

Report 2016.302
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Committee Council
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Local Government Excellence Programme

1. Purpose

To inform the Council about the Local Government Excellence Programme (the Programme) and to recommend that Council register its interest in becoming a Foundation Council for the Programme.

2. Background and Comment

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) has been working on a new Local Government Excellence Programme, which is designed to improve the public's knowledge of the work councils are doing and to support individual councils to further improve the value they provide to all New Zealanders.

The Programme has been developed following a New Zealand Local Government Survey of close to 3,000 citizens and businesses across New Zealand. The survey provided insight into how New Zealanders perceive local government, what we are doing well and the priority areas where we should focus our attention. LGNZ's report stated that it is clear that local government needs to improve, particularly in three broad areas:

- performance of local government, particularly governance, managing finances, making good spending decisions and delivering value for money;
- strengthening local leadership, particularly leadership of mayors and councillors and strategies for developing greater prosperity and wellbeing of communities; and
- communication and interaction.

The four proposed priorities of the Programme are:

- excellence in governance, leadership and strategy;
- excellence and transparency in financial decision-making;

- high standards of asset management, infrastructure and service provision; and
- stronger engagement with the public and businesses.

The Programme incorporates an independent assessment system to assess how councils are performing and the value they are delivering. It will employ independent assessors across the four priority areas above, who will report to an Independent Assessment Board responsible for the Programme's assessment system. Councils will receive an overall performance rating, with commentary on their performance. Councils will also be assessed on each priority area and provided with information on their strengths and weaknesses.

It is up to each council to review their results, develop an action plan and engage with their communities on the issues that matter locally.

Assessment will be repeated every three years to monitor progress.

The Programme begins in July 2016 with an initial group of councils called Foundation Councils, whose assessment ratings will be publicly reported around the end of 2016. The assessment cost for a Foundation Council is expected to be in the range of \$15,000 to \$27,000 (plus staff time).

The Local Government Excellence Programme will be offered to all councils from 2017.

The deadline for making an application to LGNZ to join the Programme as a Foundation Council is 24 June 2016. As this timeframe did not allow time for officers to seek a Council resolution noting commitment to join the Programme, an interim application was lodged with LGNZ following the Council workshop on 15 June 2016. Formal support is now being sought from Council.

3. Communication

The decision of the Council will be communicated to LGNZ. No further communication is necessary at this time.

If GWRC is accepted as a Foundation Council, then this will be communicated through Our Region and on the GWRC website.

4. 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 matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

4.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council 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 the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

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

4.2 Engagement

Engagement on the matters contained in this report aligns with the level of significance assessed. In accordance with the significance and engagement policy, no engagement on the matters for decision is required.

If GWRC is accepted as a Foundation Council, a Communication and Engagement Plan will be developed with the support of LGNZ.

5. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Approves** the lodging of an application to LGNZ to join the Local Government Excellence Programme as a Foundation Council.*

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