



**Report** 06.657  
**Date** 8 November 2006  
**File** PK/03/05/01

**Committee** Landcare  
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## Whitireia Park: annual contribution to park maintenance

### 1. Purpose

To seek the Landcare Committee's endorsement to make a \$20,000 contribution to the maintenance programme at Whitireia Park in the 2006/07 financial year.

### 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

On 1 December 1998, the Whitireia Park Board wrote to the Greater Wellington Chairperson asking that the Council consider taking over the control and management of the Park. The letter states that since its establishment in 1978, the Board has struggled with limited funding to maintain the Park to the standard it deserves. The Park Board considered that the attributes of the Park are similar to those in the Regional Park network and because Park users come from around the Region, the Greater Wellington would be an appropriate Park Manager. The Landcare Committee considered this request in Report 99.482. The relevant resolutions were:

- i. Agree that Whitireia Park has regional significance and at some point, in the future the Wellington Regional Council may be the appropriate level of government to manage the park.*
- ii. Agree that should the Wellington Regional Council take over Whitireia Park, then it would be appropriate to bring it up to the standards and service levels of the Regional Parks network and that sufficient funding will need to be allocated for this purpose.*

- iii. *Request Officers to model the cost for consideration through the Long-term Financial Strategy for the year commencing 2000/01.*

The Landcare Committee considered a financial model to take over the management of Whitireia Park as part of the Council's 2000/01 long-term Financial Strategy. Greater Wellington made financial provision to take over the management and control of the park in 2005/06, in Towards a Greater Wellington – 10-Year Plan 2000/2010. \$20,000 was also budgeted annually until Greater Wellington took over the management and control.

#### **4. Current status of the transfer of management and control to Greater Wellington**

The area was originally donated by iwi to the Church of England; the land was then transferred to the Otaki-Porirua Maori Trust Board, with the Raukawa trustees acting for the Trust Board. The Crown bought the land from the Trust Board through the Raukawa Trustees for park purposes.

There were conditions as part of the sale, in a Sale and Purchase agreement. Ngati Toa has raised that clauses 4 and 5 of the agreement have not been fully implemented and require these to be addressed before the park is transferred to GWRC management.

Clause 4 proposes to 'set aside' and permanently preserve an area in Onehunga Bay known as the 'anchorage' in such a way as to protect the historical associations of the area with the Ngati Toa Tribe. Discussions have been held between Ngati Toa and DOC regarding what was meant by 'set-aside' at the time the Sale and Purchase agreement was written. Various ways of fulfilling this clause have been proposed including a change in reserve status of an agreed area from Recreational to Historical Reserve, with the management plan and bylaws updated providing for seamless management. Ngati Toa has suggested that what was intended was a stronger sense of ownership; they are not seeking a freehold title but a tenure that is sympathetic to the Parks current use and which provides for a pre-emptive right over the land to Ngati Toa.

Clause 5 proposes to suitably mark in a permanent manner four old pa sites in Whitireia Park. It appears these issues can be easily resolved and is only a matter of identifying the appropriate sites in consultation with Ngati Toa.

Ngati Toa has indicated that they are still supportive of the transfer to Greater Wellington. It has been indicated by all parties involved that a resolution to these issues before the transfer occurs would be preferable.

#### **5. The maintenance programme**

The work programme for the use of Greater Wellington's contribution to the maintenance of the park is developed annually with the Department of Conservation.

The main priority within Whitireia Park has been to bring pest animal and plant numbers down. Generally, with lower numbers of pest animals and plants, the

Park can be left to regenerate into bush, wetland and coastal habitats. The next priority is to stock-proof sensitive habitats. The work plan has allowed for fencing of the Onepoto Stream, wetland gullies and some escarpment areas.

## **6. The proposed 2006/07 work programme**

If the annual contribution was made this year, it would be applied to projects to control the gorse that is getting away on the block and to continue with maintaining existing pest control operations. There are sufficient funds in the existing Whitireia Park budget for 2006/07 that can be applied to making the contribution.

If Greater Wellington declines to grant this request, the work will be put on hold until after Greater Wellington is granted management and control of the park. Gains made to date in eradicating possums on the peninsula will start to decline until the programme is reinstated.

## **7. Communication**

No communication opportunities arise as the result of this paper.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives** the report.*
2. ***Approve** a \$20,000 contribution to the annual Whitireia Park maintenance programme for 2006/07.*
3. ***Authorise** Officers to develop and implement a work programme for the contribution with the Whitireia Park Board and the Department of Conservation.*

Report prepared by:

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