



Report **05.423**
Date 17 August 2005
File E/06/01/05

Committee **Council**
Author **Ian Buchanan Chairman**

Chairman's Report

After my long planned short holiday in northern Queensland, it is back to the real world. A number of significant issues for this council are coming to a head during August and a lot of work by a lot of people has contributed to these.

1. CEO recruitment

As communicated to councillors, short-listing and interviewing has occurred, with final interviews completed by the sub-committee and reference to full Council at the 30 August meeting for consideration and decision. My thanks to the committee members for their invaluable insights and experience through this process.

2. Local Government New Zealand Conference

Attended this with Cr Turver. I also attended my first meeting of the National Council prior to the Conference. This was an interesting experience in itself, with an obvious range of agendas amongst the different sector representatives (rural, provincial, regional, metro). Unfortunately these agendas don't always coincide, making for some lively debate over what was often rather small matters. I guess I will grow into the national role with time. The Conference itself was not particularly memorable as many felt that the keynote addresses mostly lacked any pizzazz. Councillors can access all presentations etc on the LGNZ website (www.lgnz.co.nz) so I will not attempt any elaboration here. Of particular note was the address by the Chief Maori Land Court Judge Joe Williams. As is usual with these types of gathering, this one perhaps more so than other more technical conferences, opportunities to reinforce existing and establish new relationships with local government leaders abound. Cr Turver and I both took full advantage of these opportunities during the course of the Conference. Cr Turver may wish to comment further.

3. Regional Parks

Significant progress has been made in a number of areas, related to existing and proposed Parks. Firstly, meetings with DoC officials have established a

way forward for Greater Wellington involvement with Lake Wairarapa as a potential regional ecological park. Officials are working on details for a proposal to consolidate all public lands in and around the lake into a single entity, and to transfer the management of these lands to a governance body (DoC, GW, Iwi) with operational management by GW in association with DoC. Until now, the stumbling block has always been the lack of a mechanism for establishing clear management responsibility for a nationally and internationally ranked conservation area outside of DoC. Clearly there are significant implications for GW to consider here as part of our LTCCP decision making. Full reporting to Council will occur as soon as a firm proposal is available.

Alongside this is the just announced acceptance by Cabinet of our joint purchase proposal for Waitangirua Farm as part of Belmont Regional Park. At the time of writing this report I have no full details, but Cr Laidlaw and I are working these through with GW and Government officials. Great news, significant implications!

As if this isn't enough, Cabinet Policy Committee has also agreed to purchase the whole of the Whareroa Farm from Landcorp, subject to local government (GW? KCDC?) commitment to manage the area for the public. Again, no details at the time of writing, but officers are rapidly assessing implications so that we can respond prior to full Cabinet consideration on 22 August. At this stage commitments in principle only can be made, all subject to full reporting and decision making by Council. As councillors are aware, there is enormous public interest and support for all of these proposals. Details will be communicated as they are available.

4. CentrePort development

I attended the launch of the Harbour Quays business park and the topping off ceremony for the first development in this area (Stats Building). As councillors may have noted from news reports, there is some disquiet amongst development interests in the city, and from WCC itself in terms of potential impact on the CBD. In order to prevent any misunderstandings or the development of entrenched positions, I am convening an informal meeting of key players to have an open discussion on this issue. I am not particularly concerned about the issues being raised, but feel they need to be cleared early.

5. WRS framework launch

Cr McDavitt and I participated in the regional tour and launch of this first consultation phase for the Growth Strategy. There was good media attention and good buy-in from major players in the political forum. I remain very positive about this process and look forward to receiving the public input prior to developing the components of the strategy itself. Excellent work is being done by the team, including GW officers, on this strategy.

6. Hutt Valley District Health Board

Co-operation is very much the name of the game these days. I am pleased to note that in my absence Cr McDavitt signed a Memorandum of Understanding

with the Hutt Valley District Health Board and the two Hutt councils. That Memorandum sets out some good principles as to how we should work together for the good of our common Hutt community. More importantly, we are working with those bodies as to the practical things we can do together, ranging from adopting common ways of measuring progress through to cooperating on the promotion of physical health. I should like to acknowledge Cr Glensor wearing his DHB Chair's hat for his role in moving from a good idea to seeing some action.

Similarly Capital Coast DHB called a meeting attended also by Terry with its local authorities that is likely to see a similar route pursued. Any councillor interested in learning more is welcome to contact John Allard.

7. Western Corridor

More media attention, plenty of heat but not a lot of light! Cr McDavitt is running a difficult RLTC process and doing an admirable job of keeping this on track in spite of the attention of many interests. The bottom line here is that the process must be robust, and must conform to the statutory requirements of the LTMA, for any outcomes to be actionable. Draft recommendations are about to be considered by RLTC, first at a workshop, then by formal committee to settle on a document for further public consultation in September/October. Interesting times!

8. Thanks

Finally, my thanks to Cr McDavitt for covering for me during the time I was away. My cell phone did not ring once (probably because it was switched off most of the time).

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. receive the report.*
- 2. note the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Ian Buchanan
Chairman