



# Review of Wellington City Council's Urban Cycleways Programme

May 2016

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## Introduction

The Urban Cycleways Programme (UCP) is a leveraged investment programme made up of \$100 million of Government funding (UCF), the National Land Transport Fund and money from local government. It is dedicated to improving urban cycling infrastructure between 2014/15 and 2017/18. This is a \$333m co-investment programme which is designed to enable high-quality projects to get underway much sooner than may otherwise have been possible. The Wellington City Council (WCC) has a programme to deliver an UCP across specific Wellington locations between 2015 -2018. The total proposed co-investment by government with Wellington City Council (WCC) is \$34.7m. This is part of a planned total investment by WCC of \$101m over the next 30 years.

Under the agreed funding terms for the UCP, the NZ Transport Agency requires all participating authorities, including WCC, to meet defined timelines to ensure delivery by 30 June 2018. WCC are responsible for the successful implementation of their programme. Recent public reaction to some cycling developments by WCC and media commentary about WCC's proposed UCP projects prompted the NZ Transport Agency to commission a review of WCC's programme.

## Limitations

The review was not a technical review of design options, although the reviewers did discuss the general approach to design with NZ Transport Agency technical experts. We did not make any assessment of the professional competence of any individual, although we have made findings in relation to the capacity and capabilities needed to be directed to the programme to ensure that successful communication and engagement can occur.

We have not assessed the adequacy of the programme budget or individual project budgets, nor have we made any findings or recommendations on the overall funding available to WCC through the UCP or other NZ Transport Agency funding streams.

We have formed our findings and recommendations based on the material provided to us and the interviews we undertook. Given the timeframe for the review, this was necessarily targeted and we have not carried out an exhaustive analysis of all business cases and other available documentation.

## Approach

Our approach was to undertake a review of relevant material provided to us. We then undertook interviews with a range of stakeholders including elected Councillors (including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor), WCC officials, NZ Transport Agency staff and management and a limited number of community representatives (See Appendix A).

We also reviewed how some other cities had set up and governed their cycleways programmes.

Without exception, all those we spoke to were supportive of cycleways being part of an integrated transport network and that cycling was a key part of Wellington being one of the most liveable cities in the world.

## Components of the UCP Critical for Success

As we reviewed material and interviewed people it became apparent, that for cycleways to be successfully delivered a number of mutually dependant aspects of the programme needed to come together. Our analysis of Wellington's cycleways programme suggested that there were/are significant issues with most of these aspects of WCC's programme and that these needed to be urgently addressed otherwise further loss of public and political confidence and support was very likely.



## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

### Key issues:

The key issues confronting the programme are:

- While there is an overarching Cycling Framework and “plan” for cycling in Wellington (including UCP funded projects) the external perception is that projects to date have been ad hoc and disconnected from a bigger vision for an integrated transport solution for Wellington
- There is a community perception that the cycleway in Island Bay is a poor solution and that it was delivered without proper community engagement and consultation. This perception has “spilled over” to other planned projects
- This has caused a loss of general community support and a subsequent erosion of the WCC’s “license to operate”
- There was a WCC council decision in 2015 which approved a cycleways programme and cycling framework. Subsequently, political support for the framework and ongoing planned projects was withdrawn because of the loss of community support
- There was then a loss of NZ Transport Agency (and Ministerial) confidence in WCC to deliver on agreed projects prior to the 30 June 2018 deadline for UCF funded projects
- Governance has not to date reflected the nature of the NZ Transport Agency’s and WCC’s interests in WCC’s cycleways programme
- Some aspects of the programme have not had the necessary resources directed to them (e.g. communications and engagement)
- The Ngauranga to Airport transport project is impacting timelines for firming up selection of the CBD route options
- WCC’s programme has interdependencies with routes and projects across the wider Wellington Region
- There are options to undertake improvements to existing routes and infrastructure that are potentially less contentious but which nevertheless would contribute to WCC’s programme and overall network (e.g. Cobham Drive connection)
- Wellington is not the only city to experience adverse community reaction to a delivered cycle way (Dunedin, for example) and international evidence suggests that cycleways are inherently difficult to successfully deliver because of sometimes polarised public attitudes and a sense that cyclists are being favoured over other road and footpath users.

## Findings

### Design, delivery and community engagement

Item	Findings	Comment
1	<p>Island Bay has created problems that have “spilled over” to other proposed projects – these include perceptions of inadequate community engagement/consultation, design and safety issues.</p> <p>In particular, the loss of parking and impacts on other users (drivers, pedestrians, businesses, home owners) has been hard to explain.</p> <p>Some people commented to us that the UCP has driven a more aspirational approach to cycleway design and that this goes further than the community can understand or agree with. This is consistent with international experience.</p> <p>Island Bay presents an ongoing risk to WCC’s cycleways programme and presents an opportunity for WCC and the NZ Transport Agency to work together on a solution.</p>	<p>The adaptation of European cycle lane designs to New Zealand conditions is challenging and there are currently no agreed guidelines that can be uniformly applied.</p> <p>The three other projects of the Southern Route that would have delivered a cycleway connection between Island Bay and the Basin Reserve are now not currently part of WCC’s programme and the roads that were in the frame have a greater safety risk profile than Island Bay.</p>
2	<p>There are ongoing risks with what is intended to be delivered in Hutt Road and Eastern corridors. The community engagement approach is better, having picked up on the lessons from Island Bay. However, there remain concerns with what the final design solutions might look like.</p>	<p>We were told that while engagement and consultation reflected lessons learned the approach to a design solution went too far too fast (e.g. T1/T2 lane) and that there should be a phasing of the solution. Subsequently this approach has been adopted by Council and a phased approach appears to be a more acceptable method of delivery.</p>
3	<p>The UCP in Wellington is not seen as an end to end programme and has not been positioned with the community as part of a longer term vision for an integrated transport plan for Wellington. Projects are seen as ad-hoc and disconnected from other equally important transport corridors.</p>	<p>WCC does have a Cycling Framework and a good story to tell about the city’s Long Term Plan and Wellington as a world class city with a high liveability index. The story of cycling needs to be positioned within that plan and be seen as part of an integrated transport plan for Wellington.</p>

Item	Findings	Comment
4	<p>The authorising environment (also described to us as the social contract) has eroded to the point that there is now a significant risk to the successful delivery of the proposed programme. This lack of support is inhibiting councillor confidence to take decisions in relation to further cycling projects.</p> <p>The next projects will need to be carefully positioned and phased to ensure that what is proposed and delivered is seen by the community as pragmatic and sensible.</p>	<p>WCC have not been able to dispel a perception that their programme is about cyclists “winning” over other road and footpath users.</p> <p>WCC has a poor strategy for dealing with public statements from people opposed to its projects.</p> <p>We note that recent communications about the Cycleways programme have better positioned it as a component of an integrated transport network.</p>
5	<p>The scale of proposed works is large if all works are undertaken in each proposed area. We were advised by WCC that there could possibly be 30-40 work sites on the go at one time. WCC estimates that this could create significant risks to transport flows and will be challenging to deliver within the UCP timeframe.</p> <p>WCC should work with NZ Transport Agency to assess this risk and other lower risk delivery options as part of our recommended “refresh” of the programme.</p>	<p>The timeframe for delivery of the UCP (30 June 2018) is a driver of this risk.</p> <p>It would be very challenging to manage a programme at this scale and maintain public support given the probable scope and duration of disruption.</p>
6	<p>There are smaller components of current UCP projects that could be undertaken which would improve cycling and make the transport network safer across Wellington, as well as some larger projects that could be started within the UCP timelines; for example, it was suggested to us that a Cobham Drive crossing of some sort makes sense and will be needed in order to connect the eastern routes to other routes leading to the city. It is possible to put together a package of “quick wins” that balance the need to deliver improvements within the UCP timeframes and the community’s acceptance and support for what is being delivered.</p>	<p>This will need to be discussed and agreed with the NZ Transport Agency</p> <p>It will be essential that any quick wins are positioned with the community as being integral to the UCP and be seen as “sensible” both in terms of timing and design.</p>



## UCP timeframes and funding

Item	Findings	Comment
7	Wellington was not as advanced as other cities when the UCP was initiated. While the intent of the UCP to kick start or accelerate projects was good, the lead time for councils to respond to the UCP was tight and WCC's plan was put together quickly and from a lower planning base than some other council's (e.g. Auckland and Christchurch). This in turn impacted the available time for planning and community engagement.	<p>It was suggested that other places had a project/plan more advanced and that they had possibly delivered easier routes first with more contentious work to follow. We note that tactically this seems a sensible approach as it builds acceptance through the programme.</p> <p>We note that Island Bay was not funded by the UCF.</p>
8	The UCP timeframes for delivery by 30 June 2018 require projects to be planned and delivered more quickly than some people perceive as necessary. This has fuelled the public perception that WCC is not listening to communities.	There appears to be little public understanding of why delivery needs to occur by 30 June 2018.
9	The business case process, while rigorous and probably warranted, added to the time needed to plan and deliver a programme. It also necessitated a more "top down" programme design approach, rather than a community led "bottom up" approach. Engagement on the Eastern corridor reflects a much improved approach to route choice and design.	The Better Business Case methodology has been helpful in terms of generating a robust plan but UCP funding timeframes will inevitably drive a sense of developments being pushed through with some haste; with the attendant reduction in time to engage and consult with the community before final decisions need to be taken.
10	Delivering a "full treatment" of corridors reduces the opportunity for quick wins and will create a series of what will be perceived as disconnected parts of a network with no understanding of how these will connect to other cycling improvements over time.	<p>A review of what can sensibly be undertaken as part of a broader review could identify alternative options that may be more acceptable to the community.</p> <p>For instance a broader urban design approach to Island Bay might identify options for improvements beyond just addressing the cycleway.</p>

Item	Findings	Comment
11	NZ Transport Agency's interest is in cycling broadly, e.g. utility cycling (inter vs intra suburb) as well as recreational and commuter cycling. Some have perceived that the UCP is more narrowly focussed on recreational cyclists. WCC's programme and funding needs to be positioned as a longer term programme of integrated transport network improvements.	The National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) presents as a separate opportunity to work with WCC without the restricted time frame of the UCP.

## Governance and Interdependencies

Item	Findings	Comment
12	While there was initially strong political support for Island Bay, community perceptions of the decisions on location and design were negative and political support fell away. Councillors were very involved in decisions involving the design and timing of Island Bay, and this drove an approach to delivery that was sub optimal. Delegations of decision making to Officials, within an agreed framework, were withdrawn as a result of the loss of community support.	WCC Officials need to be given the opportunity to identify and advise on robust options for design and delivery of a revised programme and opportunities to amend Island Bay. The local body elections will impact on the time available to Council to make decisions about Island Bay and other proposed routes. Any solution to Island Bay and the broader programme will require political leadership and will need to be cognisant of the upcoming Local Body elections.
13	While WCC and NZ Transport Agency officials have worked closely together on the development of the business case and Wellington's cycling programme there is an opportunity to enhance internal governance to reflect the co-funder/sponsorship/Minister's interests and the Funder/contract model with the NZ Transport Agency.	Given the challenges to Wellington's programme, the NZ Transport Agency has the opportunity to partner more closely with WCC on the programme. WCC had a model for governance that would have reflected the respective interests of WCC and the NZ Transport Agency, but it has not yet been implemented.
14	The Ngauranga to Airport transport corridor project is delaying the analysis and choice of route selection for the CBD package. There are improvements that can be made to the transport network in the CBD and these could be advanced notwithstanding final decisions on the Ngauranga to Airport routes have yet to be taken.	It was noted to us that the Ngauranga to Airport scope has also considerably widened to a potentially unrealistic level, and that this has had a consequential impact of the cycling programme. Some WCC officials suggested by as much as 6 months.

## Recommendations

Item	Recommendations	Comment
1	<p>WCC and the NZ Transport Agency should move to a partnership model reflecting the UCP’s underlying principles of a partnership between the government and councils.</p>	<p>While WCC and NZ Transport Agency officials have worked closely together on the development of the business case and Wellington’s cycling programme, there is an opportunity to enhance internal governance to reflect the co-funder/sponsorship/Minister’s interests and the Funder/contract model with the NZ Transport Agency.</p>
2	<p>A review of Island Bay should be undertaken and necessary modifications made to the current solution following further consultation with the community. While the NZ Transport Agency was not a funder (because the project did not meet the UCP criteria), there is an opportunity for them to now be part of the solution to Island Bay.</p> <p>We have recommended they “partner” with WCC on the programme going forward. A review is necessary to “circuit break” Island Bay and re-engage the community on what an “integrated transport solution” could look like. Changes to what has been delivered will need to be made and these should reflect a broader urban design and regeneration approach.</p>	<p>This needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the NZ Transport Agency. It is desirable that the process include an independent expert to provide advice on options for changes to the current cycleway.</p> <p>The NZ Transport Agency could become a co-sponsor/funder of the solution which might fall out of the safety reviews that are in train, a functionality review, or further consultation on possible design changes.</p> <p>The review could revisit whether other parts of the Southern route could be delivered and part funded by UCF or NLTF funding.</p>
3	<p>In partnership with the NZ Transport Agency, WCC should recommission and re-engage communities on a revised programme. There is an opportunity to “recommission” Wellington’s programme with Council (together with the NZ Transport Agency). This could include some sensible quick wins. The programme could be re-phased to deliver what will need to be perceived by the community as “pragmatic” and “sensible” next steps, including remediation of Island Bay. WCC should work with NZ Transport Agency to assess the risk of other lower risk delivery options as part of our recommended “refresh” of the programme.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to plan an end to end programme that is coherent across Wellington and ties in with other UCP projects across the region and spells out the interdependencies (e.g. Hutt Rd). This might require some reallocation of UCF and NLTF funding across existing and, potentially, new projects.</p> <p>Quick wins could include early works or one off projects that will contribute to the network. Some might be more major works (e.g. a Cobham Drive crossing). This “recommission” needs to ensure that the Ngauranga to Airport project takes account of the impacts on route choices on CBD cycle routes.</p>

Item	Recommendations	Comment
4	As part of the refresh, WCC and the NZ Transport Agency should review funding across all streams (NLTF, UCF and WCC) to ensure there is the right mix and that funding does not drive an unrealistic or high risk delivery timeframe.	The funding mix across UCP, NLTF and council funding will need to be reviewed and agreed to support delivery of an agreed re-commissioned programme. This might result in/require agreement between WCC and the NZ Transport Agency to re-phase UCP and/or NLTF funding and possibly re-allocation of some UCP funding to other national projects.
5	We recommend that WCC in consultation with the NZ Transport Agency strengthen internal programme controls/internal governance by instituting a programme steering group with NZ Transport Agency representation and an independent advisor.	While an improved programme control group was initially identified as a model by WCC, it has not yet been implemented. This would provide programme governance that reflects the funding/partnership with NZ Transport Agency. In addition, external expertise could be added to this to provide an independent view and voice.
6	We recommend that the communications and engagement strategy and communications support for successful delivery be revisited. This can be addressed in the context of a broader refresh of the programme and reconfirmation of the level of resourcing needed to deliver the programme across the board. This should be agreed with Council in light of the recommissioned programme.	While we were advised by WCC that there were sufficient communications resources available within the programme and across WCC, the effectiveness of resourcing and planning for communications/ engagement have been/are below the level required to deliver successful engagement and community consultation. We do not consider that the level of communications resource directed to the programme to date has been sufficient.
7	WCC should ensure that its Cycling team has the right mix of capabilities and executive level support. WCC should review the resources directed to delivery of a refreshed programme to ensure they are sufficient. This will give Councillors and the NZ Transport Agency confidence that the programme can be successfully delivered.	The team needs to have the right capacity and capabilities to deliver a refreshed programme.

Item	Recommendations	Comments
8	<p>WCC Officials need to be given the opportunity to identify and advise on robust options for the design and delivery of a revised programme and opportunities to modify Island Bay.</p> <p>Elected members should provide political support for a recommissioned programme and a review of Island Bay, but should be careful to make decisions based on sound evidence and advice.</p>	<p>It will be important that there is a clear understanding of the relative roles and responsibilities between elected members and WCC officials. WCC, in conjunction with NZ Transport Agency officials, have an important part to play in advising Council on route and design options for the programme as well as how key aspects of delivery (e.g. community engagement and communications) can be managed and delivered.</p>

## Next Steps

If the recommendations of this review are accepted, then we consider that the next steps would include:

Action/Decision	Comment	Timeframe
Implement enhanced programme governance between the NZ Transport Agency and WCC	This will be critical to ensure the programme gets the right level of oversight and collaborative drive	Do now
Establish a process for refreshing and recommissioning the programme	This is will be sensitive as progress has to continue, balanced against the need to ensure the programme takes the community with it. It will also be critical to ensure that UCF funded components are delivered within the UCP timeframes	Start process design now. Complete refresh over the next month
Establish an approach and process for a review of Island Bay's cycleway. This needs to be done with the community	While the review can be done over time and should incorporate data on what's working, findings from the safety audits and any other review commissioned, this should be signalled to the community who should be consulted closely. In addition solutions should not narrowly focus on a cycleway and should encompass a broader urban design/renewal approach	Sooner rather than later
Review the approach for delivering the UCP projects in the Hutt Road and Eastern corridors	WCC and the NZ Transport Agency Need to ensure that learnings from Island Bay and this review are incorporated into their	Do now

Action/Decision	Comment	Timeframe
	approach going forward	
WCC need to review their resourcing directed to delivering the programme	A recommissioned programme will need adequate resourcing. WCC senior management should assure itself that it has sufficient resources directed to the programme	Do now
WCC and the NZ Transport Agency need to establish a process for refreshing the communications and engagement support for the programme	The communications and engagement approach has improved as WCC has learned from its experiences with Island Bay and the Hutt Road projects. However, a refreshed programme should be supported by adequate communications and community engagement resources to ensure this critically important aspect of the programme is properly resourced	Do now as part of an overall programme refresh

## Appendix A List of People Interviewed

### NZ Transport Agency Officials

- Dave Brash, *General Manager, Planning and Investment*
- Raewyn Bleakley, *Regional Director-Central*
- Dougal List, *National Cycling Manager*
- Amy Kearse, *Principal Planning Advisor*
- Phillip Eyles, *Planning and Investment Manager*
- Tim Hughes, *National Safety Engineer*
- Mike Smith, (MWH Consultant) *National Specialist-Road Safety*
- Gerry Dance, *Principal Advisor Cycling*
- Jessica Rattray, *Senior Cycling Advisor, Central Region*
- Claire Pascoe, *Senior Advisor Cycling*
- Catriona Robertson, *Strategic Communications Lead-Cycling*
- Felicity Connell, *Media Manager – Central Region*

### Wellington City Council Officials

- John McGrath, *Chief of Staff*
- Kevin Lavery, *Chief Executive*
- Paul Barker, *Planning Manager – Network Improvement*
- Geoff Swainson, *Manager – Transport and Waste Operations*
- David Chick, *Chief City Planner*
- Anthony Wilson, *City Engineer*

### Wellington City Council Elected Members

- Celia Wade-Brown, *Mayor*
- Justin Lester, *Deputy Mayor*
- Councillor Andy Foster
- Councillor Simon Woolf
- Councillor Sarah Free
- Councillor Jo Coughlan
- Councillor Paul Eagle
- Councillor Nicola Young

- Councillor Mark Peck
- Councillor Simon Marsh
- Councillor David Lee

## Other Interviewees

- Warren Hall, *Island Bay Resident's Association*



# Appendix B

## Terms of Reference

### Review of Wellington City Council's Urban Cycleways Programme

The NZ Transport Agency is committed to delivery of effective transport solutions, across all modes, for all for New Zealanders. On behalf of the Government, the NZ Transport Agency is responsible for managing the successful delivery of the national Urban Cycleways Programme (UCP). This includes working with councils to support them to successfully develop and deliver their programmes. This is a \$333M co-investment programme which is designed to enable high-quality projects to get underway much sooner than may otherwise have been possible. Wellington City Council (WCC) has a programme to deliver an UCP programme across specific Wellington locations between 2015 -2018. The total proposed co-investment with WCC is around \$34.7M. This is part of a planned total investment by WCC of \$101M in cycling over the next 30 years.

Under agreed funding terms for the UCP, the NZ Transport Agency requires all participating authorities, including WCC, to meet defined timelines to ensure delivery by 30 June 2018. WCC are responsible for the successful implementation of their programme. Recent public reaction to some cycling developments and media commentary about WCC's UCP projects has prompted NZ Transport Agency to commission a review of WCC's programme. The review will advise on whether the programme and the implementation timetable is appropriate and realistic, and whether any barriers to progress to overall programme are identified and are being managed. The reviewers will work with WCC and NZ Transport Agency to identify any opportunities for quick wins or innovations that could be incorporated in to the programme.

NZ Transport Agency, in conjunction with WCC, has established the below terms of reference for the review. The reviewers will make recommendations and report on the following key questions;

1. What are the key risks to the programme overall?
2. What are the specific risks and opportunities in relation to individual projects that could impact the overall programme?
3. Are governance arrangements appropriate for the programme?
4. Is there appropriate capability and capacity to lead and deliver the programme?
5. Could the programme be modified or phased differently from that planned? Are there any quick wins or innovations that could be incorporated into the programme or looked into?
6. What options are there to reallocate funding in the event of non-delivery of the UCP by 30 June 2018?
7. Are there other relevant matters NZ Transport Agency and WCC need to take into account of, or be aware of in order to support the successful delivery of the programme?

#### Out of scope:

The review is not a technical review of any proposed design options, although the review will be supported by NZ Transport Agency technical experts so that a high level view of the design approach can also be commented on.

The review will not make any comment on the professional competence of any individual, or call into

question the general competence or conduct of any individual.

The review will not make recommendations to increase the overall funding available to WCC through the UCP or other NZ Transport Agency funding streams.

**Time frame:**

The review will be undertaken by Morrison Low and is planned to report in May 2016.

Approved

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Dave Brash', written over a horizontal line.

**Dave Brash**  
GM, Planning & Investment  
NZ Transport Agency  
18/04/2016