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Report 99.338

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Report to the Policy & Finance Committee
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Annual Plan Submission – Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer

1. Purpose

To report on the Annual Plan submission advocating a Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer and to recommend a course of action.

2. Background

The submission (No. 12) from Liz Burge to the 1999/00 Annual Plan advocated the appointment of a Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer. Officers were requested to report further on the submission, a copy of which is attached.

The submission is very detailed, but in essence, the submitter is seeking a more satisfactory relationship between Council and Wairarapa Maori. Ms Burge has suggested that this could be achieved by appointment of an appropriate Wairarapa based Maori Liaison Officer whose role would particularly encompass resource management matters, but also include operational issues and educational training. As well as contact with Iwi organisations, the submission advocated that the Council should be communicating directly with relevant whanau and hapu when dealing with specific resource management matters.

3. Comment

The submitter has put a lot of effort into her submission including prior discussions with Wairarapa Constituency councillors and Wairarapa management.

At present the only specific liaison the Council has with Wairarapa Maori is with two Iwi organisations, both of whom claim tangata whenua status in the Wairarapa. In relation to resource management issues, there are contracts in place with the Iwi organisations with regard to non-notified resource consents. However, there has been variable success in this area.

Wairarapa management view the submitter's concept positively, particularly given the Council's stated intention to strive for more satisfactory relationships with Maori. However, there is little indication as to how the concept will be received by the Iwi organisations as such. One of these organisations in particular, has been strongly advocating for significantly more funding from Council so that it can be the point of contact for all Maori issues involving the Council and be adequately funded for this.

If the liaison officer concept were to proceed, it is suggested that a part time appointment be trialled for, say, a year so that its effectiveness can be assessed. \$30,000 is the likely approximate cost with appropriate overheads. The Council has already set aside an unallocated sum of \$100,000 for enhancing its relationship with Maori. This liaison officer could be funded from within this allocation.

Arrangements have already been made for Council representatives to meet with the different Iwi groups in the Region at various times over the next two months. It is therefore proposed that the concept of a Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer be discussed with relevant Iwi and that a final decision to proceed, or not, be made after those discussions.

4. Recommendation

That the concept of a Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer be proceeded with subject to –

- (1) Satisfactory discussions with Wairarapa Iwi groups.*
- (2) Funding of \$30,000 from the present unallocated sum of \$100,000 in the 1999/00 financial year for enhancing Council's relationship with Maori.*
- (3) An initial trial period of a year.*



Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Attachment 1

Submission from Liz Burge to the 1999/00 Annual Plan for the appointment of a Wairarapa Maori Liaison Officer