation plan for the preferred option/s in order to agree funding for the work. The funding and implementation plan would need to be agreed before the work commences.

3.1 Options

LGC summaries the options in the following way:

Stocktake

Councils would work together in the short term to compile a “stocktake” of the existing urban growth related strategies, frameworks, policies and plans that have been prepared across the region. This could test the value proposition for regional spatial planning, including the potential benefits and costs associated with pursuing the more comprehensive longer term options below. Such an exercise would reveal the overall nature and scope of the current documents, and identify the extent of any gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies as well any competing strategies. This exercise could be undertaken relatively quickly with the results used to inform further consideration of the other options.

Composite Growth Plan

Councils would commit to a joint exercise to develop a consensus composite growth plan for the region, potentially building on the results of a stocktake. Mechanisms would be needed to reconcile issues and differences which might arise between councils. Governance could be provided by a joint oversight group, with implementation of the plan remaining in the hands of constituent councils.

Comprehensive Metropolitan Spatial Plan

Councils would commit to developing a comprehensive and integrated spatial plan that would:

- present an agreed long term vision and associated spatial representation of where and how development will occur in the region;
- be founded on a shared evidence base;
- contain strategic directions translated into priorities and policies; and
- establish an integrated package of policy and investment decisions.

This option would also include the prospect of corresponding legislative change to lock in the commitment of councils to implement such a plan.

3.2 Proposed response

GWRC has been an advocate of regional spatial planning throughout the LGC process, and our feedback on the draft report indicated support for the development of a comprehensive metropolitan spatial plan. The proposed response in **Attachment 1** reiterates continued support for a comprehensive metropolitan spatial plan, and provides comment on the stocktake and composite options.

The response also suggests that if there is insufficient support to proceed with a comprehensive plan, a sub-regional exercise examining the opportunities and impacts of the proposed Petone to Grenada Link Road is urgently required. This sub-regional plan would demonstrate spatial planning in a meaningful and immediately useful manner. It may also convince councils which do not support the comprehensive metropolitan spatial plan option of the value proposition for spatial planning.

4. **Communication**

The final response will be sent to the Local Government Commission. No further communications are proposed.

5. **The decision-making process and significance**

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act), which sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

5.1 **Significance of the decision**

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington to consider the significance of the decision. The term ‘significance’ has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking into account the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance as the decision relates to feedback from the Council to another organisation (the Local Government Commission) who will make the final decisions in relation to the subject proposal.

The Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

5.2 **Engagement**

Due to its procedural nature and low significance, no engagement on this matter has been undertaken.

6. **Recommendations**

That the Council:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Approves the response to the Local Government Commission as set out in Attachment 1 to this report.***

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Attachment 1: Proposed response to the Local Government Commission