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Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
From Dr D J Watson, Division Manager Transport

Government's Transport Policy Package – 28 February 2002

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with information on the Government's Transport Policy Package announced on 28 February 2002.

2. Background

Attached is the Transport Policy Package announced by the Minister of Transport on 28 February 2002 (**attachment 1**). The Minister came to the Council's offices on 1 March 2002 to talk to and answer questions on the package. Legislation to implement the package is expected to follow within the next two months. Government transport agencies have already been advised by the Minister, in terms of their performance agreements with him, to take full account of the Government's announced policies.

3. Comment

There is some prospect of extra Government funding going to public transport services in our region over the coming years. The procedures for delivering that additional funding will be driven by Transfund New Zealand. Transfund New Zealand will need to review its current patronage funding scheme; including the baseline, kick start and patronage funding levels. A meeting of their Public Transport Advisory Group (PTAG) has been arranged for 13 March 2002 where this issue will be debated.

Public transport infrastructure funding may be treated in a different way to services funding. This may provide more appropriate ways of funding projects such as Lambton Bus/Rail Interchange. Again this issue will be raised at the PTAG meeting.

Legislative change will be required to implement other features of the transport policy package. Of interest to the Committee is the proposal that Regional Councils will be able to fund and, under agreed conditions, both own and operate public transport infrastructure and services. Clearly this has implications for the Council's Joint Venture Rail Company proposal and may provide other opportunities to be more

directly involved in the funding and provision of key public transport infrastructure projects. We will need to await the details of the proposed legislative change before commenting further on these matters.

4. Communications

The Government's Transport Policy Package is supportive of the Council's ongoing public transport improvement programme. The Committee Chairperson may, on behalf of the Committee, take an opportunity to recognise this. Other stakeholders, in particular our local authority colleagues, need also to be advised that alternatives to roading projects can be expected to attract additional Government funding support.

5. Recommendation

That the report be received.

DAVE WATSON
Divisional Manager, Transport

Attachment:

1. Transport Policy Package