

**RETHINKING 'PROGRESS'; AN EVALUATION OF THE
WELLINGTON REGION GENUINE PROGRESS INDEX**

by

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Abstract

There is widespread and long-running discontent with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of progress for society. A number of alternative measures have been proposed, including the Genuine Progress Index (GPI). A GPI has been developed by local government in the Wellington region (New Zealand) to facilitate a rethinking of conventional notions of 'progress'. The Wellington Region GPI (WRGPI) is modelled upon the *Nova Scotia* GPI, which is a pluralistic index consisting of environmental, social, economic and cultural indicators with either physical or monetary values. The study explores a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the development of the GPI, and provides an overview of the context within which it fits. A synergistic link was found between the *Nova Scotia* GPI framework and the framework provided by the Local Government Act community outcomes process. Despite this synergy, and the commitment to the GPI on the part of local authorities, a number of challenges emerged from the context. These include the poor integration of the existing community outcomes into institutional decision-making, a weak institutional commitment to the economic valuation procedure of the GPI, and the desire on the part of the present local government minister to reduce the scope of local government. In light of these challenges, a 'good practice' approach has been developed with a normative component: *deliberation, influence & inclusion*, and a methodological component: *purpose, process & context*. Deliberation was stressed as a particularly important tool to facilitate institutional and social learning around the WRGPI and to build the value case and a constituency for the WRGPI across the local authorities and community, and therefore increasing the likelihood that conventional notions of 'progress' will be replaced with more holistic ones. While this case study provides insights into the challenge of integrating a GPI into local governance, it is still too early to judge whether the initiative will emerge as a viable alternative to the GDP for the Wellington region.

Key words: Genuine Progress Index/Indicator, sustainable development, community outcomes, public participation, social learning

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Chapter One: Introduction

There is widespread and long-running discontent with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of progress for society (Cobb et al. 1995; Hodge, 1997; Anielski, 2001; Bagstad & Shammin, 2008; Clarke & Lawn, 2008a). The singular focus on the GDP has paralleled the strong emphasis on the development of economic capital and wealth; often at the expense of social, environmental and cultural capital and wellbeing (Talberth et al. 2007).

There is an increasing interest in the development of more holistic national accounting tools, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), to challenge the uncritical use of the GDP and to provide a more accurate picture of environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing (Ness et al. 2007; Gasparatos et al. 2008; Clarke & Lawn, 2008b). These tools are important to the push for 'sustainable development' across the world. As these alternative indicators trickle into use, it is important that some critique is provided and the lessons learnt are profiled. This is a necessary step if the GPI is to become a widely used tool that challenges the primacy of the GDP.

The New Zealand context

Interest in alternative measures of progress has also grown in New Zealand in the last decade. At the national level, Statistics NZ (2008) has developed a Framework for Measuring Sustainable Development (FMSD). The first report on the framework was released in July 2009 and measures sustainable development by evaluating stocks, flows, levels and structural criteria across financial and produced capital, natural capital, human capital and social capital¹. It remains to be seen how the framework will be integrated into government decision-making. At the non-governmental level, the New Zealand Centre for Ecological Economics (NZCEE) is shortly to release the

¹ Statistics NZ provide the following definitions (2008:12): *Capital stocks refer to the measurable quantity of a resource that is both accessible and available for use at a particular moment in time. Flow indicators measure the activities (flows) that cause changes in stocks (additions or reductions) from one period to the next. Level indicators provide a starting point or benchmark to assess the extent to which human needs are met. Structural criteria are economic, environmental, and social efficiency.*

first iteration of a national level GPI for NZ. Unlike the FMSD, the New Zealand GPI contains a bottom-line aggregate indicator designed to directly challenge the primacy of the GDP.

Coupled with the national-level measures, there is growing interest in more holistic measures of progress at the regional level. In part, this reflects the recent adjustment of the focus of local government in New Zealand through the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). The LGA has made local government responsible for improving sustainability through devolved community engagement (Reid, 2003; Thomas & Memon, 2005). In practical terms, this means that local government is focused on (Local Futures, 2006):

- Strengthening local democracy through an increased focus on public participation
- Providing for the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community, and
- Strategic, long-term and outcome-focused decision-making at the local level.

Local government is given general empowerment to integrate these focuses, which reflect a “governance for sustainable development” framework, into their activities. This governance framework, and the flexibility with which local government can implement it, provides excellent scope for adopting more holistic measures of progress, such as the GPI. This research looks specifically at the development of a GPI for the Wellington region.

The Wellington Context

In 2007, Greater Wellington Regional Council in conjunction with the region’s territorial authorities announced that it would develop a GPI. This was part of a joint strategy – the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) – that focused on growing the region’s economy and the promotion of good urban form. This is the first time that a GPI has been developed by local government in NZ, and joins just a handful of other such initiatives around the world. As such, an overview of how the GPI has been developed and implemented is of considerable interest, and it is important that the process is independently critiqued.

It was on this premise that this study has been developed. When it came to deciding which aspect of the GPI to focus on, a quote by Astleithner *et al.* (2004:23) was particularly pertinent: “designing and devising SISs [Sustainability Indicator Sets], in itself, changes little. It is a question of how SISs are integrated into the processes of urban governance”. Colman provided further direction for the research with his claims of the community value from the GPI (2004:18):

We feel confident that, at the community level, the GPI can assist communities in mobilising behind a common vision, learning about themselves, improving their wellbeing, planning a better future for their children, and measuring their progress towards that goal.

Consequently, it was decided that the focus of the research should be to assess how the Wellington Region GPI (WRGPI) is being integrated into local governance, with a particular focus on how the community is involved. This research proposal found favour with the WRS staff, and a research relationship was established.

Research Aim and Objectives

Therefore, the research aim is to:

Explore a ‘good practice’ approach to public participation in the development of the WRGPI, and provide an overview of the context within which it fits.

To address the research aim, three objectives were identified:

Objective One: *Identify the key aspects of the GPI that make it a useful tool for measuring progress/wellbeing at the local government level, and explore possible linkages with the Community Outcomes process (under the Local Government Act, 2002).*

Objective Two: *Identify what constitutes 'good practice' public participation in community-based long-term planning and in indicators of progress.*

Objective Three: *Building on Objectives One and Two draw conclusions on a "good practice" approach to public participation in the WRGPI, taking into account its regional and national context.*

The following chapter outlines the methodology applied to address these objectives and the research aim.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Philosophical framework

Positionality

My positionality in respect of this research is that I am supportive of recent efforts to develop more holistic indicators of progress for society, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator. I believe that while it is important to take individual actions to ensure that we are living in an environmentally sustaining and socially just way, it is equally important that we address deeply embedded structural issues. Such issues include the damage and inequity that results from the failure to deal with the true costs and externalities of production and consumption. In this way I see the GPI as an important tool that can start to internalise these costs and give us a better picture of how we are faring socially, culturally, environmentally and economically. I also believe in the need to work with organisations in a participatory and open way to explore how a tool like the GPI can achieve its potential.

Research Paradigm

This research is based upon an interpretive paradigm, that crosses between “a wide-range of interconnected interpretive practices” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:5). The research is pragmatically orientated. Creswell (2007:22) outlines that a pragmatic paradigm or worldview focuses on “the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations and consequences of inquiry rather than the antecedent conditions.” This focus on outcomes has been a focus of both the process and the final synthesis of the research, reflecting the view that enacting sustainable development requires a focus on both processes and outcomes. An open and adaptive strategy has been used throughout the research with the aim of being able to integrate paradigms, perspectives and contexts.

Research Design

An important concern in the research design was that the research would make a contribution to the development of the Wellington Region GPI (as it is called in this research) by Greater Wellington (GW). The WRGPI is based within a sustainable development framework, and the research design had to reflect that; therefore the entire research process is important – not just the end product. van Kerkhoff & Lebel (2006) have critiqued the two conventional views of links between knowledge and action – *trickle down* and *transfer and translate* - for inadequately engaging in sustainable development because they place the researcher as independent of the users of the research. They provide an alternative view, in which the role of the researcher is to engage with the research users. It is based upon the following assumptions (2006:452-7):

- *Scientific knowledge is socially constructed,*
- *The boundary between science and society is contestable,*
- *Issues of power with respect to research-based knowledge and action for sustainable development are ambiguous, complex and – not surprisingly - fraught with ideological conflict.*

These assumptions are reflected in the research design employed in this research in that time was spent with the commissioning organisation, GW, to develop and refine the research aims, objectives and outcomes. This process was seen as important to ensure that the research was well fitted to the context and to condition the organisational environment, as much as practicable, to be more receptive to the research. The key framework to link knowledge and action was based upon the principles of *participation, integration, learning* and *negotiation* between the researcher and the research users. Applying this framework in reality meant that a long-term relationship with GW was established to ensure that the research remained relevant and useful.

Possible limitations of the research design

This observational research design, in which personal relationships and funding are involved, does raise issues of research bias and objectivity. In studies such as this, there is an increased risk that critical evaluation will not

be provided for fear that it may jeopardise personal relationships or funding arrangements. In awareness of this limitation of the research design, it was important for me as the researcher to undertake critical reflection on how the relationships and funding might affect the research. While effort has been made to minimise bias, I cannot claim that this reflexivity has removed all bias, and this remains the most prominent limitation of the research design.

Overview of the qualitative research methods

The objectives were logically structured so that the results from Objective One contributed to Objective Two, and finally Objective Three.

Literature review

Literature reviews contribute to addressing Objective One and Objective Two. The literature reviews provide background discussion on important theoretical concepts that are then applied in the case study analyses.

Case study analysis

Case studies were used as a method to address Objectives Two and Three. Case studies are a commonly used qualitative research approach, “in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases)...” (Creswell, 2007:73). Such a bounded system can provide insight into important themes and issues related to the subject of inquiry. Usually case studies are based upon information from a range of sources, for example, interviews, reports and website material.

Case studies have been used in two different ways for this research. Firstly, the New Zealand local government case studies (see Chapter Six) were developed as ‘collective case studies’, where multiple cases help to identify the key themes and issues that emerge from public participation in long-term planning and indicators of progress (Stake, 2003: 138). Here the particular details of each case study are of less importance than the overall themes and issues that emerge across the spectrum of case studies. Where possible, multiple data sources were used to develop these case studies. For example, in the national case studies, previous case study research has been

combined with key informant interviews. The interviews sought input from community-based and local government based key informants. The key informants are not representative of communities or local governments across New Zealand, and this limits the generalisations from the case studies.

The second use of case study research is to address Objective Three, by developing an “intrinsic case study” (Creswell, 2007:74). An intrinsic case study is usually conducted because “the case itself is of interest” (Stake, 2003:136). The intrinsic case study of the WRGPI has involved collecting data from multiple in-depth sources, including observations, interviews and reports. By going into considerable depth, a more accurate picture of the case can be provided and the recommendations stemming from the research are more likely to be useful to the end-users of the research – particularly Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Analysis methods

The results from the case study research (including the interviews and case study meta-analysis) were coded for common elements and themes, using thematic analysis. Braun & Clark (2006:86) suggest that “thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set, be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts to find repeated patterns of meaning.” Furthermore, thematic analysis is a flexible analysis methodology “not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework” and so is suitable for analyzing the results of both the interviews and case studies (Braun & Clark, 2006:81). Themes were described where an identifiable perspective on a particular issue was offered.

Themes were summarised and the frequency with which they were reported was recorded. However, the most frequently appearing themes were not necessarily considered to be *the* most important themes (as some of the more insightful themes were only raised in one case study or interview), but they were considered more likely to be representative of the prevailing views of the time. The themes were then evaluated against the idealised public participation framework identified from the literature as a part of Objective Two, or in the case of Objective Three, the themes contributed to

the detailed Wellington region case study. More specific details of the methodology used for each of the objectives are as follows.

Table 1: Outline of Methods

Objective	Data source	Method(s)
Objective One	Academic and government literature	Literature review and analysis of the important features of the GPI that make it adaptable and effective for measuring progress/wellbeing at the local government level. Review documents on the COs* process using academic literature and government documents. Analyse possible linkages between the GPI and the COs process.
Objective Two	Academic literature NZ local government case study analysis	Use published sources to identify the key theoretical concepts of what a 'good practice' framework for public participation might be. 1. Meta-analysis of Burke's (2004) nine local government case studies to identify aspects of good practice public participation in local government. 2. Semi-structured, key-informant interviews with six council officers and six community members to establish a picture of local government public participation practice.
Objective Three	Wellington Region GPI (WRGPI) case study	1. Observational study of the development of the WRGPI. Observations are based upon regular meetings with council officers and participation in events related to the development of the WRGPI 2. Analysis of council policy papers and publications to develop an overview of public participation, the COs process and the development of the WRGPI. 3. Undertake a Treaty of Waitangi analysis based upon the WRGPI context (including consulting local tangata whenua). 4. Semi-structured, key-informant interviews with council officers and regional councillors to develop the WRGPI context and to outline important considerations for public participation in the WRGPI.

*COs = Community Outcomes

Methods employed to address the research objectives

Objective One

Identify the key aspects of the GPI that make it a useful tool for measuring progress/wellbeing at the local government level, and explore possible linkages with the Community Outcomes process (under the Local Government Act, 2002).

Objective One seeks to identify the key theoretical aspects of the GPI that make it a useful tool for measuring progress or wellbeing at the local government level. The literature review was systematically developed with the aid of key-word searches in search engines, databases and websites. This literature review was focused particularly in the fields of sustainable development, environmental management and ecological economics. An analysis of linkages with the Community Outcomes process (under the Local Government Act, 2002) was identified using academic literature and government documents.

Objective One is addressed in Chapter Three: *The Genuine Progress Index (or Indicator)* and Chapter Four: *The Local Government Act*.

Objective Two

Identify what constitutes 'good practice' public participation in community-based long-term planning and in indicators of progress.

In order to address Objective Two, a literature review and a New Zealand local government case study analysis were developed.

1. The literature review

The literature review on 'good practice' public participation was interdisciplinary spanning a number of scholarly fields, chiefly: environmental management, sustainable development, political theory, policy studies, planning theory, social science, community development, community governance and deliberative democracy. Common themes were

drawn from the literature in order to develop a 'good practice' conceptual framework in relation to public participation. This framework was used to guide the case study analysis.

The literature review is provided in Chapter Five: *'Good Practice' Public Participation*.

2. New Zealand local government case study analysis

In order to establish a picture of local government public participation practice, case studies consisting of two components were developed. The first component was derived from an existing study by Burke (2004), called *"Engaging with communities over outcomes: A review of innovative approaches to meeting the LGA 2002 challenge of identifying community outcomes"*. Burke provides nine case studies of innovative approaches to developing the community outcomes as required under the Local Government Act (2002); however she did not provide any meta-analysis of the case studies.

Therefore, a meta-analysis of the case studies was completed in the present study, using the previously outlined 'good practice' framework to provide the assessment criteria. Burke's choice of case studies was based upon a nationwide scoping exercise that would provide a broad geographical spread across New Zealand and has equal representation of regional, district and city councils. Burke was consulted to ensure that the meta-analysis was an accurate reflection of her study.

For the second component of the case studies, six of Burke's nine case study agencies were selected for interviewing in the present research. The six were selected to represent two regional councils, two district councils and two city councils, and to be as geographically representative as possible. The interviews were used as a method to provide further insight into the following themes: *representation, collaboration/partnership, methods of participation, indicators, barriers to public participation and funding*. The themes were informed by the literature reviews, the meta-analysis conducted on Burke's study and the Wellington context.

Participant selection

Purposive sampling was used to select key informants for interviews. Purposive sampling is a useful method for gathering in-depth information from people who are identified as key informants or experts in the field (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). These key informants should have the necessary knowledge and experience of the topic at hand, have the “capability to reflect and articulate” and be willing to participate (Flick, 2002). In each case, semi-structured, key-informant interviews with a council officer and a local community member were undertaken. A total of twelve interviews were conducted, with fourteen participants in total.

Community members were selected for their knowledge and experience of council-based community engagements and for their ability to provide an alternative and independent view of local government. In most cases, they were a staff member or volunteer of an NGO or community organisation. The Council officer interviewees on the other hand were selected as those directly responsible for running council based public participation or long-term planning.

Interview procedure

Two rounds of interviews were completed. The first round of interviews was completed from 17th- 23rd March 2009, in the North Island of New Zealand and the second round of interviews took place between 27th April – 1st May 2009, in the South Island. Interviewees were contacted by phone and an information sheet and interview schedule was emailed to them prior to the interview. Interviews were mainly conducted at participants’ workplaces and took up to one hour to complete. Notes and an audio recording were taken during the interview which were then transcribed post-interview.

The interview questions consisted of open-ended questions as well as short closed questions, followed by requests for further explanation. The research method received approval from the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington, and participants were given the choice of

remaining confidential or non-confidential. A copy of the ethics approval is provided in Appendix One.

The results from the interviews and case studies were then analysed using the 'thematic analysis' approach outlined earlier.

The case studies are presented in Chapter Six: *The New Zealand Local Government Case Studies and Interviews*.

Objective Three

Building on Objectives One and Two draw conclusions on a “good practice” approach to public participation in the WRGPI, taking into account its regional and national context.

To address Objective Three, a range of methods was used, including observational studies, key-informant interviews and policy and document reviews. These sources of information have been integrated to provide an in-depth 'intrinsic case study' of the development of the WRGPI.

1. Observational data

In the early stages of developing the research proposal for this research, contact was made with two officers, Melanie Thornton and Victoria McGregor of the Wellington Regional Strategy office (WRS), at GW. They expressed interest in the proposed research and contributed to the development of the research objectives. As part of an agreement with GW, I undertook to provide a report to GW (of no more than 10,000 words) on my research by the end of April 2009. This was formalised in a signed letter between GW, my supervisor and myself.

From that point on, I met with the WRS team approximately once a month and attended several GPI focused events that they organised. At each meeting I was provided with an update of how they were progressing since the start of the GPI work in July 2008 and this became a valuable input into the current study. Notes and reflections made at meetings form the core component of the observational data.

2. Policy and document review

Key policy and reporting documents related to the WRGPI and COs process contributed to the development of the WRGPI case study, as well as an analysis of the national and regional political context. These were obtained either from the GW website, other local websites or through contacts at the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

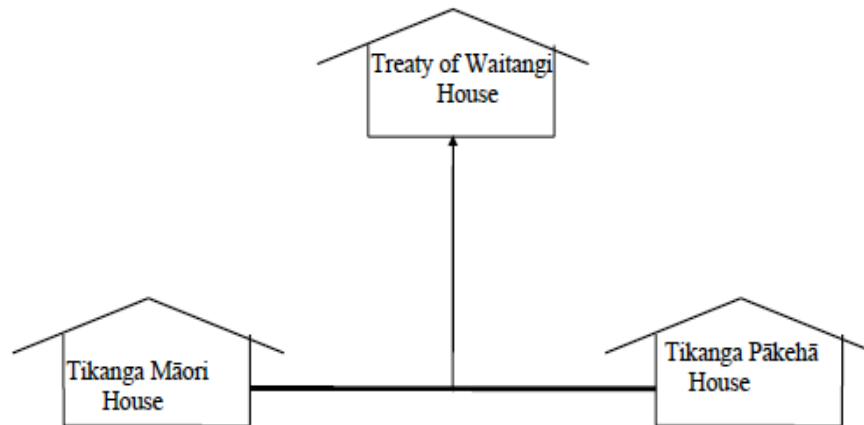
3. Treaty of Waitangi Analysis

The Treaty analysis model adopted is based upon Whatarangi Winiata's bicultural model for partnership (see Figure 1). This model has been adopted by the Anglican church in New Zealand and is discussed by Te Ahukaramū Royal (1998). It has been used to assess how the approach taken to the WRGPI matches up with the outcomes sought in the relationship between the Crown and Māori set out in the Treaty of Waitangi. The model is based upon the notion that there is a specific need to focus on 'Tikanga Māori' within a Māori environment (represented in Figure 1 as a house), a separate need to focus on Tikanga Pākehā in a Pākehā environment, and only then can they both meet in a mutual place based upon the ideals of the Treaty of Waitangi. Tikanga is defined as 'custom, obligations and conditions' by the Raupō Dictionary of Modern Māori (2008).

Te Ahukaramū Royal describes the rationale for the model (1998:10):

...the model arises from the Treaty of Waitangi and the assertion that one can not design systems and management for one culture, within the paradigm of another. The New Zealand Government has been doing this for such a long time that the belief that the Government has a 'global' concern and can accommodate all interests is deeply felt. Instead, only a model that allows space within which individual traditions can grow in their own way and, secondly, sets forth the principles and conditions upon which they can interact, is likely to succeed in fostering all.

Figure 1: Partnership - Two Peoples Development based upon the Treaty of Waitangi



Source: Te Ahukaramū Royal, 1998:10

The model has been used as the framework for undertaking a Treaty analysis of the development of the WRGPI. A local iwi representative was consulted as part of the Treaty analysis

4. Key-informant interviews

To get a broader picture from those involved with the WRGPI in some way, key-informant interviews were completed with two regional councillors, two GW officers and two officers from constituent (of GW) territorial councils. The same interview procedure was adopted as previously outlined for Objective Two. The interview questions covered the following topics in relation to the WRGPI: *linking to the COs, integration across the region, communication, integration into planning, benchmarking, full-cost accounting*. The themes were informed by the literature reviews, the results from the national interviews conducted for this research, the meta-analysis of Burke's study and from the Wellington context.

The results for Objective Three are provided in Chapter Seven: *Wellington Case Study*.

Chapter Three: The Genuine Progress Index (or Indicator)

This chapter addresses Objective One by providing a broad overview of the evolution of the Genuine Progress Index, and the merits of its application at the local government level.

Measuring Genuine Progress?

The concept of 'progress' has, generally speaking, underpinned the drive for economic development in nations across the world (Wright, 2004). Despite the successes in the name of development, development has also drawn a large volume of criticism (Jackson, 2009). One does not have to look far into the literature to see the depth of discontent with the primary measurement of economic development and progress - the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (see for example: Cobb et al. 1995; Hodge, 1997; Anielski, 2001; Bagstad & Shammin, 2008; Clarke & Lawn, 2008a). The 'GDP' discussion does in fact span nearly seven decades (Hodge, 1997). The GDP was developed during World War Two in the United States - to help financial planning for both wartime and domestic spending. Since that time, GDP has been embraced as *the* measure and indicator of progress around the world.

Despite the success of the GDP in becoming the first universally applied macro-level indicator, and despite its value in measuring market transactions of goods and services, it has serious limitations. In a nutshell, the GDP alone does not reflect the true state of a country's social, environmental, economic and cultural wellbeing. Even the architect of the GDP measure, Simon Kuznets, has drawn attention to the limitations of the GDP, warning in 1962 that *"The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income as defined by the GDP... goals for 'more' growth should specify of what and for what"* (cited by Cobb et al, 1995:67).

Numerous economists, scholars and activists have joined Kuznets' critique of the wide reliance on the GDP. They highlight the following inadequacies of the GDP (Anielski, 1999, 2001; Clark & Lawn, 2008a; Talberth et al., 2007):

1. Any expenditure is a contribution to the GDP because it is not value selective
2. The GDP does not include external (or informal) costs and benefits
3. Changes to natural stocks are not taken into account
4. The GDP does not address equity issues (such as equity of income).

Given these strong and well-accepted critiques of the GDP, the question remains: what are the alternatives to the GDP in measuring well-being or 'progress', and do they present a better picture of such progress?

Evolution of alternative indicators

To adequately address this question, we need to take into account the broader picture of indicator development, which can be grouped into seven indicator iterations (Hodge, 1997:6):

1. Economic (since the 1950s)
2. Social (since the 1960s)
3. Quality of life (since the 1960s)
4. Environment and natural resources (since the 1970s)
5. Health information systems (since the 1970s)
6. Healthy communities (since the 1980s); and
7. Sustainable development (since the 1990s).

In 'measuring change', each of these movements is underpinned by and pointed toward the concepts of *progress* and *development*. In many ways these concepts represent the ideals of the 'Western world': amongst other things, they give reason to the forces of globalisation, the activities of governments and the everyday lifestyles of individuals. The New Oxford Dictionary (1999) defines 'progress' as "advance or development towards a better, more complete, or more modern condition"; and to 'develop' means to "become more economically and socially advanced". Implicit in these definitions is that they are processes to get society to a desired state, but they do not define that state. Tagove (cited in de Rivero, 2001:112) asks,

echoing Kuznets, “...progress for whom...progress toward what?”

The most obvious effort to marry *process* with *desired state* is in the ‘sustainable development’ mandate, given prominence by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 in an effort to address environmental and ‘development’ issues in a more integrated way (Spangenberg et al., 2002). The Commission highlighted that the task for sustainable development is development that *meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (WCED, 1987). This definition has spurred continued debate and discussion about both the process of sustainable development and its goal. Parris & Kates provide a broad overview of the literature (2003:13.2):

Some combination of development, environment and equity or economy, society, and environment are found in most attempts to describe it. However, proponents of sustainable development differ in their emphases on what is to be sustained, what is to be developed, how to link environment and development, and for how long a time.

Table 2 provides a useful taxonomy of these different factors.

Table 2: Taxonomy of Sustainable Development Goals

What is to be sustained:	What is to be developed:
Nature	People
Earth	Child survival
Biodiversity	Life expectancy
Ecosystems	Education
	Equity
	Equal opportunity
Life support	Economy
Ecosystem services	Wealth
Resources	Productive sectors
Environment	Consumption
Community	Society
Cultures	Institutions
Groups	Social capital
Places	States
	Regions

Source: Parris & Kates, 2003:13.3

Sustainable development has increasingly become a core concept in policy and decision-making. From the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, Agenda 21 emerged as a ‘soft’ international agreement, arguing that (in

Chapter 40.4):

Indicators of sustainable development need to be developed to provide solid bases for decision making at all levels and to contribute to the self-regulating sustainability of integrated environment and development systems.

Coupled with Agenda 21, SDIs are a response to the increasing understanding and awareness of the interactions between environmental and social systems, improved indicator systems, the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies, and the drive for strategic initiatives (such as the Millennium Development Goals) at the international, national and regional level (Pinter et al., 2005). This range of drivers has meant that efforts to develop SDIs have been diverse; governments, community groups and independent research organisations have all taken leadership roles. In this way, SDIs have been identified as an important process that can help to define and measure a society's desired state.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Global Directory of Indicator Initiatives contains 841 entries (2009), and because it is up to organisations themselves to register an initiative, the real number of initiatives is likely to be much greater. To make sense of the diverse range of SDI approaches it is useful to make two important distinctions:

- Top-down, technocratic approaches versus bottom-up, community-orientated approaches (Rosenstrom & Kyllonen, 2007)
- Those that assign a monetary value to indicator accounts, and in cases where monetary values are ascribed, whether they are aggregated to a single index comparable to the GDP.

Indicators that challenge the pre-eminence of GDP by either encompassing, replacing or sitting alongside it include the Genuine Progress Indicators (GPIs), the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), Genuine Savings, and the Green Gross Domestic Product or Green Net National Product (Hanley, 2000; Ness et al., 2007). Most of these initiatives fit into the top-down, technocratic group, usually developed by independent research organisations for the national level, in a process where public participation is limited. Indicators in this category are not indicators of 'strong'

sustainability because they aggregate multiple forms of capital and therefore do not meet the key criterion of non-substitutability² (Dietz & Neumayer, 2007; Bagstad & Shammin, 2009). Proponents of these approaches sometimes acknowledge that the value of such indicators is primarily as a 'debunking index' that can challenge the conventional economic system (*ibid*).

There is also an extensive list of top-down SDIs that do not use economic valuation, but still reflect an effort to challenge the reliance on the GDP: the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), the Happy Planet Index (HPI), the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Ecological Footprint (Hanley *et al.*, 1999; Ness *et al.*, 2007). These are largely beyond the scope of this research.

Bottom-up approaches have been established as a response to the failure of highly aggregated top-down indices to engage communities and effect action at the local level (Fraser, 2006). Bottom-up or "community Indicators" work with the knowledge and abilities of local communities at the regional or sub-regional level. The processes to involve communities are various and contested, but in the context of developing processes that address sustainable development, the processes are as important as the indicators themselves (Meadows, 1998). Without community engagement, SDIs are unlikely to adequately present a compelling 'process' toward a desired state.

However, even the Community Indicator movement is guilty of becoming overly technocratic; Innes & Booher fault it for the proliferation of indicator reports, 'as if the numbers themselves would be enough to make change' (2000:174). They suggest that the most successful indicator projects are not necessarily those with the 'ideal' indicators or findings, but are the projects that successfully maintained engagement with a range of stakeholders in a way that challenged, transformed and united the competing discourses of stakeholders (*ibid*).

² Strong sustainability is based upon the premise that some forms of capital (particularly natural capital) are non-substitutable for others (i.e. natural capital cannot be adequately replaced by technical or social capital). Weak sustainability does allow for such substitution.

Despite these widespread efforts for progress to reflect the ideals of sustainable development, Astleithner *et al.* (2004:22) (as previously quoted in Chapter One), suggest that “existing institutional arrangements of actors and prevailing norms and values have constrained the innovation that SISs [Sustainability Indicator Sets] offer”. They conclude by reflecting that “designing and devising SISs, in itself, changes little. It is a question of how SISs are integrated into the processes of urban governance” (2004:23). This point has underpinned the development of the research objectives and is discussed throughout the following chapters.

Parris & Kates (2003:13.23) also provide a critique of the movement: “there are no indicator sets that are universally accepted, backed by compelling theory, rigorous data collection and analysis, and influential in policy.” They offer three major reasons:

1. The ambiguity of sustainable development
2. The plurality of purpose in characterizing and measuring sustainable development; and
3. The confusion of terminology, data, and methods of measurement.

Gasparatos *et al.* (2008) critique the SDI movement for the tendency to develop reductionist approaches to measuring complex systems. Norton (2007:3) also notes a concern with this tendency:

I fear that, in the rush to quantify all value derived from nature in economic terms, the most promising alternative for developing an integrated approach to evaluation—pluralism—will never be given a chance.

This reiterates the importance of developing pluralistic processes in order to reach a desired state. These pluralistic processes need to engage with “the plurality of legitimate perspectives” that exist in a society (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993). This is further discussed in Chapter Five. How the GPI addresses this issue of plurality is an important one and is now expanded upon.

The Genuine Progress Indicator and Index

The Genuine Progress Indicator was initially developed by the North American NGO *Redefining Progress* in 1995. Alongside its close companion,

the ISEW, the GPI has been developed by NGOs and academia for a range of countries, including: Canada, Australia, USA, Thailand, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Chile and recently New Zealand (Clarke & Lawn, 2008a). Both the GPI and ISEW aim to provide a better approximation of a population's welfare than the GDP (Gasparatos, 2008). Unlike the GDP, they are cost and benefit discerning. What is widely accepted to be a cost to society - such as crime, pollution, or emergency expenditure - is subtracted as a cost, rather than as a benefit as the GDP does. Even though the GPI has been used for little more than a decade, technical and methodological improvements have been made in an attempt to make it more institutionally and socially acceptable. Considerable challenges remain and are the topic of hot debate throughout the literature.

Although the bulk of the literature remains focused on the *Redefining Progress* approach, an alternative GPI has been developed - the *Nova Scotia* approach - by Dr Ron Colman and his colleagues at GPI Atlantic, Canada (2004).

A review of the GPI literature suggests that it is overwhelmingly focused on discussions about the *Redefining Progress* approach (see for example: Clarke & Lawn, 2008a, 2008b; Gasparatos *et al.*, 2008; Lawn, 2005; Ness *et al.*, 2007; Neumayer, 2000; Parris & Kates, 2003). There is scant description of the *Nova Scotia* approach or this divergence in methodology. This is in large part because GPI Atlantic has been operationally focused and has had few resources to put into the development of academic discussion about the *Nova Scotia* approach (Colman, 2004). Because the research for the current study is working in the context of the *Nova Scotia* approach, and also to help fill this gap in the literature, the two approaches are now compared, and summarised in Table 3 (Anielski, 2001; Boven *et al.*, 2006; Breuer, 2008; Colman, 2004; Lawn, 2005):

1. The *Redefining Progress* approach only uses indicators that can have a monetary value assigned to them across environmental, social, cultural and economic areas. It seeks to challenge the GDP, which it achieves by aggregating all indicators to one headline indicator that is compared to GDP. The calculation of the *Redefining Progress* GPI starts with private

consumption expenditure, to which other transactions are either added or subtracted (depending on whether they are considered a cost or benefit) and systems that defy market valuation undergo adjustments before being included. In this context, the GPI stands for Genuine Progress Indicator.

2. The *Nova Scotia* approach uses the full-cost accounting³ procedure, which does not depend on consumption expenditure to be calculated. Full-cost accounting integrates the true costs or benefits of natural resources (amongst other non-market variables) into the GDP. This reflects a shift away from the weak sustainability approach based upon continued rates of high consumption, to a strong sustainability approach. In other words, it is a shift from a predominantly 'reductionist' paradigm towards a 'systems thinking' paradigm that focuses on wholeness and interconnectedness of the system. *The Nova Scotia* approach avoids aggregating and seeks instead to provide indicators that integrate (where possible) across environmental, social, cultural and economic areas⁴. Due to this level of depth contained within each indicator, they are usually reported independently and as they are developed. In this context, GPI stands for Genuine Progress Index.

³ Full-cost accounting is an accounting procedure that considers the costs and advantages of an item beyond that of a conventional economic cost-benefit analysis by incorporating environmental, social, economic and cultural non-market variables.

⁴ A good example of an integrative indicator is 'commuter transport by mode' because it provides insight into the social (who is using different modes of transport), economic (who can afford different modes of transport) and environmental (is the choice of dominant transport modes impacting on environmental quality?) aspects of an issue.

Table 3: Comparative analysis of the Redefining Progress and Nova Scotia approaches

	<i>Redefining Progress</i>	<i>Nova Scotia</i>
Methodology	Personal consumption expenditure adjusted for environmental, social, cultural and economic costs and benefits	Takes physical measures and applies economic valuations where possible (full-cost accounting). Engages with the community.
Uses economic value and physical measures?	Focus on economic measures	Both
Relationship to GDP	Directly challenges the GDP	Provides a more holistic alternative framework, which includes the GDP
Aggregation to a single indicator?	Yes – the ‘GPI’	No
Top-down or bottom-up?	Top-down	Ability to be bottom-up or top-down
Paradigm	Tends toward reductionism, monistic	Tends toward systems thinking, pluralistic
Reporting	As a time series comparison with GDP, and spider diagram	As single accounts and spider-diagram
Meaning of ‘GPI’	Genuine progress indicator	Genuine progress index (collection of indicators)

Source: Own analysis, drawing on Colman (2004).

The most important consistency between the approaches is an emphasis on economic valuation as a means to challenge conventional economic systems (Colman, 2004:53):

In the view of both Redefining Progress and GPI Atlantic, only such economic valuation could challenge and take issue with existing core accounting mechanisms and create an essential dialogue with the world of conventional economics.

Economic valuation is the key point that differentiates both forms of the GPI from other indicator sets, such as those that have already been developed in New Zealand (for example the Quality of Life indicators, and the Social Report).

Colman provides a rationale for the divergence from the *Redefining Progress* approach (2004:11):

Parallel to our wish to use the GPI name, we had concerns. We did not want to replicate some of the methodological problems in the original GPI, and planned to measure some things very differently. We also did not intend to strive for a single bottom line, and therefore felt that the singular designation “indicator” did not accurately express our intention, approach or potential final product. We felt that an “index” was a more appropriate designation for a collection of many indicators.

By developing the GPI as an *index* (rather than an *indicator*) the *Nova Scotia* GPI addresses the concern outlined by Norton over the tendency toward monism, at the expense of pluralism. Furthermore, the team that developed the *Nova Scotia* GPI suggested that a bottom-line (or aggregate) indicator did not reflect the most practical information for policy makers, and instead opted to develop stand-alone accounts for each indicator. This is supported by Meadows’ (1998) arguments against aggregation:

- Any one measurement used as an indicator is a grossly simplified representation of complex states and relationships
- The process of aggregation itself can lead to the loss or misrepresentation of information
- Aggregating requires a subjective judgement of how much weighting to give each indicator.

On the other hand, two experienced SDI experts, Atkisson and Hatcher provide an argument in favour of aggregation (2001:512):

...we were previously opposed to aggregation. We believed it is important to use disaggregated arrays to demonstrate the many facets of sustainability in concrete terms. However, our continued work with decision makers in business, government, and the private voluntary sector, as well as our work with media representatives, ultimately convinced us of the desirability, and utility, of a more aggregated and simplified presentation scheme for sustainability indicators.

This reflects the sway the reductionist paradigm has on decision-making; attempts to deliver more holistic approaches are marred by a lack in capacity of decision-makers to engage with systems-based analyses. For this reason it

is important to ensure that there are processes of social learning when introducing systems focused analyses.

More fundamentally, it has become apparent that SDIs in themselves are not adequate processes for reaching a desired state. They need to be coupled with pluralistic efforts to engage with the community throughout the process. This argument is central to this research and forms an important component of the “good practice” approach developed in the present study, for the WRGPI context.

Using the GPI at the local government level

There is growing interest in the regional/local development of GPIs on the part of local governments around the world (Bagstad & Ceroni, 2008; Clarke & Lawn, 2008b). Colman (2004) identifies that the Nova Scotia GPI has percolated into and directly impacted on public policy at the provincial and regional level. It has also increased public consciousness, which has led to increased pressure and participation from the public.

Downscaling the GPI from the national to the sub-national level offers several challenges, including data quality and availability, interpretation of certain aspects and the appropriate use of results (*ibid*). These challenges for regional/local use of the GPI ultimately come down to the context, which is strongly defined by institutional arrangements and political contexts (Aistleithner, 2004).

One of these important context features is the degree of influence that the local government has over what might be issues or policies determined at a national level (Clarke & Lawn, 2008b). In the Wellington context for example, the Local Government Act (2002) takes an approach that sets broad level outcomes that often reach beyond the mandate of local government to address. Others, such as transport, involve both national and local level policies and actions. The breadth of these outcomes mirrors the relatively broad scope of indicators involved in the GPI.

Furthermore, the Local Government Act requires local government to report on progress toward community outcomes. The legal framework therefore is

particularly conducive to the development of a GPI in the Wellington context. Because the GPI and community outcomes are very broad, the success of them depends in large part on how local government can collaborate with community groups, NGOs, businesses, central government and individuals to monitor and report effectively on such outcomes.

Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the normative underpinning of the GPI, analysed the divergence in methodology between the *Redefining Progress* and *Nova Scotia* approaches, and outlined issues in how the GPI can be used at the local government level. The following chapter introduces and outlines the aspects of the Local Government Act that are relevant to the development of the GPI in the Wellington region.

Chapter Four: The Implications of the Local Government Act 2002

This chapter outlines the legal framework within which the WRGPI must fit. It focuses specifically on the intention behind the Local Government Act, the requirements for public participation and the requirements for reporting on progress. This chapter continues the discussion from the previous chapter to address Objective One. In doing so, it sets the ground for discussions that address Objectives Two and Three.

Rationale for the focus on the Local Government Act

At the commencement of this research, the WRS team indicated that the WRGPI was going to be based upon the nine community outcomes for the Wellington region. The COs are a core component of the legal framework of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). For this reason, although there is a wide range of statutory requirements that the regional council must fulfill (as outlined for example in the Resource Management Act 1991, the Biosecurity Act 1993 and the Land Transport Act 1998), the WRGPI fits primarily within the legal framework of the LGA.

The conceptual framework of the LGA

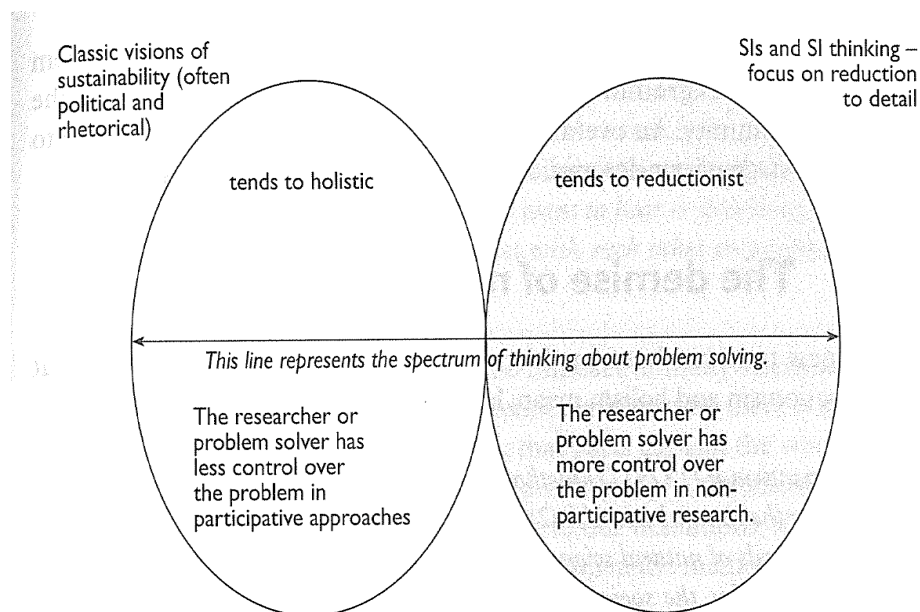
The LGA reflects two important conceptual shifts in the way that local government is practised. Firstly it shifts the emphasis from 'government' to 'governance'; and secondly it puts local government activities within a framework of sustainable development. Both of these shifts are important contributors to the move to indicators of progress and sustainable development such as the GPI.

The government to governance shift reflects the 'third way' approach taken by centre-left governments such as the 1997-2007 Tony Blair-led Labour government in the United Kingdom and the 1999-2008 Helen Clark-led Labour government in New Zealand (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Reid, 2003; Thomas & Memon, 2005). 'Government' emphasises traditional

institutionally based patterns of control and regulation through state and local entities, while ‘governance’ is a broader notion of the collective management of private and public affairs through the promotion of community participation and ownership (Reid, 2003; Astleithner *et al.*, 2004; Memon & Borrie, 2005).

Rather hierarchical and sometimes reductionist approaches have historically dominated local government approaches to problem solving and participation (as outlined in Figure 2). The shift that the LGA attempts to bring about is, as Bell & Morse (2008) call it, a paradigm shift from reductionist tendencies to a more holistic approach. This enables a form of governance that is characterised by enhanced participation from players outside of government. Although Figure 2 has been developed to address ‘research’, it can also be used to understand the difference between reductionist and more holistic forms of governance.

Figure 2: A continuum of governance approaches



Source: Bell & Morse, 2008:105

This conceptual shift from reductionist to more holistic thinking reflects post-normal science, which recognises that many of the issues that governments deal with are “wicked problems” – unsolvable by the government alone (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993). Coupled with the shift to

more holistic frameworks is an increased focus on engaging citizens through participation (Social & Civic Policy Institute, 2000; Juntti *et al.*, 2009). The difficulty that local government in New Zealand faces in dealing with inherently complex and “wicked problems” is reflected in the findings by McNeill (2008), who found that despite the mandate to “manage” the environment (with the Resource Management Act 1991), environmental quality has tended to decrease overall, despite some counter trends such as in point source water pollution. This failure to deliver on environmental performance reflects the nature of these complex, wicked problems, where they cannot be simply managed (Senge *et al.*, 2008).

The LGA was formed in a process of local government transformation to reflect “governance for sustainable development”. This approach aims to simultaneously address the complex nature of environmental, social, cultural and economic management (Reid, 2003; Thomas & Memon, 2005). It also reflects “a shift within central government to a focus on managing for outcomes, rather than on purchasing outputs from departments” (McKinlay-Douglas, 2004:10). With this adjustment has come an increased focus on strategic and long-term planning, as well as an emphasis on improved service delivery (Scott, 2004). McKinlay-Douglas (2004) argue that the process of globalisation has, at the same time, placed greater focus on the regional/territorial scale, with a consequent shift away from the national scale. The LGA also reflects the trend toward decentralisation initiated by the RMA 1991. These driving factors are reflected in the purpose of New Zealand’s local government as it is established in Section 2 of the LGA, 2002:

- (a) To enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- (b) To promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities, in the present and for the future.

The LGA enacts this purpose primarily through the community outcomes process (COs) and the Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCPs). The COs process was developed as a tool for long-term planning that addresses social, environmental, economic and cultural wellbeing for current and future generations (Local Futures, 2006). Local authorities are provided with

general empowerment to develop the COs process and, at a broader level, to achieve the purposes of the Act. The local authority must work with local communities and relevant organisations at least once every six years to identify community outcomes. The process employed to develop the COs must encourage the public to participate.

Local Government New Zealand (2003:31) provide a useful overview of the significance of the COs for the community:

The outcomes are the community's judgment of what it needs to promote its wellbeing. Outcomes therefore belong to the community – not the local authority. The local authority does not have to adopt the outcomes in the sense that it would adopt any other plan or policy, and may not even agree with the outcomes.

In this way, the COs process sets itself apart from other local government planning and decision-making processes. For many local authorities such a process has been new territory. This is especially given that in practice local government has limited control over the outcomes and its primary role is as a facilitator. The wording of this requirement is broad: *To inform and guide the setting of priorities in relation to the activities of the local authority and other organisations.* Some councils have applied this mandate effectively. The Waitakere City Community Report is one of the best examples of a joint effort between the local authority and community groups to undertake a process of 'local services mapping'. The Waitakere City Council initiated the process as a facilitator, but the resulting document is presented as part of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Strategy (2004, 2006). In this way, the process has shaped the priorities of both the local authority and 'other organisations'.

In a number of instances, the COs process has not been well implemented. The Wellington region case study, which is described and discussed in Chapter Seven, is an example in which the COs have been poorly developed and as a result lack institutional and community commitment. This reflects both the difficulty of developing COs at the regional level when they are also developed at the territorial level, and the difficulty of shifting the role of a

local authority to that of a facilitator. This less than adequate application of the COs process is perhaps attributable to the non-specific wording of the LGA and the delegated empowerment for local authorities to develop their own COs processes, together with the varying capability of local authorities.

It is important to consider the implications of the LGA interpretation of 'community'. While any affected citizen can have input into general local government decision-making, the legislation pertaining to the COs process appears to be more specific with its focus on, and interpretation of, 'communities'. Schedule 6 of the LGA defines a strict interpretation of 'community' as place-based:

2 (1) A community may be constituted in any part of a district in accordance with this schedule and must be wholly within 1 district.

3 (1) Not less than 10% of the electors of a continuous area, having a population of 1500 persons or more and being within the district of a territorial authority, may propose that the area be constituted as a community.

3 (2) Not fewer than 100 electors of a continuous area having a population of fewer than 1500 persons and being within the district of a territorial authority, being electors present at a meeting called by public notice by any elector or electors and being the majority of the electors present at that meeting, may propose that the area be constituted as a community.

The community then elects a board to represent them and it is this board that the council works with. Somewhat confusingly, this interpretation of community officially underpins the community governance process, and is the focus of the COs process. However, in reality, and according to Local Government NZ (2003) and McKinlay-Douglas (2004:39), the broadest interpretation of community should be used when developing the COs:

The term community sector should be understood to include all the diverse interests and groups within the geographic boundary of the district or region served by the council concerned so that it encompasses not just the voluntary/community sector but business, sport and recreation, Iwi and others.

Similarly, Brown & Pitcher (2005) stress the plurality of interpretations of the term 'community' (including place-based, values-based, occupation-based, events-based, skills-based and intentional communities). In the context of government-led community regeneration initiatives in the United Kingdom, Dargan (2009:315) comments that

...the concept of 'community'...is far more complex than the idealistic vision underpinning many area-based regeneration programmes. Simply living within the same neighbourhood is not enough to foster a sense of shared-ness – of community – amongst the people who live there.

Where community engagement has been sought in the development of the COs, none of the local authorities adhered to the LGA interpretation of 'community' – most of them followed the approach outlined by McKinlay-Douglas. This reflects the reality whereby community boards are sporadically dispersed and therefore the community governance model that the LGA aims to work to is unworkable. A good practice approach to the COs, then, is context dependent and works with the full range of community groups to ensure inclusion and representation (McKinlay-Douglas, 2004). Building broad community support is an important aspect of the *Nova Scotia* approach and in the case of the GPI Atlantic, a wide-range of community groups was engaged with (GPI Atlantic, 2009).

Should the territorial and regional authorities take a joint approach to the COs?

Another contentious issue in developing the COs is the linkage between the COs of the territorial authorities and the relevant regional authority. While a number of councils have opted to take a joint approach to developing the COs between the regional council and the territorials (for example the Canterbury and Taranaki regions), others have made it clear that they value keeping the COs at the territorial scale (for example Wanganui district and Waitakere City). McKinlay-Douglas (2004:37-38) cite and adapt Guerin's (2002) criteria for deciding whether a joint approach to developing the COs between the regional and territorial authorities is taken:

- *Area of impact – within what boundary is the greater proportion of the costs and benefits of the initiative – the outcomes – likely to be experienced?*
- *Information - where is the key information held/generated? Alternatively, is information relatively unimportant?*
- *Preferences - the more that preferences in the outcome area concerned vary by locality, the stronger the case for outcome responsibility being held at a low level.*
- *Cost - are there significant economies of scale?*
- *What are the areas of responsibility of the key partners for the outcome concerned?*
- *Capability - the expertise required to develop the community outcomes process, especially with a strategic planning emphasis, is probably scarce.*

These criteria provide a useful overview of the considerations that need to be taken into account before deciding whether or not to take a joint approach to COs development. Ultimately, the COs are context dependent and needs to be considered in each region and territory.

Reporting on progress toward the COs

The LGA 2002 (in Part 6, Section 92, and Schedule 10, Parts 1 & 3) also requires councils to monitor progress toward the COs by developing and reporting on a set of measures in the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) and Annual Plans. The LTCCPs, which must be developed once every three years, are an important aspect of the strategic planning aspirations of the LGA. They require councils to plan activities 10 years in advance and to explain how these activities address the COs.

Councils have developed a range of indicator sets and narrative reports that are included in the reporting component of the LTCCPs. Formal public consultation is required in the development of the LTCCPs. However, this public engagement has only in a few instances included the development of indicators. Most councils have instead developed indicators and reporting measures with the assistance of key stakeholders, government departments and experts (Burke, 2004; Memon & Johnson, 2008). Coupled with this

reluctance to directly engage the community in the development of indicators, is the limited progress in developing consistent performance measures. McNeill highlights that efforts have been marred by the imperfect coordination between regional and territorial councils (2008:221):

Regional councils need to interact with territorial councils and stakeholders. The survey revealed asymmetrical relationship; territorial council respondents generally felt that they did not have good relationships with their regional councils, while the regional council respondents felt that they did.

Furthermore, in a number of cases, there has been little public participation in the development of the COs – let alone the indicators (Burke, 2004). The limited efforts by councils to engage with the community reflect the broader challenge of implementing the LGA shift from government to governance. The issue of public participation in the development and use of indicators was addressed in the interviews for this research and is reported on in Chapter Six and Seven. Despite these challenges, the adaptability provided by the LGA creates significant potential for local authorities to involve the public in innovative approaches, such as the GPI.

During this research, a number of councils (predominantly regional) attended the GPI workshops held by GW, reflecting a general interest on the part of councils in ‘good practice’ methods of developing indicators. These included: Environment Waikato, Environment Bay of Plenty, Marlborough /Nelson Regional Economic Development Authority, Auckland Regional Council, Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Hawke’s Bay Regional Council. Several calls were made at these meetings for stronger links between local and central government – particularly on the issue of indicator development. These were based upon concerns about capacity and funding, which will also be further discussed in Chapter Eight: Discussion.

This chapter has provided an overview of the LGA requirements and the opportunities for integrating the WRGPI into the legal mandate of local government. To conclude, Memon & Johnston provide perhaps one of the

most important challenges in the development of the COs and indicators (2008:6):

...to successfully integrate a broad community based 'bottom-up' approach to indicator development with a central and local government expert-driven methodology. Thus, the task of indicator development is akin to marrying government with governance rather than signifying a shift from government to governance. This emphasises the significance of a collaborative strategy for indicator development.

This challenge is a useful point of reference for both the assessment of the approach taken by GW for the WRGPI, and as part of the 'good practice' approach to public participation in community-based long-term planning and in indicators of progress (as outlined in Objective Two).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the legal framework into which the WRGPI process fits, as well as a brief overview of critiques of the LGA. Two key conclusions can be drawn from this chapter:

1. The LGA provides the mandate and required flexibility for the development of a GPI, and
2. The LGA has important requirements for public participation through this process.

The following chapter looks in further detail at this second point, the issue of 'good practice' public participation.

Chapter Five: ‘Good Practice’ Public Participation

This chapter primarily addresses Objective Two. It provides an overview of the broad literature on public participation, examining related concepts such as deliberation and social learning in the context of local government, and outlines a ‘good practice’ conceptual framework for public participation. The chapter concludes with a case study that illustrates the use of the conceptual framework. This conceptual framework is developed to address Objective Three.

The Normative Basis for Public Participation

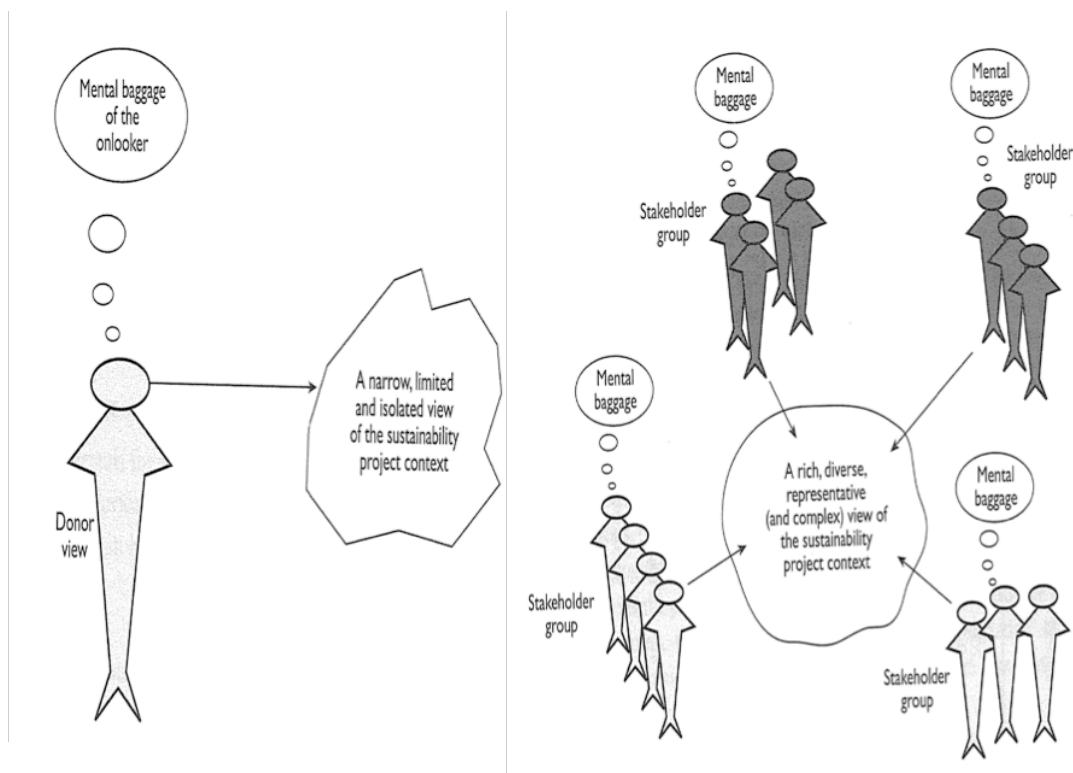
As highlighted in Chapter Four, due to the complex and “wicked” nature of environmental and social problems, more holistic or pluralistic approaches to governance and policy-making are required. Norton (2007:4) argues that

Trying to force all values at issue into a single, monistic framework leads to a politics of ideology and exclusion, as interest groups that define the problem differently struggle to gain control of public discourse and enforce the methodology that yields "one right answer" to the problem as they characterize it...Recognizing multiple values—pluralism—can lead to negotiation and reformulation of problems as people develop new, sometimes more similar, "mental models" of problem situations.

Norton identifies a number of important aspects here. Of most importance is the distinction that a monistic framework engages with few stakeholders and tends to exclude diverse views, while a pluralistic framework is inclusive of diverse stakeholders. A pluralistic or more holistic framework, such as the LGA (compared to previous local government legislation), is faced with the challenge of engaging the ‘plurality of legitimate perspectives’ (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993). Such engagement is a necessary step to build a broad picture of the systemic context before policy initiatives are developed.

Public participation that is more than tokenistic is, as Figure 3 shows, about collective (or pluralistic) problem solving and futures planning, rather than a monistic approach to policy development (Abelson *et al.*, 2003).

Figure 3: From a single view of sustainability to multiple views of sustainability

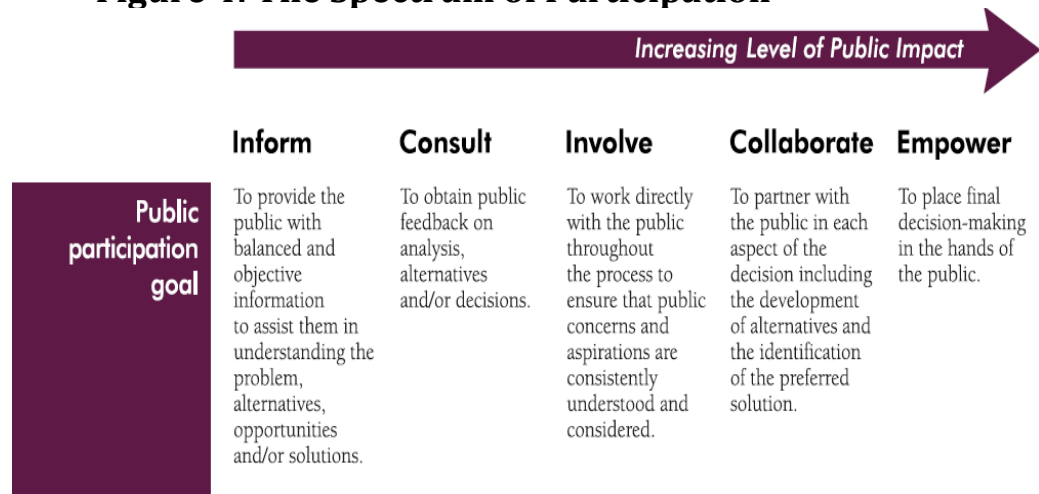


Source: Bell & Morse, 2008:164-5

The success or failure of a public participation⁵ initiative depends to a large extent on how the plurality of perspectives (or social difference) are brought together and facilitated. A number of frameworks have been developed that outline the different ways in which the public can be engaged. These include Arnstein's *ladder of citizen participation* (1969), Keen *et al.*'s *types of participation* (2005) and the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2, 2007) *spectrum of participation* (see Figure 4). According to the IAP2 spectrum, the different levels of public participation are 'inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower'.

⁵ 'Public participation' and 'community engagement' can be used interchangeably; however, for the purposes of continuity with both the LGA 2002 and the bulk of the literature this research primarily uses 'public participation'.

Figure 4: The Spectrum of Participation



Source: IAP2, 2007

Several commentators have suggested that the lower two levels - inform and consult - do not constitute genuine participation because there is no transfer of ownership or power between the agency and the participants (Innes & Booher, 2003; Jankowski, 2008). Involving the community shifts ownership further toward the community but it is not until the Collaborate or Empower levels that joint ownership and decision-making becomes a possibility. As a result, 'good practice' public participation according to the intention of the Community Outcomes (COs) process in the LGA should be collaborative or empowering.

Taking a collaborative approach means that the plurality of legitimate perspectives is engaged throughout the process (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993). Bringing together plural perspectives as a component of policy-making brings with it a complicated web of politics, evidence and power relationships that need to be negotiated or at least juggled before a genuine consensus or decision can be reached between the participants (Juntti *et al.*, 2009). The philosophy and practice of deliberative democracy has emerged in the last 30 years as a response to the need to negotiate these complex relationships and contexts. Deliberative democracy has become the most prominent field of research in political theory (Dryzek, 2007) and is also well studied in the fields of policy analysis, anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, social geography, business sciences and environmental studies

(van Asselt Marjolein & Rijkens-Klomp, 2002). Juntti *et al.* describe the process and its merits (2009:7):

...the deliberative approach in policy decision-making that is seen by many as crucial for managing the normative conflicts and dilemmas of environmental policy also offers potential for 'structural learning' that refers to changes in the discursive frames that actors engage when defining their normative view points and interpretations of validity of knowledge for example...Structural learning can lead to permanent behavioural change and even change in how actors view their own interests...As suggested by the notion of 'authentic dialogue', the quality of communication is key to the resolution of conflicts of interest and bridging of different interpretative frames and ways of viewing environmental problems and possible solutions.

Similarly, Dryzek & List (2003:1) note that “deliberation involves discussion in which individuals are amenable to scrutinizing and changing their preferences in the light of persuasion (but not manipulation, deception or coercion) from other participants.”

The early deliberative democracy scholars focused on the exchange of rational arguments, aspiring to reach a consensus for the common good and equality by providing a coercion-free environment (Habermas, 1987; Dryzek, 1990; Fishkin, 1995; Cohen, 2007). These principles have raised considerable debate. Geczi (2007:382) and Young (2000) highlight that deliberation is rarely coercion-free due to the “harsh reality of economic and social stratification”. They suggest that democratic arrangements are likely to attract participants that reflect the status quo, leaving little changed. Therefore, they highlight the importance of inclusion, which brings social difference into the room. Social difference can then be used as a tool to deconstruct assumptions and preferences in order to find a common ground.

There are wide ranging claims about the merits of deliberative democracy, which include for example, the hope of strengthening local democracies and bringing about ‘political renewal’ by engaging people in conversations about the common good (Barnes *et al.*, 2004:268; Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2002; Vatn, 2005; Carson, 2007). Deliberation that seeks to invoke ‘reflection upon

preferences in non-coercive fashion' (Dryzek, 2002:2; cited in Vatn, 2005:351), creates significant opportunities for social learning and can enhance the effectiveness of decision-making (Holden, 2008; Ray-Valette *et al.*, 2007; Siebenhüner, 2004). In turn, social learning has a number of positive flow-on effects including innovation, enhanced relevance of policy to those affected by it, increased public participation in dealing with community problems, and community action on issues (Innes & Booher, 2000).

The merits of deliberative democracy can be summarised in the following points (Bell & Morse, 2008; Involve, 2005; Lukensmeyer & Torres, 2006; Macnaghten & Jacobs, 1997; van Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006; Vatn, 2005; Webler *et al.*, 2001):

- An enhanced understanding of the problem, issue or system
- Enhanced support and legitimacy of governance
- Increased social cohesion, trust and justice
- More effective services and policy
- The shared management of responsibility for actions, and
- Social learning and capacity building.

The risks or costs on the other hand, include (Abelson *et al.* 2003; Barnes *et al.* 2004):

- The increased amount of time required to set up and get used to deliberation
- The need for an appropriate facilitator that has a well-developed understanding of the deliberative process
- The increased cost of running the process due to the longer time and facilitation requirements
- The challenge and possible implications of addressing established distributions of power and interests.

These have proven to be significant barriers to the adoption of deliberative methods in public participation at the local government level. The challenge of increasing the use of deliberation is reflected by the trade-off between the increased costs of deliberation with the longer lasting, more robust, and

more widely accepted decisions that it can create. While these costs are significant issues that need addressing, they should not prevent the use of deliberation, as arguably one of the most important tools for moving toward sustainable development.

Hartz-Karp's (2007:2) description of the literature reflects three important normative prescriptions for public participation: deliberation (consensus that secures legitimacy), influence (over the process and outcomes) and inclusion (egalitarian processes). These three considerations deserve further attention in the local government context.

Deliberation and social learning in the local government context

In the context of the LGA 2002 – which orientates local government to being community focused within a sustainable development paradigm – deliberation is especially important for the social learning that it makes possible. However, Holden points out that (2008:2):

We have remarkably few analytical tools to assess when and how learning is taking place in different contexts and amongst different professional and public communities...In failing to understand how learning processes function in the public realm, planners and policy makers miss an important means to connect with communities and members of the public to push for desired ends.

Social learning is defined by Keen *et al.* (2005:4) as *the collective action and reflection that occurs among different individuals and groups as they work to improve the management of human and environmental interrelations*. They argue that the failure to come to grips with the complexities of 'sustainability' is in large part due to a lack of focus on social learning between local government and the community. They outline four 'traps' that inhibit institutional learning (Keen *et al.*, 2005:18):

1. Administrative traps – institutional arrangements become inflexible and driven by narrowly defined management or efficiency considerations that are unable to take into account new information, different interests or diverse values.

2. Competency traps – bureaucracies become very good at what they do, but are unable to innovate and respond to new challenges requiring different approaches.
3. Bureaucratic traps – planning processes become captured by bureaucratic hierarchies and are unable to integrate external inputs into the decision-making frameworks
4. Legitimacy traps – bureaucratic processes become focused on maintaining legitimacy by servicing the interests of a narrow range of interest groups.

Institutions that successfully adopt a social learning approach can use it to build the social capital and capacity required to respond to the challenges of sustainability (Percy-Smith, 2006). Brown *et al.* (2005:254-6) outline the social learning strands that meet the local government strategic need to achieve an outcome, whilst ensuring that an ‘enduring institution of learning is formed around the environmental management process’. These learning strands are presented in Figure 5 and include *Reflection*, *Systems Orientation*, *Integration*, *Negotiation* and *Participation*. These strands reflect the deliberative democracy approach, in which the process of engaging with the community is an evolving, long-term learning process.

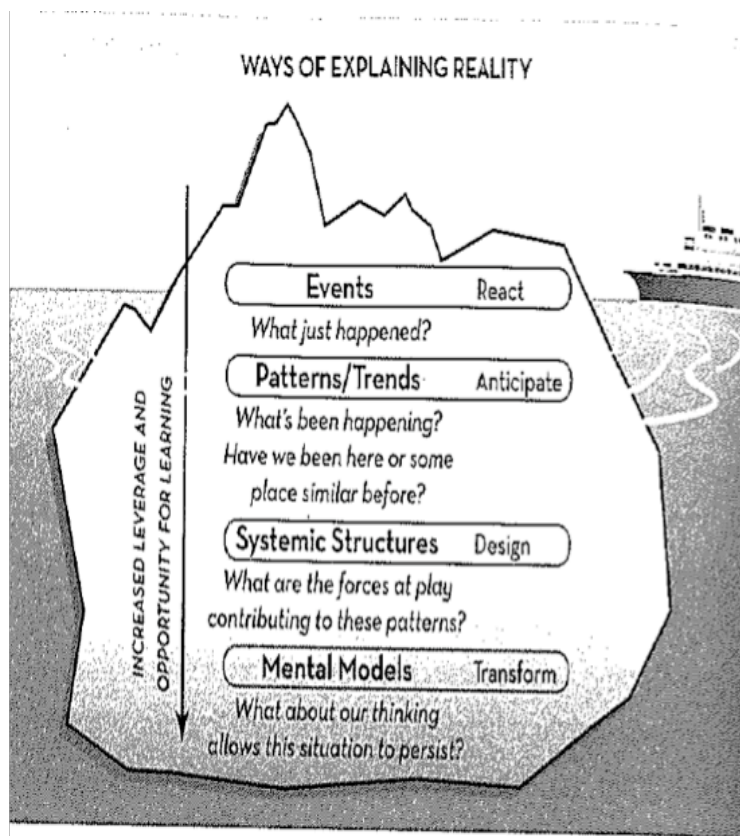
Figure 5: Social learning strands of a government-initiated environmental management system

Government Learning
<p>Reflection: Respecting intuition and professional knowledge, revealing community and organisational values and objectives</p> <p>Systems Orientation: Understanding interactions between community and government over time and space</p> <p>Integration: Valuing different types of knowledge (individual, local, expert, organisational and holistic), using iterative knowledge management systems</p> <p>Negotiation: Exchanging ideas and facilitating learning across scales and interests</p> <p>Participation: Developing rules of engagement to encourage mutual obligations and shared objectives</p>

Source: Brown *et al.* 2005:254

Senge *et al.* (2008:172-4) see social learning as an important component of a systems thinking paradigm, which recognises four distinct 'ways of explaining reality' (see Figure 6). They call this the 'Systems Thinking Iceberg' because like a real iceberg, most of the levels are "below the waterline or invisible to anyone looking at things normally". Senge *et al.* highlight the importance of being able to move down the levels of the iceberg in order to uncover the events, patterns/trends, systemic structures and finally, the mental models that contribute to complex and wicked problems. Many efforts to address issues of sustainability get stuck at the top level - *reacting* - rather than transforming or redesigning systems. As such, the issue remains. In order to reach these deeper levels of analysis and enquiry, an open and collaborative process of community engagement is required.

Figure 6: Ways of Explaining Reality



Source: Senge *et al.*, 2008:174

Fischer provides an example of how the lower levels often go unnoticed when he asks (1995:7): "How could the United States spend \$30 billion a

year on foreign intelligence and fail through the 1980s to see the coming collapse of the former Soviet Union?" The answer is likely to be that they spent most of their time at the first level – reacting – rather than anticipating patterns and trends. There was little social or institutional learning.

While this outline of aspects of social learning only provides a snapshot of the wider literature, it reveals insights into the philosophy of social learning in a local government context. With this discussion of deliberation and social learning in mind, this chapter now considers the issue of influence.

Influence

Influence is important because it makes participants feel that their participation is contributing to something. Without influence, participation can be seen as meaningless. A comprehensive meta-study of 239 participatory case studies by Beierle & Cayford found that "one of the principal reasons offered for low levels of participant motivation was a perception that the public had little influence over agency decisions" (2002:68). Furthermore, in situations where there is a lack of trust between the public and the lead agency, it was found that increasing influence helps to build trust, which in turn fosters participation.

Investigating the role of influence inevitably leads to the need to delve into definitions and distributions of power, a comprehensive review of which is beyond the scope of this study. However, Juntti *et al.* provide a valuable insight into the notion of power (2009:5):

...in order to understand the notion of power, and its role in the policy-evidence relationship, it should be understood as vested in interaction between certain actors and enacted, rather than allocated a priori...Such 'network power' can be catalysed by the mutual benefits vested in effective collaboration as opposed to traditional power struggles or 'manouvering'...In other words, a certain interpretation of evidence or a framing of environmental sustainability becomes powerful only when it is adopted or enacted by a host of relevant decision-makers and stakeholders. By association, this renders the proponents of this specific discourse 'powerful'.

Thus, power is not pre-determined. Rather it is nested in networks of people and can be activated if a collaborative approach is taken. Where collaboration is not enacted, power can 'turn ugly', with the emergence of resistance to preserve political interests or as institutionalised resistance to change (Barnes *et al.*, 2004). Society is defined by deeply embedded social, political and power inequalities, so a special effort is required to ensure that public participation initiatives are genuinely inclusive of - and can facilitate - this difference (Geczi, 2007).

Inclusion/Representation

Inclusion (as indicated by representation) provides legitimacy to the outcomes of public participation; however, it is also one of the most difficult challenges to negotiate. The study by Beierle & Cayford (2002:23), found that nearly 60% of public participation processes were non-representative of social difference in the general public. Geczi (2007) and Young (2000) point out that without genuine representation, entrenched structural inequalities (such as inequalities of power and racial or gender discrimination) remain unchallenged. They suggest that the social difference (or plurality of perspectives) arising from true representation can be used to stimulate dialogue (and social learning) and to negotiate entrenched economic, social and political rifts and interests. It can also provide opportunities to challenge dominant discourses.

There are a number of different approaches to achieving inclusion. Beierle & Cayford (2002) highlight that the foremost question is whether to use random selection or stakeholder engagement in order to be inclusive. Carson & Hart (2006) and Hatz-Karp (2007) stress that the most effective way to ensure inclusion is by random stratified selection of participants. This they argue is the only way to ensure that socioeconomic representation is achieved.

It is important to recognise that both of these approaches have their own legitimacy. In large part, which approach is most suitable is context dependent. Context includes institutional, political, environmental and social relationships, structures and mental models/worldviews. A brief overview of

the legislative context in which this research is based has already been outlined, and further details about the context are provided in Chapter Seven. In brief, the context for public participation can be generally defined by the focus on communities of place, sustainable development through a focus on the four wellbeings, strengthening democracy by involving the public in decision-making and social learning that emerges when social difference is present.

In light of these contexts, what is the best way for the COs process to be inclusive?

Both stakeholder representation and socioeconomic representation are important aspects of an ideal WRGPI – COs process. In the first instance, it is important for the regional council to collaborate directly with key stakeholder groups, who represent interests within the community and can contribute greatly to the initial groundwork (which includes resourcing etc.). Socioeconomic representation through stratified random selection is an important aspect that is best suited to public engagements. Socioeconomic representation helps to ensure that process is truly reflective of the diversity inherent within a community and can therefore provide legitimacy and increased ownership of the initiative. Using both stakeholder group representation and socioeconomic representation is likely to provide a much more rich, complex and diverse view of the community, the context, and the project than the local authority alone could (as shown in Figure 3), as well as increasing the likelihood of achieving inclusion.

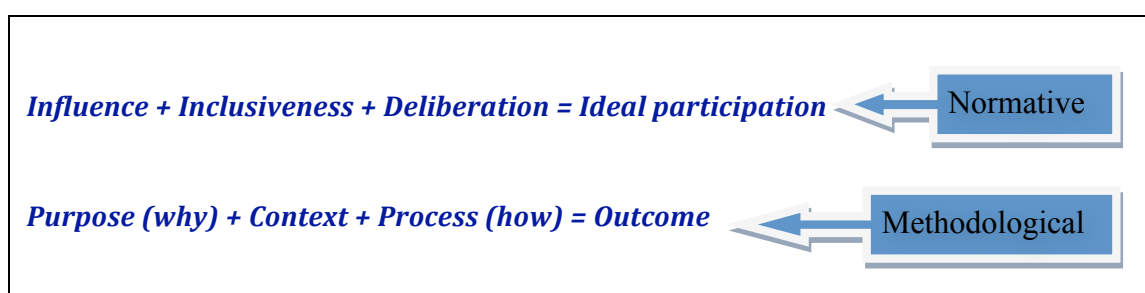
A conceptual framework for ‘good practice’ public participation

These three considerations – deliberation, influence and inclusion – together form a useful normative framework for ‘good practice’ public participation upon which the case studies are assessed and the WRGPI – COs process is loosely based. Carson argues that the principles are central to designing a successful and effective public participation initiative. She warns that without them “policy making occurs within a pseudo or false democracy,

audience democracy prevails, and powerful elites have an inappropriate level of control” (Carson, 2007:19).

As well as the normative aspects, there are important methodological considerations – purpose, context and process (Beierle & Cayford, 2002). Together, these methodological and normative aspects constitute the ‘good practice’ framework for public participation, as outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Conceptual framework for good practice public participation



Source: Author’s own, drawing upon Hartz-Karp (2005a, 2007) & Involve (2005)

In terms of the methodological components, the purpose and context have already been discussed in Chapters Three and Four, which have provided an overview of both the purpose and context of the legal framework and the theoretical aspects of a GPI. The possible processes for public participation have been introduced and receive further attention in Chapters Seven and Eight. We turn now to looking at the specific methods that can be used and how these are evaluated.

Methodological issues

Methods of participation

With the increasing focus on public participation across the world, a great many processes to engage the public have emerged. These cover a range of scales, contexts and participants. Furthermore, the principles of deliberation have been applied to a wide range of participation methods (Rauschmayer & Wittmer, 2006). It is, however, beyond the scope of this report to discuss these in detail. Abelson *et al.* (2003), Bayley & French (2008), Bingham (2006), Carson & Hartz-Karp (2005), IAP2 (2006), Involve (2005),

Rauschmayer & Wittmer (2006), Rowe & Frewer (2000) and van Asselt Marjolein & Rijkens-Klomp (2002), all provide useful overviews of different participatory methods.

The range of methods includes:

- Workshops (IAP2, 2006)
- Focus groups (IAP2, 2006)
- Citizen's juries (IAP2, 2006)
- Deliberative Polls (IAP2, 2006)
- Integrated Assessment (van Asselt Marjolein & Rijkens-Klomp, 2002)
- Multi-criteria analysis (Kowalski, 2009; Quaddus & Siddique, 2001; Rey-Valeete *et al.*, 2007)
- Technology aided participation (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2008):
- 21st Century Town Meetings (Carson & Hartz-Karp, 2005; Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2002)
- Participatory GIS (Jankowski, 2008)
- e-participation (French *et al.*, 2007; Hilton, 2007)
- Mediated Modelling (Antunes *et al.*, 2006; Forgie & Richardson, 2008)

Of particular interest in the New Zealand context, Forgie & Richardson (2007:10) investigate the possibility of using mediated modelling as a technique for developing the COs under the Local Government Act. Mediated modelling is a methodology that "provides a way of building and documenting understanding about systems so that the various parties all work in the same space". Thus mediated modelling is a way to investigate the layers of the systems thinking iceberg, by asking such questions as (*ibid*:11):

- How does the world work in a certain domain or worldview?
- What would constitute a more desirable state of the world or vision of the future?
- What policies will lead to that better state, given how the world works?

Mediated modelling uses computer modelling as part of the participatory process. Technology aided participatory processes have been shown in a number of cases (see above) to be successful at engaging people with complex and wicked problems or futures planning. The primary concern

with this type of approach is that some people are not interested in technical, computer-modelling approaches (*ibid*) or may mistrust the assumptions that tend to be obscured within the computer models it deploys.

The mediated modelling approach is one of a number of promising approaches that could be linked with the COs process and potentially linked to the WRGPI. Another innovative approach is the 21st Century Town Meeting, which is illustrated at the end of this chapter in the Perth case study.

Evaluating public participation

Despite the comprehensive field of literature on public participation, Laurian & Shaw (2009:294) point out that ‘published evaluations of participation are scarce and tend to rely on few case studies’. Participation is inherently difficult to evaluate definitively; nevertheless, a common reason for the lack of evaluation is the perception that public participation is an end unto itself – rather than a means to an end (Macnaghten & Jacobs, 1997; Rowe *et al.*, 2008; van Asselt & Rijkens-Klomp, 2002). This is especially so when the participation is to meet a statutory requirement.

They also suggest that evaluation is often avoided because it is a difficult task. In Laurian & Shaw’s survey of 761 planners based in the United States, only 9% reported that they regularly evaluate participation with formal criteria. Informal criteria were more frequently used, which include (Laurian & Shaw, 2009:303-4):

- Increased understanding (mentioned by 24.1% of respondents)
- Consensus reached/arrival at decision (19.0%)
- Participant satisfaction (16.0%)
- Increased trust among participants (15.6%)
- Solution identified is workable, can be implemented (13.0%)
- Attendance (6.4%)
- Smooth process, little conflict (5.9%).

Formal criteria on the other hand included short, close-ended surveys, analysis of public comments (expressed in comment cards, e-mails, letters,

or verbally), analysis of attendance, and a process of critical reflection where participants reflect on their experiences through open-ended questions.

Rowe *et al.* (2008) have developed and applied a normative framework for evaluation. While they found that the appropriateness of the criteria vary according to the context, overall they provide a useful set of assessment criteria. The nine criteria are (Rowe *et al.*, 2008:421-2):

Acceptance Criteria:

1. Representativeness: public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public.
2. Independence: the participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way.
3. Early involvement: the public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient.
4. Influence: the output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
5. Transparency: the process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.

Process Criteria:

6. Resource accessibility: public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfill their brief.
7. Task definition: the nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
8. Structured decision-making: the participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
9. Cost effectiveness: the procedure should in some sense be cost effective.

Evaluation is important to ensure that there is learning from the process, that concerns of participants don't go unheard, and that improvements are made over time. Bringing together the plurality of legitimate perspectives can sometimes have an ugly side, where people's energy becomes destructive rather than creative. In this case, instead of social learning, social conflicts and inequalities can be exacerbated. Participation fatigue is also a

risk – people may be turned away from participation (and future events) due to conflict, overly-demanding processes, poorly communicated processes, or outcomes that have little influence over decision-making (Involve, 2005). Evaluation is one way to begin to ensure that such concerns are effectively dealt with – rather than causing the destabilisation of the project.

Case study: Dialogue with the City – Perth, Australia⁶

This case study has been chosen because it exemplifies many of the good practice issues discussed previously in this chapter. While it did not directly involve indicators, it reflected the normative framework identified above for ‘good practice’ public participation, it used a technology-aided method and went through a process of evaluation.

Overview

Dialogue with the City was initiated in 2003 by Western Australia’s minister for planning and infrastructure in response to the largely uncontrolled and unsustainable growth of Perth city. The aim was ambitious: ‘to create the world’s most livable city by 2030’. The design of the public participation process attempted to engage the whole community and sought to be deliberative where possible. Outreach initially involved a survey of 8,000 residents, a one-hour TV show, an interactive website, newspaper articles, school competitions and additional listening sessions for those frequently not heard. This was followed by a 21st Century Town Meeting, with 1100 participants participating in the initial meeting.

The method: 21st Century Town Meeting

Hartz-Karp (2005b:16) provides a brief overview of the key-components of a ‘21st Century Town Meeting’:

This process uses small group, facilitated deliberation together with networked computer technology to enable the room’s key themes to be broadcast to the entire room virtually in ‘real time’. Table inputs are relayed to a theme team who synthesise the results and display them to the room on large screens. Key issues are prioritised, with each participant nominating

⁶ Sources for case study: Carson & Hartz-Karp (2005); Carson & Hart (2005); Hartz-Karp (2005a, 2005b); Maginn (2007)

their individual preferences...individual ratings or rankings are input to the computer and then displayed on the screens as histograms.

Evaluation

The evaluation from the event provides insights into the effectiveness of the process. Participants left very satisfied overall, with 99.5% of the 1100 participants reporting that the deliberations went 'okay' or 'great'. Ninety-seven percent of participants said that they would be prepared to participate in a similar event again. Forty-two percent of participants changed their views as a result of the dialogue, while many more admitted to broadening their views (Hartz-Karp, 2005a:7).

While it was clear that the process was costly in terms of resource use, that cost was spread, not falling entirely to the Western Australia state government. The distribution of contributions was also highlighted by Hartz-Karp (2005a:334):

The Dialogue process was extensive and would have been costly if industry partners had not shared the costs of the televised production, chat room, newspaper coverage, computer software and hardware and major forums. It is estimated that the process would have cost at least AU\$570,000, excluding public service salaries, if it had been paid for totally by the government. The actual cost to government was AU\$250,000.

Deliberation

To judge from the evaluations, the process of deliberation was very successful. Special care was taken to ensure that the process developed an environment that had deliberative attributes. The success of this process is reflected in the social learning that emerged from the event, with 42% of participants said to have changed their views and perspectives.

Inclusion

The selection of participants was 1/3, 1/3, 1/3: one-third stakeholder, one-third open invitation and one-third random stratified selection. The random stratified selection was seen as an important step to ensure representative legitimacy. It was recognised that despite the broad scope of this approach,

extra effort was still required to reach groups that often go unheard (youth, indigenous peoples, disabled people and migrant groups).

Influence

The Minister made a special effort to outline the level of influence that the process would have and, in the end, the Western Australian state government adopted the final report and plan of action. This clear communication of influence meant that people had a clear picture of how their contribution would “make a difference”. This clear communication contributed to the overwhelming support that it received from the community, with over 250 people volunteering to help out on the day.

Critique of Dialogue with the City

Despite the apparent success of the Dialogue, Maginn (2007:331) provides a critique of the process:

...the process was scripted and stage-managed and lacked sufficient space and time for citizens to engage in genuine inclusionary argumentation and social learning. Hence the Dialogue initiative may be viewed as an exercise more reflective of a mix of consultative and participatory planning conducted widely.

This highlights the contentious nature of what constitutes deliberation, how it is enacted and the inherent difficulty of establishing a deliberative environment. Thus, when assessed against the nine acceptance and process criteria outlined by Rowe *et al.* (2008), the process can be said to have fulfilled all the criteria except the ‘independence’ criterion, as alluded to by Maginn (2007). This critique provides the following lessons:

- Genuine deliberation requires considerable time for ‘inclusionary argumentation and social learning’ and even in the most inclusive process views will differ on motion and outcomes, and
- It is important to outline and reflect on the underlying assumptions and independence of the process, which in the case of the Dialogue with the City was arguably ‘stage-managed’ to reflect notions of ‘sustainability’.

Taking into account this critique, the Perth case study provides a useful example of a process that sought to be deliberative, inclusive and influential. The lessons from the initiative can be applied to the development of a 'good practice' model for public participation in the Wellington context.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a broad overview of the normative and methodological aspects of public participation. From this overview a conceptual framework for 'good practice' has been developed. The Perth case study illustrates how the conceptual framework for 'good practice' public participation can be applied and some of the remaining challenges. The conceptual framework developed in this chapter has been used in the development of a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the development of the WRGPI. This is presented in the following chapter and discussed in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Six: The New Zealand Local Government Case Studies and Interviews

This chapter presents the results from the New Zealand local government case studies. These results provide some important background to addressing both Objective Two and Three. The New Zealand local government case studies include results from interviews carried out for the present research as well as case studies conducted by Burke (2004). The results are presented according to these categories – “From the interviews” and “From Burke’s case studies”. A summary of the different aspects of the interviews and case studies is shown in Table 4. The results for the NZ case studies are structured first according to the normative framework and secondly according to other important themes that emerged.

Table 4: Summary of NZ Local Government Interviews & Case Studies

Local authority	Name of COs initiative (from Burke, 2004)	Council interviewee (2009)	Community interviewee (2009)
Waitakere City Council	The Waitakere Way	Mark Allen (Team Leader – Long Term Planning)	Pat Watson (Community Waitakere)
Manukau City Council	Tomorrow’s Manukau	N/A	N/A
Tauranga City Council	Tauranga Tomorrow	Cheryl Steiner & Anne O’Malley (Strategic Planners)	Tauranga Community Person
Taranaki Regional Council	Future Taranaki	Policy Manager	Simon Cayley (The Bishops Action Foundation)
Wanganui District Council	Wanganui’s Future	Council officer	Wanganui Community Person
Kapiti Coast District Council	Choosing Futures	N/A	N/A
Environment Canterbury (Regional)	Future Path Canterbury	Josie McKnee (Community Outcomes Portfolio Manager)	Raven Gooding (community youth advocate)
Queensland Lakes District Council	Place-based Community Plans	Phillip Pannett (General Manager Policy and Planning)	Trevor Williams & Graham Dickson (Wanaka residents association)
Environment Southland (Regional)	Our Way Southland	N/A	N/A

Inclusion and Representation

From Burke's case studies

All councils focused primarily on achieving interest group/stakeholder representation rather than wider public representation. The reasons for this were varied and include:

- The community outcomes are much 'bigger' than just the council, so strategic relationships will help progress them;
- Simplicity – it is much easier to engage with people via already established groups;
- It is important to get 'the right people' in the room who will contribute constructively.

The case studies show that socioeconomic representation remains the greatest challenge for councils to achieve. Socioeconomic representation was achieved by household surveys in four of the nine case studies. Open invitations to participate were maintained by all councils, which achieved socioeconomic representation to some degree, but also tended towards some level of exclusion in practice.

All case studies used a mixture of broad and narrow inclusion to develop the community outcomes. Reference or steering groups consisting of councillors, stakeholders or officials were used to lay the groundwork. In some cases the reference group consisted of only council officials and/or councillors, meaning that inclusion was very narrow at that stage. Other reference groups sought to be broader by taking a collaborative approach among council staff, councillors and the 'key movers and shakers' of the community (as identified by council staff). The reference groups set the groundwork for broad inclusion, which was seen as important to ensure the legitimacy of the community outcomes.

From the Interviews

Of the 14 interviewees, seven felt that socioeconomic representation is a priority for their council when undertaking community engagements. Six felt that while it is not a priority, it is still a consideration. There was a common

sentiment that gaining socioeconomic representation is one of the more challenging aspects of engagement and was usually achieved through telephone surveys with randomly selected participants rather than by inviting randomly selected individuals to meetings. When questioned about the merits of gaining representation through one-third open invitation, one-third stakeholder and one-third random selection, half of the interviewees considered this to be a useful and realistic approach. Four interviewees suggested that they would prefer representation to be gained by building on existing community relationships with community groups and leaders. The remaining interviewees were ambivalent about the approach.

The final question on representation asked the interviewees to identify possible barriers to enabling socioeconomic representation. The most commonly expressed barrier (by nine of the interviewees) is the lack of capacity (education, time, knowledge etc.) for participants to engage in council orientated conversations. This was linked with observations that some people believe they have little to contribute, or that their view is unimportant. Disempowerment and apathy were also identified as barriers that stem from a lack of capacity to engage.

A barrier expressed only by the community interviewees was the perception that the council had pre-determined the decision, or showed a simple lack of effort to engage with the community. This perception that council consultation is tokenistic (which may or may not be accurate) is a serious barrier to gaining representation. Other barriers (in order from most often cited to least) include:

- Lack of time to commit/bad timing
- Difficulty of moving people from talking about issues to developing desired outcomes
- Making sure that participants who claim to represent a group actually have the mandate to represent
- A lack of continuity between council staff (councils use policy advisors or consultants to do community work, which should be done by community workers)

- Quality of information.

Deliberation or information sharing?

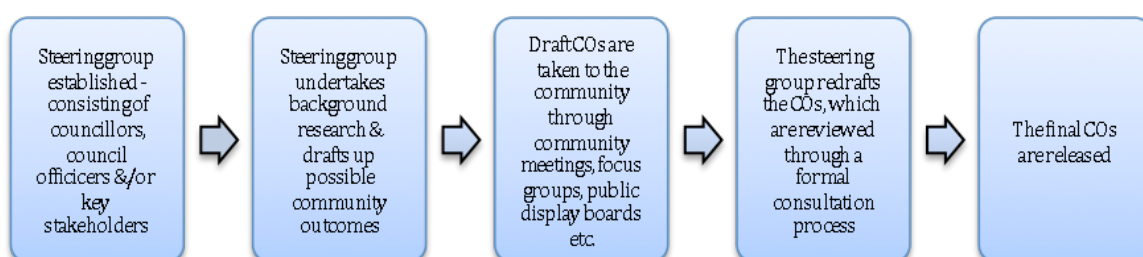
From Burke's case studies

In terms of the technique used at the engagements, all New Zealand case studies showed the use of information sharing in various forms and to varying degrees of success. Deliberative democracy was not used as a tool in any of these case studies. While some of the case studies undertook highly successful discussions, these did not meet the criteria for deliberation (equity of access, intensive exchanges of experiences and perspectives, well-reasoned arguments and a commitment to finding a common ground or consensus). There are also several perceived barriers to the use of deliberation, which many of these case studies highlight:

- Lack of councillor buy-in or understanding of deliberation
- Lack of institutional will-power or capacity
- Lack of funding to carry out deliberation properly
- Consultation fatigue from community members/stakeholders.

The case studies took various approaches to the process of identifying the COs, although common patterns can be identified. Figure 8 summarises the steps that most NZ local authorities took to developing their community outcomes (based upon Burke's study).

Figure 8: Summary of Case Study Community Outcomes Processes



An important divergence can be identified in the use of engagement techniques; the 'go to where the community is' approach and the 'invite the community to come to us' approach. The 'go to where the community is'

approach holds the view that public meetings tend to have poor attendance and are usually dominated by a select few, while the 'invite the community to come to us' approach is the more conventional view of engagement. The implications of these two approaches are explored in the discussion chapter.

Method of Public Participation

From the Interviews

Most of the interviewees showed a preference for smaller scale and a broader range of events than the suggested '21st Century Town Meeting'. Several did however feel that if done 'right', the 21st Century Town Meeting could be very successful. None of the interviewees had prior knowledge of what such a meeting involved.

The interviewees offered a wide range of attributes of an effective public participation method, which can be divided into normative qualities and methodological qualities. The normative qualities of an effective method included: openness, honesty, people feeling safe and comfortable, people feeling like they can express themselves and be listened to, influence, accessible to the public, effective two-way communication, inclusive, engages the 'silent majority', authenticity, focuses on building long-term relationships.

The methodological qualities of an effective method included: structured, facilitated, transparent, careful time-management, uses a range of techniques, clear definition of the issue and process, stimulating, having the 'right people' there, an effective communications strategy, effective feedback, easily accessible information.

The council officers were asked what the key considerations for their council are when planning for community engagements. The following questions emerged:

- Is it appropriate for the public to be involved?
- Is the proposed event accessible?

- Who is involved and leading it?
- Is the event appealing to the public?
- What is the desired outcome of the event?
- Are we well enough resourced to run the event?
- Has the purpose been clearly identified and communicated?
- Is the timing right?
- Has a communication strategy been developed?

A joint approach or 'go it alone'?

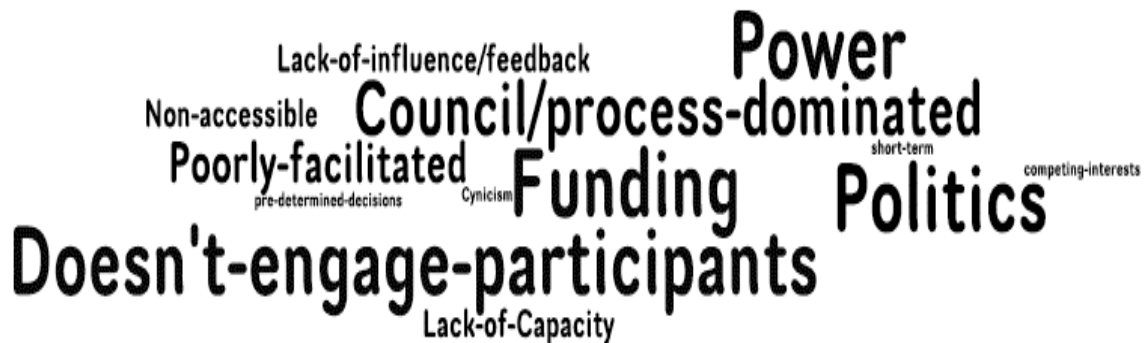
Both the interviews for this work and Burke's case studies reflected an even split, in terms of the development of the COs, between those councils that favoured taking a joint approach (with other councils) and those that didn't. Some concerns were raised with the joint approach because it was more likely to gloss over unique local-scale issues. On the other hand, a joint approach was seen as more efficient for councils, and less likely to cause participation burnout as there would be fewer engagements.

Barriers and challenges to enacting 'good practice' Public Participation

From the interviews

A wide range of barriers and challenges to enacting 'good practice' public participation were offered and are outlined in Figure 9. This figure is displayed as a 'wordle' (see www.wordle.net), which is a visual technology that sizes the words or phrases according to the frequency with which they are mentioned. For example, the most commonly mentioned barriers or challenges were 'Power', 'Politics', 'Doesn't engage participants' and 'Funding'.

Figure 9: 'Wordle' representation of barriers & challenges to 'good practice' public participation



Influence

Influence was mostly addressed through looking at whether a collaborative approach was used, as well as addressing issues of funding.

From Burke's case studies

When assessed against the spectrum of public participation, five of the local authorities took what can be identified as a collaborative approach. The other four councils undertook an approach that fits into the consultation level of the 'Spectrum of Participation' (IAP2, 2007). When compared to the level of influence of participation, it becomes evident that the local authorities that took a collaborative approach also gave participants the greatest influence.

Most of the case studies did not outline the costs involved. However, the Choosing Futures (Kapiti Coast District Council) report noted that no extra costs were incurred. Nevertheless, the process was considered 'not sustainable' (perhaps because it was too demanding of staff time). Wanganui's Future also highlighted the resource intensiveness of the process. The Waitakere Way commented that the costs were no more than usual, which reflects the cost savings from taking a collaborative approach.

From the interviews

Eleven of the 14 interviewees were strongly in favour of their council taking a collaborative approach and the remaining three were in favour of it in most cases. Community interviewees were more cynical of council efforts to collaborate, while some of the council officers claimed that collaboration was an approach they were increasingly taking. To support collaboration, interviewees suggested the following:

- Working with and building long-term relationships with mandated community leaders
- Establishing a 'multi-stakeholder' plus council project team
- Focus on community development and the objectives of the community rather than the objectives of the council.
- Using a facilitator to ensure openness and listening

The council officers were asked whether they thought that the level of funding earmarked for the community outcomes was adequate for the type of process they would like to see. Two of the officers responded by saying that the funding was adequate, while the remaining four thought that it was 'okay' but not necessarily ideal. They were also asked whether they thought other council staff and councillors are supportive of the level of resourcing for public participation initiatives. Four of the interviewees answered yes, while the other two reported that most of the staff are supportive, but some are cynical about it.

How were councillors involved?

From Burke's case studies

Local authorities took a full range of approaches to involving councillors in the process. In Future Path Canterbury, councillors were involved simply as participants. Similarly, in the Future Taranaki process, councillor participation was described as 'low key'. In the Tauranga Tomorrow and Our Way Southland initiatives, councillors had a defined role on a steering or reference group. The Waitakere Way, Tomorrow's Manukau, Wanganui's Future and Choosing Futures took a more proactive approach to councillor involvement. In these cases, councillors often played anchor roles in the

process. This was identified as a successful strategy because it meant that councillors had a deep level of insight into the lives, perspectives and desires of the public. Involving councillors throughout the process sends an important message to the public that councillors are willing to listen and therefore that the public will have influence by participating. However, councillor involvement can also be problematic where councillors are over-bearing or not willing to listen properly.

How were the views of Māori integrated?

Only four of the case studies made a reasonable effort at engaging with Māori in the development of the community outcomes. Three of the case studies unsuccessfully attempted to engage Māori and the other two case studies made no reference to Māori at all. The most successful involvement of Māori came about when the local authority held Māori specific hui or met with a group developed from existing relationships. Engaging Māori requires further effort to meet the standards set in the LGA and to ensure that Māori have genuine influence. The issue of engaging with Māori was not directly addressed in the national interviews.

Linking the community outcomes to indicators

From the interviews

There was a large degree of ambivalence about the role for public participation in the development of indicators. Most interviewees felt that if done carefully, indicators could be developed at the same time as identifying the community outcomes. However, they felt that this process should not necessarily be forced upon participants. Two of the interviewees suggested that the best way to integrate indicators into discussions about public participation would be to ask 'How would we know if we are successful at reaching the community outcomes?' On the other hand, one of the community-based interviewees felt that there was little point in talking about indicators with the public: 'Indicators are only needed at the government level and communities aren't usually interested'. The overwhelming majority of interviewees all believed that indicators play an important role for both the community (with less-technical indicators) and

the local authority (with technical indicators). It was widely perceived that indicators can be useful for the public – if they are communicated clearly.

Overall assessment of the model

The majority of interviewees felt that the ‘good practice’ model of public participation is both realistic and likely to be effective. There were a number of further considerations for the model, which were highlighted by the interviewees:

- Adaptability
- Using a range of methods
- Aiming for a broader reach
- Providing a picture of how participation fits within council planning

Simon Cayley (CEO, The Bishops Action Foundation, Taranaki) highlighted the need for the process to focus on fostering community relationships: “Working with communities is about the relationships, it’s about the face-to-face, it’s about the conversations – it’s not about the pieces of paper. I think that’s where councils sometimes make mistakes.”

Mark Allen (Team Leader – Long Term Planning, Waitakere City Council) reflected that: “I think that the core of your model is absolutely valid, and I think the challenge is making it relevant to so many communities and geographies”.

Chapter Summary

The New Zealand local government case studies and interviews provide useful lessons and insights into the practice of developing the COs, and integral part of the LGA’s requirements. It has provided an ‘on the ground’ assessment of how the LGA is applied and has provided important groundwork for the development of the ‘good practice’ approach to the WRGPI. This ‘on the ground’ perspective was important for informing the shape and direction of the WRGPI case study research, the results of which are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: Wellington Case Study

This chapter presents the results from the Wellington case study. Previous chapters have contributed background research relevant to developing the Wellington case study. By addressing Objective Three, this chapter also directly addresses the research aim.

Objective Three: *Building on objectives One and Two, draw conclusions on a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the WRGPI, with its regional and national context.*

Research aim: *Explore a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the use of the WRGPI, and provide an overview of the context within which it fits.*

The Wellington context

The Greater Wellington Regional Council is one of the twelve regional authorities in New Zealand and serves a population of 450,000 people (Statistics NZ, 2009). It is New Zealand's wealthiest region gauged by median annual personal income per capita (Statistics NZ, 2009). Within the Wellington region there are eight territorial authorities – Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Carterton District Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Masterton District Council, and South Wairarapa District Council.

An important programme of work for local government arises out of its obligation to meet the statutory requirements of the LGA (2002). The theoretical underpinnings and implications of the Act have already been outlined in Chapter Four and 'on the ground' interpretations (in relation to COs) were explored in Chapter Six. This chapter's case study looks first at GW's approach to developing the COs and how the public are involved. Secondly, it looks at the evolution of the GPI and the proposed WRGPI 'good practice' approach, and thirdly this case study provides a Treaty of Waitangi analysis and reflects on the external challenges that the WRGPI faces.

Greater Wellington's approach to developing the Community Outcomes

The most recent review of the Wellington Region COs was timed to coincide with the development of the 2006-2016 LTCCP. To do this, GW drew together all of the community outcomes generated by the eight territorial authorities and developed a list of eight COs that were deemed suitable to represent the whole region. A steering committee consisting of local government, central government and 'quasi-government' organisations was established to oversee the development of the COs. It was at this point that the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) was developed in cooperation between the territorial councils and the regional council as the primary body of work that focuses on addressing the COs (GW, 2009a).

Feedback was sought on the focus of the WRS through a mail-out to 4500 key individuals and organisations in the Wellington region (as identified by the GW). As a result of the consultation, another two community outcomes were added, so that the region now has ten COs: *Healthy environment, Quality lifestyle, Sense of place, Prosperous community, Prepared community, Connected community, Entrepreneurial and innovative region, Essential services, Healthy Community, and Strong and Tolerant Community.*

Critical perspectives on GW's COs process

There is a widespread belief within the regional authority and council that the region's COs are too broad to be meaningful. The COs process is approached as another statutory requirement – rather than as a strategic community planning exercise, as intended by the Act. This was observed by a range of sources. The 2009-2019 proposed LTCCP reflects this discontent (GW, 2009b:17):

The existing outcomes are very high level and, therefore, do not provide adequate guidance for our activities. Also, the wisdom of Greater Wellington attempting to monitor progress for aspects of the outcomes that are either not related to our business, or where monitoring information is not available on a meaningful basis, is questionable. The outcomes, in their current form, do not help Greater Wellington in setting priorities. Greater

Wellington will be looking at ways it can make the community outcomes and the monitoring of progress more meaningful to our ratepayers.

Furthermore, during the interviews and ongoing observations for this study, all of the councillors and council officers from GW critiqued (without being asked to) GW's COs for being too broad to be useful. Two of the interviewees said that they really were just about being 'healthy, wealthy and wise'.

Councillor Peter Glensor reflected this concern with the COs:

...I am a part of a growing number of people who regard the whole community outcome process as a bit of a swizz really...What has happened is that almost everyone comes up with exactly the same ones, not surprisingly because they are in fact human desires which are as someone says all about being healthy, wealthy and wise. And that is a completely understandable goal so I see this GPI as having value in itself quite apart from whether or not it is linked to the community outcomes that the Act talks about.

Councillor Paul Bruce commented that he thought the COs to be too simplistic. Another important issue that was explored in the interviews was whether the COs should be integrated between the territorial authorities and GW. This question was met with a great degree of ambivalence. The two interviewees who were most clearly of the view that the COs should not be integrated pointed to large demographic differences between the territories. The other participants were generally supportive of integration in some way to make the process more efficient, but as long as it did not sacrifice the ability to provide a detailed picture of the local scale.

One of the GW council officers reflected on the matter of integration as well as the ineffectiveness of the COs:

I'm in two minds about this. I first of all thought that we should have one set for the entire region. But after mulling it over, and taking into account the intention of the LGA, which is very focused at the community level, I think that there is merit in having territorial focused COs. As it stands now, there

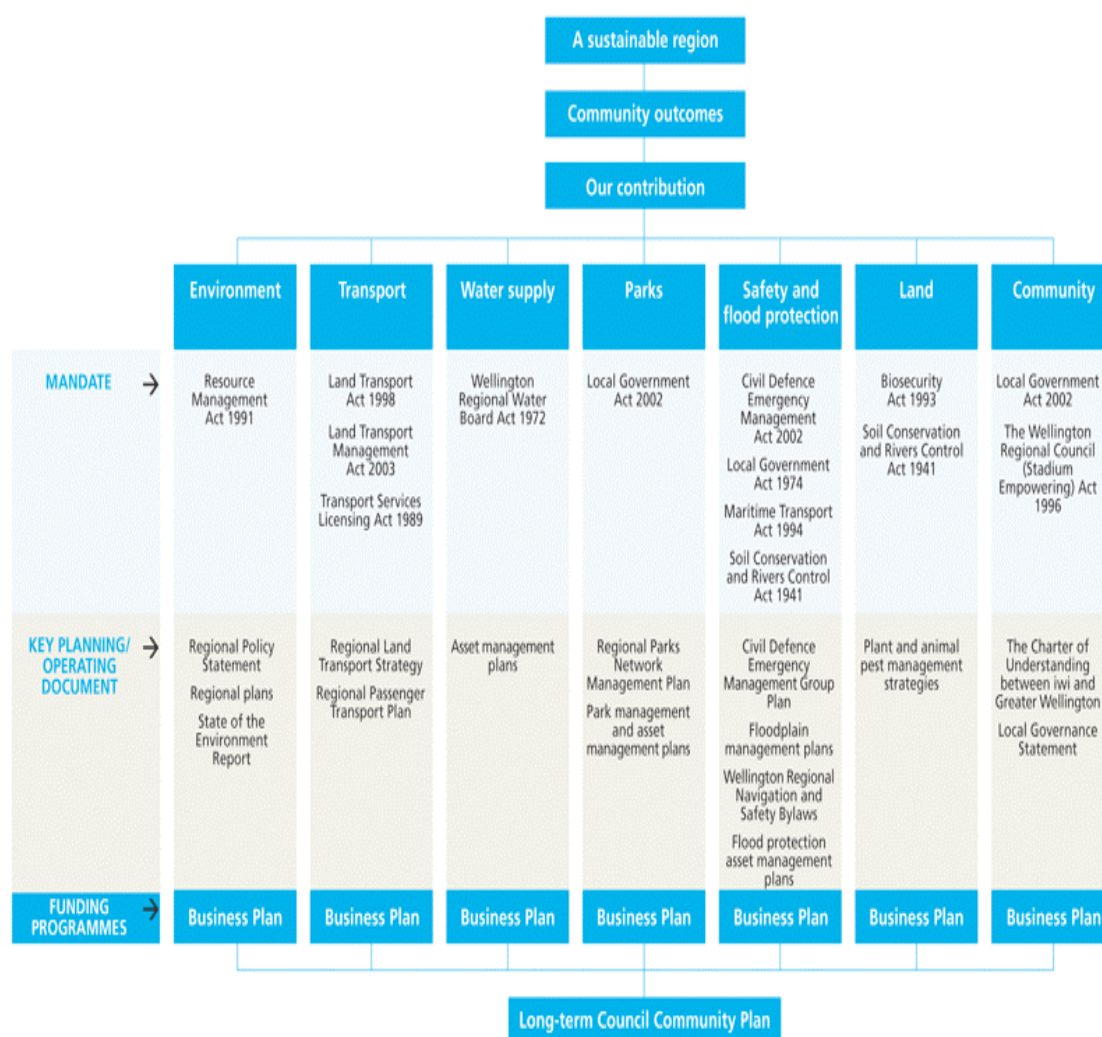
is definite duplication of time and money spent on developing community outcomes and indicators, and to be perfectly honest, the COs don't guide our work at the everyday level and the only time we refer to them is when we do our LTCCP. This is mainly because the COs are too high level and because we have to do the work programmes and functions under statutory requirements. So we don't do them because they are COs – we do them because that's what we are required to do.

This lack of depth in the COs is also reflected in the way in which they are integrated into the council planning framework, shown in Figure 10. This figure indicates that they remain high-level mechanisms with no specific initiatives deriving from them, other than the WRS.

Reporting on progress toward the COs and WRS

GW must report on progress toward the COs as a statutory requirement under the LGA 2002 (according to sections 91 & 92). This reporting work has most recently been undertaken as a part of the development of the 2009-2019 LTCCP, and presented in the document “Progress with Community Outcomes” (Greater Wellington, 2009e). The LTCCP also explains the future plans for reporting on the COs to be integrated with the WRS reporting – via the GPI (GW, 2009b).

Figure 10: Relationship of the COs to GW's key strategic planning documents



Source: Greater Wellington, 2006

Interview participants (as identified in Table 5) were asked for their opinion on this issue of whether the GPI would sufficiently report on progress toward the COs (as planned by GW). The question received a broad range of answers. Four of the participants thought that the GPI would do an adequate job of reporting on the COs, while one thought that the GPI would constitute only part of the reporting requirements and another interviewee thought that the GPI had a role and value unto itself, independent of the COs.

Table 5: List of Wellington Interview Participants

Local Authority	Interviewee	Position
WRS Team	Victoria McGregor	Policy advisor
Greater Wellington	Confidential	Policy advisor
Greater Wellington	Paul Bruce	Councillor
Greater Wellington	Peter Glensor	Councillor
Kapiti Coast District Council	Cath Edmondson	Policy advisor
Upper Hutt City Council	Confidential	Policy advisor

The WRS establishes the GPI as a means to measure progress on the strategy and toward the COs of the strategy. The final pages (pages 51-52) of the WRS outline how progress will be measured and introduce the GPI concept at a very basic level. The establishment of the GPI sits somewhat strangely within a document which, although it is called a ‘sustainable regional growth strategy’, is very focused on economic growth. This issue is considered further in the following discussion chapter. The three primary focus areas of the WRS are:

1. Leadership and partnerships
2. Growing the region’s economy, especially its exports
3. Good regional form.

Who is responsible for delivering on the WRS (and therefore the GPI)?

Since the adoption of the WRS in 2007, an economic development agency, ‘Grow Wellington’ has been established to deliver on three of the COs outlined in the WRS – *Prosperous community, Connected community* and *Entrepreneurial and innovative region* (Grow Wellington, 2008). Figure **Error! Reference source not found.**¹¹ outlines the contribution that Grow Wellington makes toward the WRS.

Figure 11: Grow Wellington's contribution to the WRS

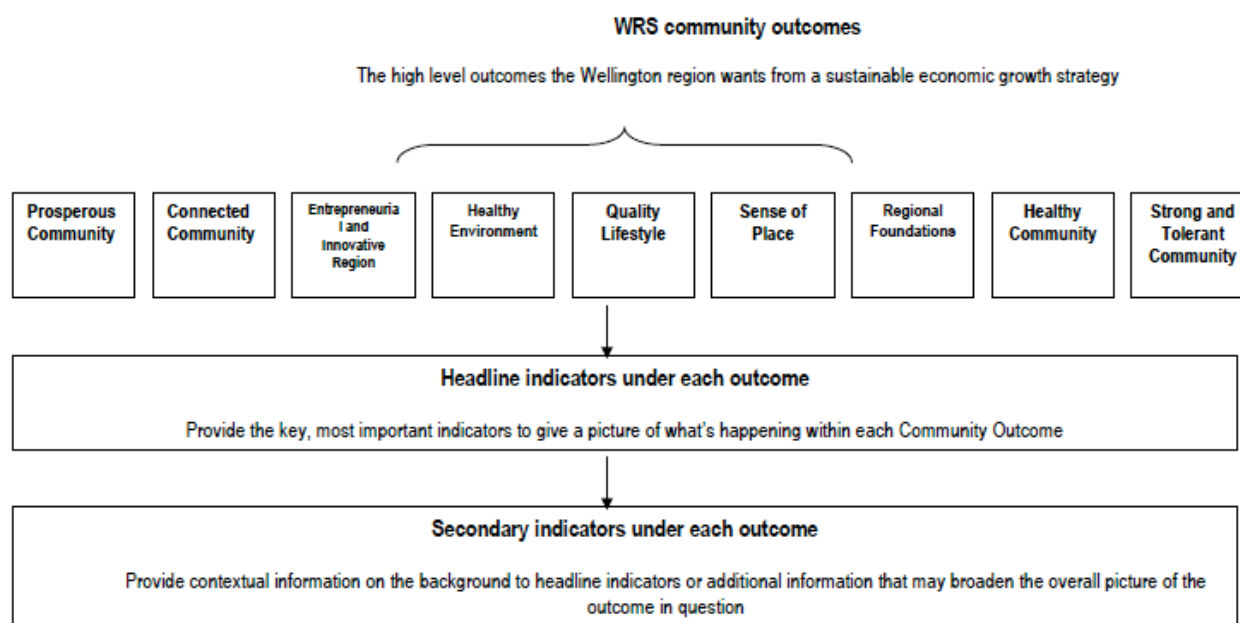


Source: Grow Wellington, 2008:4

In order to address the wider objectives of the WRS, a small team (two full-time staff) based at GW was established to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This team reports to the WRS Committee, which consists of seven of the region's mayors, as well as five independent appointees representing private sector and business interests, making 12 in all. Two of these appointees have iwi affiliations from within the region. A working group, consisting of officers from each of the participating councils, was initiated in May 2008 to work with the WRS team to be the driving force

behind the development of the GPI. The local iwi council representative group, *Ara Tahi*, has also been engaged throughout the process.

Figure 12: WRS Monitoring Conceptual Framework



Source: Greater Wellington, 2009c

The WRGPI framework

During the course of the research, a GPI framework was developed and its constituent indicators identified. Instead of the conventional environment, society, culture and economy headings for categorizing the indicators, the WRGPI framework uses the COs from the WRS (as shown in Figure 12). For each of the nine COs there are both headline indicators (a total of 62) and secondary indicators (a total of 40). The full set of indicators is provided in Appendix Four.

A set of criteria for the selection of indicators was developed (Greater Wellington, 2008b):

1. Reliable
2. Valid
3. Repeatable

4. Easily understandable
5. Culturally meaningful and relevant
6. Can be aggregated/disaggregated
7. Available and cost-effective
8. Show changes
9. Leading indicator.

The following groups were consulted in the selection of the indicators (Greater Wellington, 2009c, 2009d):

- Workshops held with the WRS Committee, Greater Wellington's Sustainability Committee, Ara Tahi and the Population Health Division of the Planning and Funding Directorate of the Capital and Coast District Health Board,
- Greater Wellington staff responsible for the Regional Policy Statement.
- Sixteen expert commentators

The full list of indicators is extensive, with over 100 indicators. The WRS team remarked that in a number of cases there were inadequate or no data for the desired indicators. Some of these have been prioritised for future data collection, while others have been dropped. The first release of the WRGPI is set to be in either October or December 2009 (Greater Wellington, 2009c). It is likely that the WRGPI will be reported in a similar format to the Alberta GPI report card, which uses spider diagrams to show changes over time to the indicators.

Public participation in the development of the WRGPI

Victoria McGregor from the WRS team sums up the approach to public participation in the development of the WRGPI (from interview):

Our approach has been top-down. The regional community were consulted on the overall strategy throughout its development. In developing the GPI, it would be have been nice to engage with the community from the start, but the WRS regional projects are principally related to collaboration across councils rather than direct consultation with the community. If we considered community consultation in the development of the GPI, it would be useful to use a variety of methods to engage with people. But it's also

tricky, because we don't want to over-engage the community on similar issues such as community outcomes, regional policy statements and other local council initiatives.

McGregor's statement is reflective of the awareness within the council that it is performing poorly in involving the public, and this was a common theme during the interviews. Both of the regional councillors felt that GW could do a much better job of public participation than it currently does.

Councillor Peter Glensor:

...having conversations in our community is a practice that we need to encourage. The contradictory bit of it is that I'm of the strong view that we are consulting people to death and we've got to stop it...we've got to gear our public participation to the appropriate people at the appropriate time and size the public participation programmes to the size of the issue.

Councillor Paul Bruce:

As it stands, our democracy doesn't really function very well – because we don't really have proper engagement around these issues. And people don't really understand the issues properly because the engagement at the moment is too superficial. People sort of think that it is good enough to sit in front of the TV to understand an issue.

While it was obvious that public participation has been minimal, the WRS team has shown interest in and was very supportive of this research throughout the year. In February 2009, as a part of this research, a report was presented to the WRS team, "Public Participation for the Community Outcomes and Wellington Region GPI". This report focused on how the public could be involved in reviewing the COs and how that could be linked to the WRGPI. The report was well received by the WRS team and they sent it to many contacts throughout GW.

Wellington interview responses to the idea of benchmarking

The idea of *benchmarking* of the WRGPI was included in the interviews for two reasons:

1. The GPI indicators are not indicators of sustainable development. As Hecht (2007:4) suggests, they “tell us where we stand now but do not tell us whether our current position can be sustained in the future”. To make the WRGPI a sustainable development index, benchmarks of sustainability would need to be determined for each indicator.
2. The process of benchmarking is a normative exercise that would be greatly enhanced through public engagement. This would also help to build public ownership and understanding of the WRGPI.

The benchmarking idea was generally very well received. Five of the six participants thought that it would be a good idea to involve the public in some way with a benchmarking process. The participants commented that it would be important to consider:

- The information on which to base the benchmarks
- That it needs to become an organic part of developing the COs
- That it has to be done in such a way that the depth of information does not overwhelm the public.

One concern that was raised with the process is that it could become ‘too mechanistic’. This concern was not directed at the idea of benchmarking itself, but with how the process might be implemented. In particular, there was concern that the benchmarks would only be chosen where the council and other agencies had control over the outcomes or that “they’ll drop the bar as low as possible” to ensure that they aren’t held accountable for not reaching the benchmark.

Attitudes about the WRGPI

The Wellington local government interviewees were asked to comment on what they saw as the merits of the GPI. Five of the interviewees were supportive of the development of the WRGPI, while one of the policy officers was uncertain about it and admitted that they were cynical about it. They raised the following merits of the WRGPI:

- It will encourage collaboration across agencies and mitigate the silo mentality

- It represents more holistic thinking (than just the GDP) (raised by three participants)
- It can replace current performance indicators
- It can effectively communicate important information to the public (raised by two participants)
- It can be used as a tool for education
- It will be useful in the policy cycle
- It's new and exciting.

The interviewees also raised the following concerns:

- That it is resource intensive and doubles-up on work
- That it is beyond the call of duty of the council – the GPI measures things which are not its function
- That time will be wasted measuring things at the cost of taking action on things
- The success of the GPI depends on the content of the indicators
- That the GPI will be implemented at the cost of economic development.

Should the full-cost accounting procedure be undertaken?

Most of the interviewees admitted that they did not really know enough about full-cost accounting to make an adequate judgement. The primary concern, which all of the interviewees reflected, was the cost and resource intensiveness of the procedure. Some felt that they were unsure of the gain from it. As shown in Box 1, three of the interviewees were supportive of full-cost accounting, if resources were streamlined and pooled within the region to develop it.

Box 1: Councillor and council officer reactions to the challenge of full-cost accounting

"I mean I sort of understand the theory behind it but it does feel to me like it is a huge amount of work and I'm not sure how much the gain will be."

"I don't really agree with it, although I'm no expert in it. I could see that there could be cases in which it would be useful but it is so resource intensive that I think the council's money is better spent elsewhere."

"I think it's interesting – I don't know enough about it."

"I can see the value of it for sure and I think it's not until we get our first report together that we can convince our decision-makers about the use of full-cost accounting. It does cost a lot though. If everyone was aligned it might make sense to do full-cost accounting."

"I see that it is probably a huge exercise. I think that it would be one of the first things to do because at the moment there is a total misunderstanding, there are very few people that actually understand where the benefits are of x versus y."

"I think we need to better understand the total value of it. We need to see what we are going to get out of it before leaping in head and shoulders."

As part of this research, the issue of full-cost accounting was discussed with WRS staff, who reflected that GW was likely to only have the resources to do full-cost accounting for one indicator per year.

Cath Edmondson reflected on the challenge of resourcing in the smaller councils:

...having things like an aligned GPI that you can disaggregate to the local level, and centralised collection and analysis and some sharing of not just information and data but knowledge and expertise around indicators around participation, around planning processes would certainly be really useful for smaller councils like I would say Kapiti and in the Wairarapa.

Treaty of Waitangi Analysis

The involvement of *tangata whenua* was outlined in a number of the reports from the WRS team to the WRS committee. The initial WRS project proposal outlined the way in which Ara Tahi would be engaged (Greater Wellington, 2004:15): "Ara Tahi, the iwi committee of Greater Wellington will be invited

to act as advisory on matters of significance to *tangata whenua* to the WRS Forum.”

The most recent report outlines how the views of *tangata whenua* were incorporated into the selection of indicators (Greater Wellington, 2009c:10-11):

The WRS recognises the special role of tangata whenua in the Wellington region. Maori-specific measures have been developed in liaison with Greater Wellington's iwi advisory group Ara Tahi. Where the data is available, these indicators have been selected as part of the monitoring framework. In some instances where data is not currently collected the measures have been added to a list of indicators we might like to have in the GPI.

From these excerpts, it is clear that the WRS team has made a genuine effort to consult with Greater Wellington's iwi advisory committee. This was confirmed by comments made by the WRS team, where they claimed to have consulted with all of the iwi in the region on a regular basis on the indicator selection. However, in a number of cases, it was noted that there were inadequate measures in place for some of the desired indicators.

GW has also been in contact with an academic group from Te Wānanga o Raukawa who have been researching a tikanga Māori based GPI. When Canadian GPI expert and pioneer of the full-cost accounting approach Dr Ron Colman was hired (in both 2006 & 2008) to provide advice to Greater Wellington, he also spent time with the group from Te Wānanga o Raukawa. The GPI forms an important aspect of the courses taught at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, for example in one of the accounting courses (2009:9) “Students will be introduced to the Genuine Progress Index, GPI, and the superiority of this statement over the statement known as Gross Domestic Product, GDP...”

The discussion with the local iwi representative highlighted the fact that there is an intuitive link between tikanga Māori and the normative framework that underpins the *Nova Scotia* GPI. This has been further

reflected in the way that the Maori Party has demonstrated their support for the development of a national-level GPI (Sharples, 2008):

The Maori Party's policy is to adopt a Genuine Progress Index to measure our national performance. A GPI is an integrated planning tool, which measures the economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes of our decisions.

Further research is being jointly developed between Te Wānanga o Raukawa and the NZ Centre for Ecological Economics to develop variables specific to Maori.

These findings suggest that the GPI concept has received a high level of support within the tikanga Māori 'house'. Furthermore, this research has found that the WRGPI does not sit solely within any one 'house' of the Treaty analysis framework (see Figure 1), but is a concept rooted within the tikanga Pākehā house, that has resonated strongly within the tikanga Māori house. Whether the WRGPI brings the two together into a 'Treaty of Waitangi House' is difficult to judge due to the iterative and complicated nature of the WRGPI. The following discussion chapter considers this in further detail.

Recommendations for a 'good practice' approach to the WRGPI and COs

This section provides results pertaining to Objective Three: *Building on objectives One and Two, draw conclusions on a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the WRGPI, with its regional and national context.*

The 'good practice' approach developed for this study evolved considerably over the course of this research. It was an important subject of consideration in the national and Wellington interviews, after which the approach was revised and adapted in light of the feedback received. Only the final iteration of the 'good practice' approach is presented here, while the earlier stages of it are provided in Appendix Two.

Scope of the 'good practice' approach

The recommendations for a 'good practice' approach are by no means comprehensive or expected to be immediately adopted. The scope and scale of change that the recommendations call for cannot be achieved from these recommendations alone. Political and institutional understanding and support is required if GW is to adopt this good practice approach to the COs and WRGPI. The aim of the 'good practice' approach is to make the COs and the WRGPI meaningful and 'living processes' relevant and engaging to citizens of the Wellington region. To achieve this, these recommendations need to go beyond being an objective of this thesis research. Active engagement with GW on these recommendations is the next step, but is beyond the scope of reporting here.

The COs must be reviewed at least once every six years and must be reported on as part of the LTCCP development every three years. The 'good practice' approach is anchored to the COs and LTCCPs processes, but is not limited to them.

'Good practice' public participation, institutional learning and political leadership

The WRGPI 'good practice' approach developed for this study has been shaped by the recognition that if the process is to successfully engage the community, it needs to reach beyond the conventional process of public participation alone. It needs to also address the institutional processes and decision-making linked to the WRGPI.

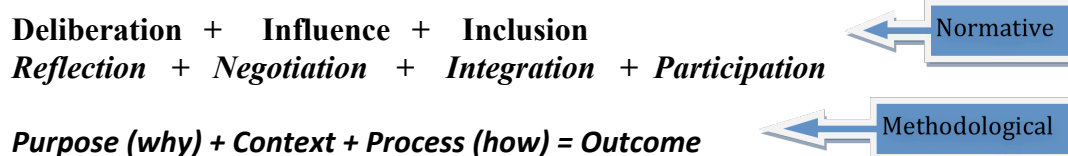
GW has a large and diverse staff, which under the LGA is tasked with addressing a broad range of environmental, social, cultural and economic issues. McNeill (2008) found that regional councils in particular have struggled to adapt to the broadened mandate (compared to the previous local government legislation) and continue to pursue a relatively narrow range of functions. It is this challenge of institutional adaptation to a broadened (and usually more complex) mandate that has been one of the foremost barriers to enacting sustainable development (Senge *et al.* 2008).

This has not been assisted recently by the political uncertainty hanging over the role of local government, especially regional councils (see for example Hide, 2009).

Chapter Five introduced the concept of social learning and presented the five-stranded government-learning framework developed by Brown *et al.* (2005:254). The five strands - *Reflection*, *Systems Orientation*, *Integration*, *Negotiation* and *Participation* - have been integrated into the good practice normative framework as outlined in Figure 13, and elaborated on below.

Furthermore, the good practice approach developed in this study has adopted the “systems thinking iceberg” (as cited in Chapter Five, Fig 6) as a meta-level image to guide the approach for the regional council. The good practice approach needs to facilitate social learning to understand “events, patterns/trends, systemic structures and mental models” (Senge *et al.* 2008). Understanding these four layers is important if the WRGPI is to truly reflect the sustainable development mandate and re-orientate progress for the Wellington region. Therefore, an important purpose of the good practice approach is for institutions to grow the capacity to be able to uncover and address all levels of the “iceberg”. With these additions, the final iteration of the ‘good practice’ model is now presented.

Figure 13: Adjusted ‘good practice’ framework for the WRGPI



The methodological component of the ‘good practice’ framework

The methodological component is implicitly addressed in the following discussion. The *purpose* and *context* have already been discussed (and are

discussed further below), while the *process* is reflected below in the description of the normative component.

The normative component of the 'good practice' framework

Deliberation

GW must involve diverse communities in order to address the often complex environmental, social, cultural and economic issues and challenges that the region faces. The LGA was implemented as a means to encourage the development of adaptive frameworks that can more adequately reflect sustainable development and foster more active citizenship. Deliberation has been extensively discussed in this research as an important tool for enacting the two-fold LGA mandate. For innovative and enduring outcomes to emerge from deliberations, careful facilitation is required. Furthermore, an important result from a successful deliberative environment is the creative 'emergence' that can be generated by the group to tackle persistent and complex issues. This process requires a substantial amount of time because as Wheatley & Frieze (2006:2) highlight: "Emergence violates so many of our Western assumptions of how change happens that it often takes quite a while to understand it." In this way, the process is challenging and if not carefully facilitated, can be the source of misunderstanding or resistance from participants.

In the context of the WRGPI, *reflection* and *negotiation* form the deliberative process for both the institutional and public stages of the process.

Reflection

Reflection in this context involves an exchange of perspectives on the past, where the key events and outcomes can be understood through each layer of the systems thinking iceberg (see Fig 2) (Senge *et al.*, 2008). The WRGPI will be an important source of information to feed into this reflection process. Furthermore, the process of reflection should identify

gaps in the capacity of individuals and institutions to participate fully in the community engagement process.

Negotiation

Negotiation is where “the rubber hits the road”, where (often competing) priorities are chosen and responsibilities for action are set (Brown *et al.* 2005). In the context of social/institutional learning, negotiation should engage the plurality of legitimate perspectives in a shared exploration of complex events, patterns, systemic structures or mental models. Furthermore, the process of negotiation needs to help the participants to identify specific and tangible actions that will address the COs.

The use of technology to aid the process

Different technologies can also be used to assist the process, as is reflected in methods such as *mediated modelling* or a *21st Century Town Meeting*. However, it is important that the assumptions underlying technologies such as *geographic information systems*, or computer modelling are made clear. Furthermore, these technologies are not always well understood by participants and so need to be applied appropriately and with adequate resourcing for capacity building (Forge & Richardson, 2007).

The process is non-linear

Following negotiation and the resultant actions, the process returns to ‘reflection’. However, in reality, these phases are unlikely to occur in a strictly linear progression, but in an intersecting and simultaneous fashion. The process needs to be flexible and adaptive to meet, but not be constrained by, the formal and legal institutional arrangements of the LGA. For these reasons, the process flow diagrams that were developed in the initial development of the ‘good practice’ approach (see Appendix Two) have not been further developed.

Reviewing the COs

Regional integration (with territorial authorities) of indicator and monitoring frameworks is required to adequately administer the WRGPI. This brings opportunities to synchronise reporting and monitoring of the territorial COs. GW is faced with the task of reviewing the regional COs that currently do not reflect good practice. To do this, it is recommended that a regional review team be established, with a strong mandate for collaboration between the community and GW. The composition of the review team is discussed below in the 'Inclusion' section.

The primary task for the review team is to synthesise regional COs based upon those of the territorial COs (and be informed by the previous COs). In doing so, it is important that the integrity, detail and meaning of the territorial COs are maintained. The process should not be one of aggregation (or homogenisation), but of grouping and integrating. The COs review should then flow into a more comprehensive series of public participation events that revolve around the linkage between the COs and the GPI.

Linking the COs to the GPI

The link between the COs and the GPI needs to be based upon common normative values for the GPI to meet the LGA requirements for reporting on progress toward the COs. This linking process needs to occur following the COs review. The process should involve reflection to review the appropriateness of the existing constituent indicators of the GPI and negotiation to select the constituent indicators and determine benchmarks for them. Shared ownership of the benchmarking process is important to ensure that the process is meaningful and influential.

Turning a technical exercise into a meaningful community-focused discussion

A number of the interviewees reflected that the most helpful question to ask about monitoring and reporting is "How would we know if we are successful?" This question gives a sense of meaning to a process which

was otherwise widely perceived in the interviews as a technical and bureaucratic process that the public are rarely interested in. In the WRGPI context, this question becomes: How would we know success and how would we know when we are making progress?

Influence

The discussion in Chapter Five and the results from the local government case studies have highlighted the importance for public participation to have influence over the decision-making process and the outcome at hand. For any form of community engagement to have legitimacy with participants, the level of influence needs to be clearly communicated (Fraser *et al.* 2006; Hartz-Karp, 2005b). The important questions to ask are:

1. What direct influence will the process have?
2. What indirect influence will the process have?
3. What are the possible barriers to the proposed level of influence taking effect?
4. How will the process have influence?

The issue of influence delves deep into the realm of politics, which brings a degree of risk and uncertainty to how influential a public participation process might be. An effective way to address this issue is to involve politicians throughout the process, and to make sure that they are involved with the social learning process. This reduces the physical and mental distance between the public and politicians, giving both parties a chance to see each other for what they are, and brings the influential 'into the room'. The issue of who is involved in the 'good practice' approach is also relevant.

Inclusion (and Participation)

The issue of inclusion offers one of the most challenging questions to address: *who participates?* It is widely accepted that public participation should be as inclusive as possible; however in reality, participation is

usually limited to the size of the venue or to the number of people that turn up. People not turning up can be attributed to:

- A lack of interest or capacity on behalf of the public to engage in council-based consultations. Or on the contrary,
- A lack of capacity on behalf of the hosting institution to engage with the 'plurality of legitimate perspectives'.

In the context of a 'good practice' approach, the power and responsibility for ensuring an inclusive and participatory process ultimately rests with the latter, the hosting institution. Previous discussion has highlighted two different forms of representation: socioeconomic representation (ideally through stratified random selection of participants) and stakeholder representation (ideally through mandated representatives). Results from this study have shown that New Zealand local government usually opts for stakeholder representation, and that efforts to obtain socioeconomic representation are usually through non-interactive methods such as random telephone surveys or referendums.

The ideal of inclusion should be reflected as broadly across the 'good practice' approach as possible. At the early stages of development, inclusion and collaboration can be sought through inviting a broad range of key stakeholders and mandated community leaders onto a 'project partner team'. This team should represent diverse parts of society and also have direct links to the community. The 'project partner team' should be the primary decision-making body for the further development of the COs/WRGPI process.

The process should build toward some form of large-scale community engagement event(s), at which point it is important to reach as wide a cross-section of society as possible. For such events, the 1/3 stakeholder, 1/3 open invitation and 1/3 random stratified selection strategy should be applied (as outlined in the Dialogue with the City case study in Chapter Five).

The process has a special responsibility to engage *tangata whenua* and the most obvious way of doing this is through continued collaboration with the Wellington region iwi representative group, Ara Tahi. Councillors should also be engaged and involved in the social learning aspects of the 'good practice' approach to ensure improved continuity of decision-making and influence.

These recommendations for a 'good practice' approach have been provided to promote further discussion and thinking about how GW approaches the COs and WRGPI processes. If these recommendations were to receive institutional and political support in the Wellington region, the approach would still be subject to two substantial external barriers, which are now outlined.

External challenges to the WRGPI

At the time of writing (August 2009), there are two key external challenges that face the WRGPI. These include budgetary cuts in response to the global (and local) economic recession, and the apparent positioning and political discourse of the present local government minister, Rodney Hide. The economic recession is affecting the way in which local government is operating, with a general paring back of 'the frills'. The GPI may be seen as a frill. A risk management response to this might be to highlight the possible savings that could be made by better regional integration of indicator development and reporting. A GPI could be seen as more important in a recession because of its ability to show where money is best spent across environmental, social and economic spheres in advancing progress in a broad sense, but this does presume a broad view on the part of politicians who have recently focused largely on economic concerns.

The second challenge is potentially more difficult to deal with. The Minister is very vocal in his opinion about the need for reform in the local

government sector. He reflects the neo-liberal approach to local government, with a focus on reducing the scope of local government to a core economic development focus. In a recent speech the Minister outlined some of his plans for local government (Hide, 2009a):

I am proposing that the Act be reviewed to ensure ratepayers and citizens have better tools for controlling council costs, rates and activities. And I will be looking at ways of ensuring local government operates within a defined fiscal envelope and focuses on core activities. We are living in tough economic times and councils need to think about the cost and affordability of services in their areas. We need hard thinking about the costs imposed on ratepayers...

...First of all, I'm looking at things like mandatory water and air quality standards, mandatory consultation and planning procedures, and excessive water requirements. I'm going through with a big sharp pencil crossing out as many of those things as I can, because at the end of the day someone has to pay for all that - and it's people like you. I believe that's wrong.

These comments from the local government Minister follow on from a cabinet paper, *Improving local government transparency, accountability and fiscal management*, that he presented in April 2009. The level of restructuring that the Minister proposes would very likely mean that a tool like the GPI would no longer fit within the legal framework or mandate of local government. It remains to be seen whether the rest of the Government will support the Minister's aspirations, given that Mr Hide represents a party with less than 4% of the vote at the 2008 election⁷. Furthermore, there is substantial resistance from the local government sector to the Minister's proposals, as revealed at the recent Local Government New Zealand conference (Gorman, 2009):

Comments during the conference's first day yesterday show Hide's plans face a battle.

⁷ http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2008/partystatus.html

After delivering his speech, Labour leader Phil Goff gave delegates tips on how to handle Hide and his proposals, and called ACT "a radical party, which is better than saying it is an extreme party, but there may not be a great deal of difference".

Waitakere City Mayor Bob Harvey told the conference there was plenty to fear from Hide.

"Not since [former National local government minister] Warren Cooper have we seen a minister that holds local government in such contempt," he said. "All of us in this room are in dire peril of this man."

These risks and further limitations are also discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a summary of the research findings that address Objective Three and the research aim. Both the Wellington context and the "good practice" public participation approach have been addressed. The WRGPI sits somewhat awkwardly within the WRS that is otherwise firmly rooted in conventional economic planning. Application of the existing COs has been limited by the institutional dissatisfaction with them, which has meant that the COs are not used for strategic planning as the LGA intended. There is a lack of understanding about the full-cost accounting procedure, and the GPI in general, across the region. The Treaty of Waitangi analysis found that the GPI normative framework has received support from Māori across a range of levels. The chapter concluded by presenting the final iteration of the 'good practice' approach to public participation in the COs process and the WRGPI. Social learning and systems thinking frameworks were applied to the existing normative framework that is focused on deliberation, influence and inclusion. These results are now critically addressed in the following discussion.

Chapter Eight: Discussion & Conclusion

In the context of a desire to develop alternative and more meaningful indicators of progress than the GDP, this research has sought to review and provide input into a regionally developed GPI, the Wellington Region GPI (WRGPI). This chapter is a critical discussion of the research findings and of the research process.

Critical reflection on the research findings

This research set out to address the research aim: *Explore a “good practice” approach to public participation in the development of the WRGPI, and provide an overview of the context within which it fits.*

To address the research aim, three objectives were identified, each of which is now discussed, with reference to the various results found in this study.

Objective One: *Identify the key aspects of the GPI that make it a useful tool for measuring progress/wellbeing at the local government level, and explore possible linkages with the Community Outcomes process (under the Local Government Act, 2002).*

The results of Objective One were directly addressed in Chapters Three and Four. Reflecting on the discussion for Objective One, it became evident that the discussion needed to at times draw upon the results from Objectives Two and Three as well. This reflects the overlapping and iterative nature of the research objectives.

The fit between the GPI framework and the LGA 2002 legislative context

The overview of the LGA provided in Chapter Four highlighted two important shifts in the legislative framework for local government in NZ. Firstly there was a shift from the notion of ‘government’ to that of ‘governance’; and secondly local government activities were placed within a framework of sustainable development. This double shift means that the

local government mandate, field of interest and participatory process have, at least in principle, been greatly broadened. It reflects the shift from reductionist approaches to more holistic, systems-based approaches as described by Bell & Morse (2008) (See Figure 2). Such a shift is an important step if local authorities are to address, or contribute to addressing, the often complex and ‘wicked problems’ that societies face. Furthermore, the LGA recognises that the community level is the best scale at which to address many of these issues, and as a result it requires long-term community-based strategic planning.

The focus on communities means that the expectations of and for public participation are increased. The primary tool for engaging the community in strategic planning is the Community Outcomes (COs) process. The LGA gives local authorities the responsibility to act as facilitators for addressing the COs. This is in the recognition that the scope of the COs is well beyond the ability of local government alone to address and needs to involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This is a significant shift for local authorities that have traditionally focused on meeting specific statutory requirements.

The local government legislative context in theory matches the *Nova Scotia* GPI (as outlined in Chapter Three) community philosophy (Colman, 2004:18):

We feel confident that, at the community level, the GPI can assist communities in mobilising behind a common vision, learning about themselves, improving their wellbeing, planning a better future for their children, and measuring their progress towards that goal.

As well as this community focus, the *Nova Scotia* GPI also consists of (Colman, 2004):

- A process that identifies a set of values to address the question “progress towards what?” and to guide the indicator selection process
- A pluralistic approach to measuring ‘progress’ and sustainable development. In practice this means using multiple types of indicators - not just economic valuation or physical accounts

- A focus on economic valuation of non-market variables across environmental, social and cultural indicators to challenge conventional economic systems
- A focus on integrating across the individual accounts rather than aggregating to a bottom line.

In this way, the GPI focus on community and function as a holistic reporting and accounting tool matches the LGA community focus and requirement for local authorities to report on progress toward the COs. Overall, it can be said that there is significant alignment between the *Nova Scotia* GPI conceptual framework and the LGA legislative context.

In the WRGPI context, the link between the two has been exhibited by the use of the COs to guide the selection of the WRGPI indicators. This link has however, not amounted to anything more (at the time of writing, August 2009). There are two important aspects of the WRGPI that need improving on if it is to accord with the *Nova Scotia* GPI philosophy⁸. A discussion of these is followed by a critical reflection on the lessons that have emerged from this analysis.

The community philosophy

Even though the community was consulted in the development of the regional COs, this did not amount to genuine participation because there was a minimal transfer of power or ownership between the community and the local authority (Innes & Booher, 2003). Furthermore, the GPI was not the subject of any part of the original COs consultation for the region. A range of key stakeholders have been involved in the development of the WRGPI, but they represent a very limited part of the Wellington region community. As a result, community participation and ownership of the WRGPI is minimal and not reflective of the *Nova Scotia* GPI community philosophy. In short, a substantive reconsideration of how the community is engaged in the COs would strengthen the WRGPI. A more comprehensive and inclusive process for the COs process need not be significantly more resource intensive.

⁸ This research has only focused on how the WRGPI is developed and applied; there are further issues that are not covered here, such as the appropriateness and technical features of the constituent indicators.

Economic valuation of non-market variables

It was evident during the interviews with staff and councillors in the Wellington region that there was some resistance to and lack of understanding about the full-cost accounting procedure. This concern was primarily due to the resource intensiveness of the full-cost accounting procedure, and to a lesser degree, a concern that the GPI should not displace the GDP accounts. These concerns are not unexpected, as they are reflective of the wider political and economic climate that is seeing a 'cutting back of the frills' across local and central government (a discussion of which is continued below).

However, for the WRGPI to reflect either the philosophy of the *Nova Scotia* GPI or the *Redefining Progress* GPI, economic valuation of non-market goods preferably by full-cost accounting is required (Colman, 2004; Talberth *et al.* 2007). Without progress in this direction, the WRGPI is unlikely to adequately challenge conventional economic directions or significantly reshape progress in the Wellington region. For these reasons, if the steps in the full-cost accounting procedure are not taken, the WRGPI should arguably no longer be called a GPI.

Can the challenges in the WRGPI context be resolved?

To address the first challenge, to greatly improve community participation and ownership of the WRGPI, institutional attitudes toward the COs process and its role as a strategic decision-making and planning tool need to be confronted. For this reason, the recommendations provided under Objective Three include a strong focus on social/institutional learning. I argue that only with institutional learning about the role of the COs can the process become more meaningful for GW and the community. There are several other issues that accompany this, such as whether the regional COs should be integrated with the territorial COs, all of which are considered in the discussion on Objective Three.

To confront the second challenge, of ensuring that economic valuation of non-market variables is undertaken, two steps are recommended from this research:

1. The political and economic status quo needs to be addressed and, where necessary, challenged through a deliberative process of social learning, and
2. There needs to be greater pooling of monitoring data and resources between the territorial and regional authority.

The first step is particularly challenging, given that the WRGPI was tacked onto a strategy dominated by a strong economic growth framework. This is ironic considering that the point of the GPI is to challenge such frameworks. This institutional tension, some might say schizophrenia, can be seen as reflecting a possible transition between two ultimately conflicting paradigms. The conventional economic paradigm is based upon neoliberal ideals of a high growth economy driven by market forces. The GPI, on the other hand, is based upon the principles of ecological economics and green accounting, which attempt to provide a more holistic national (or sub-national) accounting framework than conventional national accounts focused on the GDP, and facilitate, through social learning, a transition away from a growth-based view of well-being.

The conventional economic analysis is particularly evident in the core objectives of the WRS, such as 'double the region's exporting share of GDP by 2026'. This objective is based upon business-as-usual forecasting, remarkably unperturbed by a sense that the economy and society is likely to go through major and probably disruptive adjustment over this period. Yet, future global economic, social and environmental disruption due to peak oil (Heinberg, 2007; Kerschner & Hubacek, 2009) and particularly the need to mitigate future climate change (Beddoe *et al.* 2009; Richardson *et al.* 2009) is now widely expected. Knowledge of such risks has, however, rarely led to convincing or proactive responses from policy-makers, except where policy-makers are able to build a broad-based constituency for proactive adjustment.

Without an improved understanding of these risks and the value of the full-cost accounting procedure in progressing toward the COs, decision-makers are unlikely to support the scale of resourcing required for adequate GPI

development, e.g. more than one account per year to be calculated (as was indicated by the WRS team). For this reason, the 'good practice' approach outlined in Chapter Seven has focused on social learning to ensure that the understanding of the GPI and the full-cost accounting procedure is improved and the direction of conventional economic planning is reflected upon. The challenges of implementing the 'good practice' approach are outlined under Objective Three.

The second step, greater pooling of reporting resources between the local authorities, could be relatively easily achieved. The WRS itself is a good example of how the local authorities in the Wellington region are sharing resources and working together to address economic issues. Edmondson from Kapiti Coast District Council highlighted in her interview that particularly for the smaller councils, regional collaboration could greatly increase the efficiency of meeting the monitoring and reporting requirements of the LGA. This would require the WRGPI to be able to be disaggregated from the regional to the territorial level (as some of it currently can be), and would also depend on how well the regional COs match the various territorial indicators.

In summary, the WRS is a mixed blessing. On the one hand the context that the WRS has created has limited the extent to which the WRGPI reflects the *Nova Scotia* GPI philosophy. On the other hand, the strategy has enhanced the integration and cohesion between the territorial authorities and the regional authority and therefore increased the resourcing opportunities for it. Such a mixed context is likely to define pioneering efforts to develop a GPI at the local government level.

What does this case study tell us about applying GPI at the local government level?

In a global context in which the development of a GPI by any form of government is uncommon, it can be expected that pioneering initiatives, such as the WRGPI, will be developed in confronting political and institutional contexts. Therefore, the imperfect application of the GPI philosophy, as exhibited by the WRGPI, is to be expected. While the process

of developing the WRGPI has been brought about by a specific and significant strategy, its development will also be coupled with longer-term incremental changes that will improve or decrease its effectiveness (Geczi, 2007; Lindblom, 1979). Thus the social learning frameworks recommended by this study will be critical to ensuring that these incremental changes improve, rather than decrease, the effectiveness of the WRGPI.

This study has found that the success of the wider transition from narrower, conventional economic analysis to more holistic and meaningful accounting frameworks requires:

1. Pioneering case studies such as the WRGPI that can provide evidence that the GPI is a useful and effective tool, and can positively reinforce COs development⁹
2. Social learning frameworks that accompany the development and subsequent incremental application of a GPI
3. Integration where possible between institutions to ensure that a GPI is adequately resourced and maintains relevance to the region
4. One-off policy interventions (such as the introduction of the GPI), coupled with incremental adjustments.

As the WRGPI case study evolves, further lessons will emerge that should continue to be reflected on and made public.

Objective Two: *Identify what constitutes 'good practice' public participation in community-based long-term planning and in indicators of progress.*

Objective Two has been addressed through Chapter Five (which built upon Chapters Three and Four), and the local government case studies provided in Chapter Six.

The literature on public participation is extensive and radiates across numerous fields of academic research. This field was narrowed with the Objective Two focus on “public participation in community-based long-term

⁹ Although these conclusions about the effectiveness of the WRGPI are limited by the fact that it has yet to be put into practice.

planning and in indicators of progress". Furthermore, Chapter Five discusses and explores 'processes' that can help attain a community's desired states (in this context, the COs), reflecting the sustainable development agenda of both the GPI and the LGA (as explained in Chapters Three and Four).

Community-based long-term planning was conceptualised as an inherently complex or at least complicated, process that requires participation from diverse and often conflicting views to come to some form of common ground. Deliberative democracy was discussed as the leading field of academic investigation that is appropriate to this conceptualisation of community-based planning. While deliberation is a widely discussed and theorised process, the practicalities of successfully implementing it into institutional settings are less proven (Fischer, 1998, 2003).

This is in part due to the institutional contexts in which policymaking is developed where "...the relationship between evidence and policy is highly politicised, complex and recursive" (Juntti *et al.* 2009:6). Any measure that confronts the power dynamics as a deliberative process does is prone to obfuscation or resistance by those with political agendas or vested interests in maintaining the status quo. The social learning that can emerge from the deliberative process can be effective at negotiating disparities between the powerful and the less powerful (Holden, 2008; Percy-Smith, 2006; Siebenhuner, 2004). It can produce a participatory environment in which (Dryzek & List, 2003:1) "individuals are amenable to scrutinizing and changing their preferences in the light of persuasion (but not manipulation, deception or coercion) from other participants." This can reduce inequalities of power, and perceptions of difference between participants, but significant differences are likely to remain.

While social learning can be very effective with those who participate, there is still the issue of those with power that remain outside the deliberative/social learning process (who are often top-level politicians). Thus deliberative processes that do not engage top-level politicians can exist on a knife-edge between competing political and vested interests. The over-ruling of decisions made collectively through the deliberative process is

frustrating and ultimately damaging; and the repercussions of it persist in public opinions about local government. This was highlighted in the local government case studies and is certainly a key challenge in the context of the WRGPI (as further discussed under Objective Three).

This connects into the importance of *influence* throughout the process. The Dialogue with the City case study (provided in Chapter Five) showed how top-level support and commitment to according influence to the outcomes of the process contributed to very positive participant perceptions of the event (Carson & Hartz-Karp, 2005; Carson & Hart, 2005; Hartz-Karp, 2005a, 2005b). Moreover, perhaps the most significant question that the results of this research have not adequately addressed is “how does the process gain and maintain influence?” This a challenging question to address, and requires a deep level of local context. It is addressed as part of the Objective Three discussion.

While it may be simpler and cheaper to run one-off public participation events with clearly delineated boundaries, the ultimate question is whether these will aid the necessary institutional and social systemic shift to reflect ‘genuine progress’ and sustainable development. This research strongly suggests that the current difficulties with enacting the sustainable development mandate result in part from such one-off, inconsequential and disconnected participatory processes. While it may be more challenging and resource intensive, this research considers it essential that future participatory events (in the context of long-term community planning and related indicators) are situated within a wider incremental policy-cycle that focuses on building long-term, collaborative capacity with the public (Innes & Booher, 2003). Furthermore, it has been shown that investing in long-term collaborative capacity can be a cost-effective strategy because stakeholders are likely to take on increased ownership and responsibility (Hartz-Karp, 2005a, 2005b).

The final component of what has been identified as ‘good practice’ public participation is *inclusion*. Inclusion is difficult, and requires a concerted effort to ensure that participatory events are genuinely inclusive. The

formulation of this ‘good practice’ approach to inclusion has given weight to the arguments provided by both Young (1990) and Geczi (2007); that much of the value from public participation is derived from the exchanges (and therefore social learning) between participants from diverse social backgrounds. Furthermore, social difference can be used to examine underlying assumptions (as per the systems thinking iceberg outlined in Chapter Five) as a means to rethink and realign ‘progress’ (Geczi, 2007; Senge *et al.* 2008).

The way in which inclusion is approached has been considered at length in Chapters Five and Seven. The local government case studies (in Chapter Six) found that representing/involving social difference (or socioeconomic representation) remains one of the greatest challenges for local authorities. A number of barriers have been identified previously (such as lack of time, feelings of disempowerment etc.). However, imaginative techniques are preferable to half-hearted or tokenistic efforts to obtain representation and inclusion. This further reinforces the value of a focus on building long-term relationships and collaborative capacity of the community and local authority.

The good practice model represents a strong normative framework to engaging the public in long-term strategic decision-making and indicator development. This ‘good practice’ framework aims to assist a systemic-level re-orientation toward sustainable development and genuine progress at the regional level. This is a complicated process, which is likely to face a number of challenges and risks. These are best explained in the following section, discussing Objective Three, where the Wellington context is further integrated into the discussion.

Objective Three: *Building on objectives One and Two, draw conclusions on a “good practice” approach to public participation in the WRGPI, with its regional and national context.*

The iterative nature of this research has meant that Objective Three and the research aim have already been directly addressed. Chapter Seven in

particular provided important conclusions on both the 'good practice' approach and the Wellington regional context. The previous discussion and reflection on Objectives One and Two have also played a key role in addressing Objective Three and the Research aim. This final discussion therefore does not retrace this ground, but places the WRGPI case study in key global, national and regional contexts and discusses the possible implications of these for the WRGPI 'good practice' approach. It finally revisits some of the challenges outlined early on in the thesis and reflects on the effectiveness of the research methodology.

Possible context-based risks facing the WRGPI process

Three scales of risks and issues resulting from contextual conditions can be associated with the 'good practice' approach outlined in this study. These include global, national and regional risks and issues.

Global level risks and issues

The first is the global level, which is characterised by increasing globalisation and interconnectedness, to which the Wellington region is no exception. The WRS in fact is explicit about its aim of increasing the Wellington region's global connectivity¹⁰. While increased globalisation can bring a range of benefits, it also increases the susceptibility of the WRGPI to global events and risks (Murray, 2006). At the time of writing, the most obvious global risk is the global financial recession, which has reduced the willingness and ability to invest in public-sector infrastructure and policy. Given the costs associated with the WRGPI 'good practice' approach, this poses a threat, which is also compounded by the national-level risks that were outlined in Chapter Seven.

Climate change and peak oil are further global level challenges that are likely to directly affect the Wellington region. In these contexts, the WRGPI can in fact play an important role in directing decision-making down a path that is focused on renewable energy sources and transport options, with a shift away from carbon-intensive modes of activity and oil-dependency. Thus if

¹⁰ Through such initiatives as providing a direct air link to South-East Asia, and doubling Wellington's share of exports by 2026 (WRS, 2007).

the WRGPI 'good practice' approach is carefully implemented, it may provide an important framework for improving the resilience of the Wellington region to global risks, and facilitating new ways of conceptualising 'progress' that are more robust in the face of global shocks.

National level risks and issues

At the national level, the risks are particularly pertinent. An overview of these was provided in Chapter Seven. Coupled with the government spending cutbacks in response to the global economic recession the political shift to a simplified vision of local government is a considerable risk. Local government minister Rodney Hide has been working hard to make his desire to reduce the scope of local government (and particularly regional councils) known. He has suggested doing away with the environmental, social and cultural mandates of local government with the primary focus shifting to economic growth. This reflects a fundamental challenge to the WRGPI framework, which certainly does not fit within the Minister's definition of 'core business'.

While other local authorities have expressed interest in developing similar, more holistic accounting and reporting measures, the Wellington region is a leader in this regard. Waitakere City Council was a stand-out performer in the local government case studies in the way that they engaged with the community. While they have not developed a tool such as a GPI, they provided important lessons about collaborating with the community that are relevant to the WRGPI 'good practice' approach. The Waitakere COs are the best example of how the COs can be applied to community-based, long-term strategic planning. The strategy of building long-term collaborative relationships with the community has meant that the COs are a living and meaningful process in Waitakere. This research found that GW could learn from Waitakere to considerably improve its performance in how it develops and applies the COs.

Regional risks and issues

At the regional level, there has been good political support for the WRGPI, although this research has shown that politicians do not necessarily

understand the full implications or possibilities of the WRGPI. However, political support and understanding of public participation is far from adequate, and poses a substantial risk to the WRGPI 'good practice' approach. As has been stressed a number of times, this is highlighted in the failure of the COs to have institutional, political or community saliency. Community attitudes toward GW's efforts to consult with them reflect a continuum from a complete lack of interest to anger at the inadequacies of the consultation process, as highlighted by Duston (2009):

Perhaps the most stellar example of consultation irrelevance would be the upcoming Wellington Public Transport Review, being conducted by the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The intent is good; Wellingtonians are being asked about their use of and requirements for public transport services, and a brochure is being sent to households in the region soliciting feedback. As part of the process, Councillors were asked by the responsible officials to comment on the brochure...only to be told that it was too late to make any changes, as 50,000 copies of the brochure had already been printed.

Such negative press is damaging for GW. A comprehensive rethink of how it approaches public participation is required. To this end, this research has made some useful interventions. As agreed with the WRS team, a report was provided by the author in February 2009 outlining a possible 'good practice' approach, based upon literature and national/international case studies. The report was well received, and was sent throughout the institution, including to the CEO and some of the regional councillors. In a recent conversation (August 2009) with councillor Paul Bruce, he said that he found the report to be insightful and useful for sparking some council level reconsideration of how it engages with the community. This ties in with the recommendation from Chapter Seven, that if this research is to become genuinely useful, it needs to be summarised and presented to the regional councillors. Indeed it is only through careful communication with the regional councillors that the 'good practice' approach stands a chance of being enacted. An important further step would be to communicate about it with the territorial councils as well. Communicating about it with council staff is equally important, or

else the WRGPI risks being perceived as an imposition on already heavy workloads.

The NZ Centre for Ecological Economics was recently (as at August 2009) awarded funding to complete phase two of their “Sustainable Pathways” research. This includes using GW as a case study, to look at scenario modelling methodologies. This research will certainly aid and feed into the development of the WRGPI, and may well complement the recommendations of this research (although it is too early to draw any conclusion yet).

The challenge of integrating indicators into local governance

This research has provided some insight into the key challenges of integrating indicators into local governance. This was spurred on by two seminal propositions:

- Astleithner *et al.* (2004:23): *designing and devising SISs [Sustainability Indicator Sets], in itself, changes little. It is a question of how SISs are integrated into the processes of urban governance; and*
- Memon & Johnston (2008:6): *[there is a need] to successfully integrate a broad community based ‘bottom-up’ approach to indicator development with a central and local government expert-driven methodology.*

The WRGPI ‘good practice’ approach has sought to address these challenges and has provided recommendations to help facilitate the integration of the WRGPI into institutions and communities across the Wellington region (in Chapter Seven and the preceding discussion). This research has focused specifically on the linkage between the COs process and the WRGPI. However, the WRGPI is by no means limited to the COs process. A question that warrants further investigation is: “How does the WRGPI connect with policies and processes outside of the COs?” This requires some serious consideration, as the current COs (upon which the WRGPI is based) are not well connected with council workplans.

Critical reflection on the research methodology

The research methodology applied for this research has enabled a comprehensive and contextualised analysis and discussion of the research

objectives and aim. The research has been inter-disciplinary, has included active involvement in the development of the WRGPI and has adapted as the context has evolved. While the methodology employed here has generally proved to be successful, a critical reflection on it is provided here.

The literature reviews

The literature reviews provided important background insights and academic rigour to the development of the 'good practice' approach. It was recognised that developing a 'good practice' approach needed to be both process and context orientated. This required the research to be interdisciplinary and cover a range of research fields. The cost of such an approach is that depth of discussion can be reduced. However, for this study, the broad scope has helped to provide a more holistic 'good practice' approach than could have been achieved if it aimed for less scope but greater depth.

Local government case studies

Using Burke's case studies as a source for the meta-analysis provided in this study provided two challenges (the full results of the meta-analysis are provided in Appendix Three). Firstly, Burke's study is five years old (as at August 2009). In this time, local authorities have developed their COs processes and have had more time to get used to the LGA, which at the time of Burke's research was still a very new piece of legislation. This issue was addressed by following up the meta-analysis with interviews with six of the local governments in Burke's nine case studies. The second challenge was in respect of conducting the meta-analysis based upon another researcher's primary research. This issue was also addressed by discussing the results of the meta-analysis were discussed with Burke, who felt happy with them.

The interview process (for all interviews)

The interview recruitment process can be considered very successful. Of the 20 interviewees that were approached, only one could not participate in the allocated time. The major concern that could be raised with the recruitment process is that it was too broadly focused – it was decided that more case studies, with fewer interviewees in each location was preferable to fewer

case studies each with more interviewees. Particularly for the Wellington case study, it would have been helpful to have had a greater depth of interviews. However this issue is not overly concerning because the Wellington case study was accompanied with an observational study, based upon the relationship developed with the WRS team.

Observational study and relationship with the WRS team

The relationship with the WRS team proved invaluable to the research. It was a source of 'inside' information, which meant that the research could keep abreast of developments as they occurred and respond accordingly. Furthermore, the relationship meant that ideas for the 'good practice' approach could be tested out with the WRS staff, and they were only too happy to provide feedback. It took some time to be able to build up a clear picture of the context, and this would have been much more difficult had it not been for the observational study. The methodology chapter highlighted that a possible concern with observational studies is that the results can be skewed or covered up for fear of weakening established relationships. This research has been careful to ensure that participants in it have not been put at risk by the findings, but this has in no way limited freedom of speech or the independence of this research.

Treaty analysis

The Treaty analysis found the link between the tikanga Māori house, the tikanga Pākehā house and the Treaty of Waitangi house to be a more iterative and complicated process than the somewhat simplified Treaty analysis framework suggested (see Figure 1). While the Treaty Analysis provides a useful insight into how the GPI is perceived from a Māori perspective, it has not provided a conclusive answer about whether the WRGPI has adequately addressed Treaty issues. To comprehensively address this question would require a much wider scope of interviews and discussion with local iwi, community and council representatives. Furthermore, the question is difficult to address at this stage, for the reason that the WRGPI is still in its infancy and will continue to evolve. Therefore while the Treaty Analysis has been by no means conclusive, it has provided important insight into the complicated nature of Treaty-based relationships.

The conclusion, which follows, summarises this discussion chapter and ties it with the previous chapters, the research objectives and the research aim.

Conclusion

This research has used an in-depth case study of the Wellington region to generate insights into key issues associated with integrating a GPI into governance and long-term community planning at the local government level. The research was participatory in that it actively engaged with GW during the development period of the WRGPI, which meant that the research evolved over the course of a year. The research was chosen in part due to my keen interest, as a resident, in the future of the Wellington region and an interest in how more holistic measures of progress can be applied as a contribution to sustainable development.

The research aim consisted of two core components:

1. *Explore a 'good practice' approach to public participation in the development of the WRGPI, and*
2. *Provide an overview of the context within which it fits.*

This research has interpreted and developed a 'good practice' approach that reaches beyond just the public participation aspects of the WRGPI. This in large part drew on a systems thinking paradigm. This meant that for a 'good practice' approach to public participation to be realistic, it needed to be connected and integrated with the wider institutional arrangements and context. Thus the method and analysis addressed the two components of the aim in an integrative fashion, across the three research objectives.

Astleithner *et al.* (2004) suggest that it is "how SISs [Sustainability Indicator Sets] are integrated into the process of urban governance" that largely determines the success of them. In the national context, the legislative environment provided by the Local Government Act 2002 has provided a synergistic and flexible normative framework, particularly in

its Community Outcomes process, to which the GPI can be linked. This research has provided a discussion of the evolution of the *Nova Scotia* GPI (in contrast to the *Redefining Progress* GPI), which aims to provide a holistic, pluralistic and community-based measure of progress as a means toward sustainable development. Similarly, the COs process is the key tool provided in the LGA to aid long-term community based strategic planning. Progress toward the COs needs to be conceptualised in terms of indicators and then monitored and reported, for which the GPI is ideal.

Memon & Johnston highlighted the challenge of reporting on the COs (2008:6): "...to successfully integrate a broad community based 'bottom-up' approach to indicator development with a central and local government expert-driven methodology." This captures the aspiration and challenge of developing the 'good practice' approach to the WRGPI (and COs) as reflected in the aim of this research.

The in-depth case study of the Wellington region showed that the current approach to the COs in the Wellington region is generally felt to be inadequate, and not reflective of 'good practice'. Furthermore, during the development of the WRGPI, the process challenge expressed by Memon & Johnston was not adequately addressed. There is awareness within Greater Wellington Regional Council about the failure to engage the community in both the COs and WRGPI. Going beyond this, the present research has identified a number of context related difficulties that a 'good practice' approach for the WRGPI and COs needs to be able to deal with. These include:

- The ultimately conflicting paradigms of the conventional economic analysis provided by the WRS and the (*Nova Scotia*) GPI, which seeks to challenge the conventional economic conception of 'progress'
- The fact that the GPI is developed as part of the WRS means that it is not a GW-specific body of work, but is a joint body of work owned by both the territorial authorities and the regional authority
- COs being perceived as 'too broad to be meaningful' by both the community and local authorities across the region

- Inadequate community participation in and ownership of the COs
- The resource intensiveness of the full-cost accounting procedure, and a general lack of understanding of the procedure
- A political context that is now dominated by a local government Minister who is insistent on scaling down the scope of local government activities and cutting back 'the frills'
- An immediate economic context dominated by a global and local recession.

Bearing these difficulties in mind, some of the outcomes that this 'good practice' framework aims to work toward are to:

- Build meaningful and enduring community support and participation in the COs and WRGPI, through collaboration between the community and local authorities
- Deliver a strong value case for the continued resourcing of the GPI
- Integrate reporting and monitoring efforts from across the region, through a regional GPI that can be disaggregated to and involve the territorial level
- Establish and integrate processes of social learning across relevant institutions, particularly GW.
- Improve the application and strategic value of the COs process for the community and local authorities
- Use appropriate facilitated deliberative methods, such as the 21st Century Town meeting and Mediated Modelling, to assist the identification of the COs and benchmarks for the WRGPI.

In light of this analysis, an appropriate 'good practice' approach was developed based upon academic literature, international examples and a set of national local government case studies. The 'good practice' approach has a normative component, *deliberation, influence & inclusion*, and a methodological component, *purpose, process & context*. In line with a rich literature on the strength of deliberative processes, deliberation was stressed as a particularly important tool to facilitate institutional and

social learning around the WRGPI between the local authorities and the community.

Yet deliberation is a challenging process to effectively apply, and the 'good practice' approach is neither costless nor quick. This research has shown that a significant investment in the approach would be necessary to stimulate social learning required for a possible shift and reorientation of perceptions of progress to occur. Such investment would greatly improve the capacity within the region to make genuine progress toward the desired community outcomes, as well as increasing the resilience of the region to future environmental, social, cultural and economic challenges. The good practice approach also aims to build community ownership by improving the collaborative relationships between the GW and the community. This increases the likelihood that the local authorities could share the burden of costs with communities and businesses, and that a strong constituency supporting a broader view of community progress would develop.

The GPI reflects a new approach to measuring (and facilitating) 'progress' in the Wellington region and is a reflection of the scope provided by the LGA. It represents a transition from a largely reductionist, top-down, paradigm to a systems thinking paradigm. Despite the fit between the GPI and LGA frameworks, the real challenge lies in integrating the GPI into the institutional context, which has tended toward reductionist frameworks. These reductionist frameworks of thinking provide the greatest challenge to the 'good practice' approach and, at a broader level to enacting the sustainable development mandate.

The WRGPI, coupled with the opportunities provided by the current economic recession and the likely call to action from the Copenhagen climate change meeting provides the potential for a region-wide reconsidering of what direction and outcomes society values. It remains to be seen whether the WRGPI will be successfully implemented, and whether the development will be an important part of a wider, more

globally felt shift to more holistic and pluralistic measures of progress. If this shift emerges, the local government Minister's neo-liberal pronouncements could just be the rearguard of reductionism (a narrow view of local aspirations). Or it may be that the temptation of reductionism will persist and the aspiration for sustainable development will continue to lie just beyond our reach.

Whether or not this shift takes place depends in part on how the GPI can be moulded to fit often difficult and conflicting institutional contexts. This study has explored some of the contextual challenges that emerged in the development of the WRGPI. While the recommendations are particularly pertinent to the development of a GPI at the local government level, they provide broad insights into the interface between the GPI and institutional contexts that are also useful at the institutional level. The *Nova Scotia* GPI is a powerful tool, with great potential for shifting thinking around 'progress'. However, this study has shown that such a tool alone is not enough; a GPI needs to be coupled with social learning frameworks that align with its development. This study has contributed to the evaluation of frameworks and proposals that challenge the juggernaut of conventional economic 'progress'. Effectively enacting any of these proposals will require all the imagination, charm and persuasiveness academics and practitioners can muster.

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Appendix One: VUW Ethics Committee Approval



MEMORANDUM

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Email Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

TO	Aaron Packard
COPY TO	Associate Professor Ralph Chapman, Supervisor
FROM	Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	December 21, 2008
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval: No 16268, Public participation, community outcomes and the Genuine Progress Index.

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 30 June 2009. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Convener

Appendix Two: Interview schedules

Local government case studies indicative interview schedule

“Public Participation in the community outcomes process and the development of the Wellington Genuine Progress Index”

Introduction (10min):

- Overview of information sheet and signing of consent form,
- Overview of the research, including an introduction to the ‘best practice’ model of public participation that is being developed,
- Any questions at this point?

Interview questions (40mins)

1. Representation

Representation in local government community engagements is often sought through the involvement of stakeholders (or interest groups). However, stakeholders are not necessarily representative of socioeconomic difference in a society. A number of commentators argue that socioeconomic representation is necessary to ensure the legitimacy of public participation.

- Is socioeconomic representation in community engagements a priority for your council/community? How is representation currently sought?

It has been suggested that the best way to gain socioeconomic representation is by random selection of participants. This however can be very resource intensive and leaves stakeholders out of the engagement process. One case study opted instead to invite participants by 1/3 random selection, 1/3 open invitation and 1/3 stakeholder.

- Do you think that this would be the best way to ensure representation? Why or why not?
- In your experience, what are the possible barriers to enabling socioeconomic representation?

2. Collaboration

In a number of case studies, collaboration (as opposed to informing or consulting) between the council and the community has been shown to bring considerable benefits to both the council (cost savings etc) and the community (increased ownership etc). On the other hand, there can be a number of institutional barriers to effective collaboration.

- Do you think that collaboration is an approach that your council/community would benefit from? If so, how?
- What structures or relationships do you think would be important to promote collaboration during the community outcomes process?
- Do you think that this best practice model takes a collaborative approach?
- Does your council plan to take a joint approach (with other local authorities) to developing the community outcomes?

3. Method of public participation

In the first round of community outcomes identification, most local authorities used community or stakeholder meetings to engage with the public. In some cases these were

successful, in others it was reported that only the ‘usual suspects’ turned up. Another comment was that the process could easily get people to agree upon broad, high-level community outcomes, but little progress was made in deciding on how and who would take action toward them. The best practice model introduced above proposes the use of a ‘21st Century Town Meeting’, which couples deliberation with computer modelling as a means to linking the community outcomes to policy directives. Such meetings host 200 – 5000 participants.

- Do you think that a large-scale and in-depth event like this is necessary for the community outcomes process?
- What do you think are the key attributes of an effective public participation method?
- In your opinion, what makes a public participation event successful, or unsuccessful?
- What are the key considerations for your council when holding community engagement events? (question to council staff only)

While computer modelling is effective at visualising physical outcomes (such as new bike paths), social outcomes can be harder to visualise.

- Do you have ideas for how to visualise (for example, developing scenarios) social outcomes and their impact on policy?

4. Linking the community outcomes to indicators

Local authorities must report on progress toward community outcomes. This is done through the development of indicators.

- Should indicators be developed and reviewed through a process of public participation?
- Should this be done at the same time as the community outcomes process?

Some international case studies have shown that the public more readily engages with non-technical indicators than technical indicators.

- In light of this finding, what role do you think indicators should play – a technical/institutional role or a less technical/public role? Or both?

5. Barriers to enacting ‘best practice’ public participation

- In your opinion, what are the two foremost barriers to enacting ‘best practice’ public participation?

6. Funding (question for council staff only)

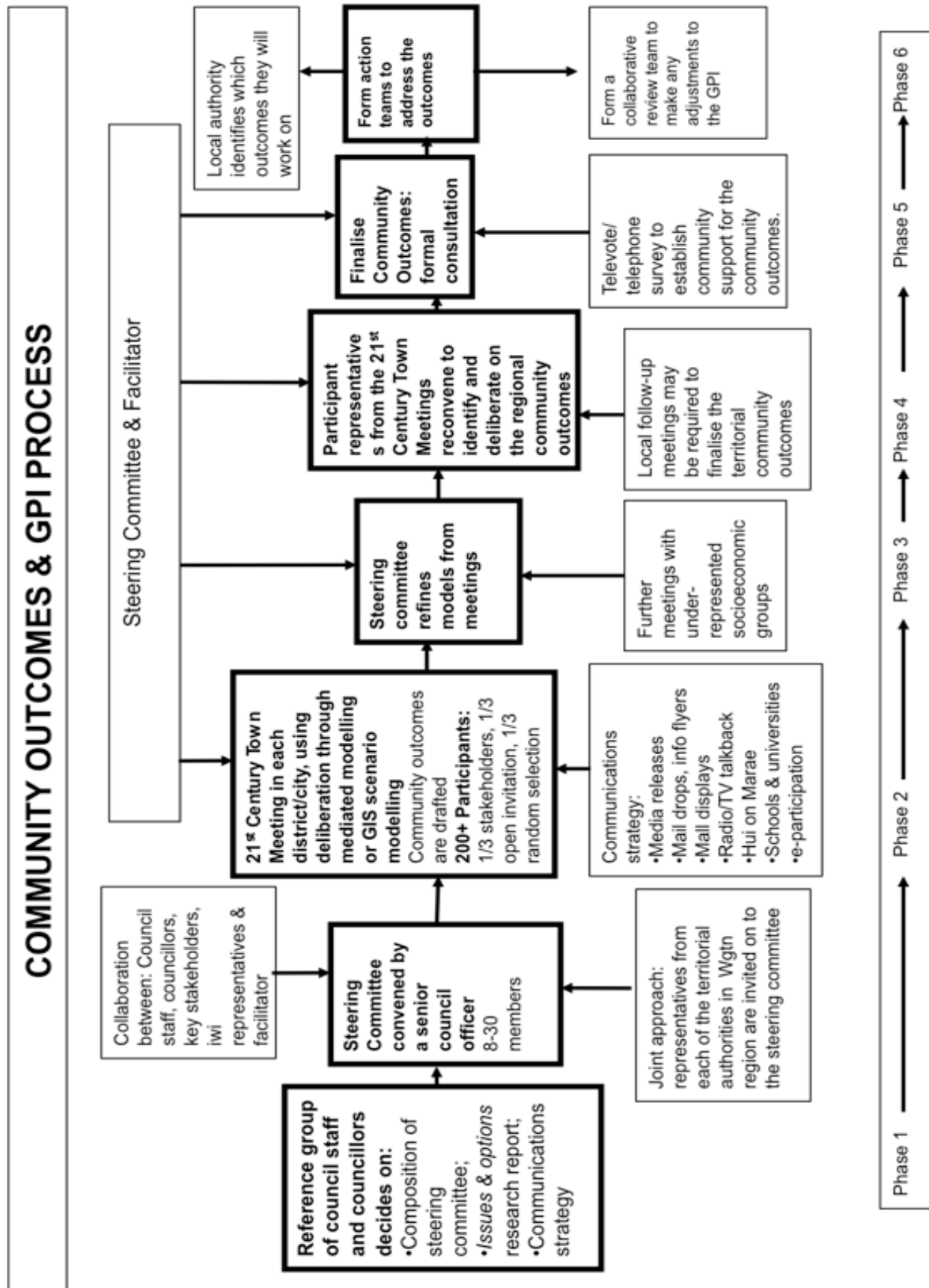
- How much funding has been allocated to the community outcomes process?
- Is this enough for the sort of process that you would like to see?
- Are other staff supportive of public participation? How do they respond to the allocation of funding to community engagements? (question to council staff only)

7. Overall assessment of the ‘best practice’ model

- What improvements could be made to the ‘best practice’ approach to public participation described earlier?

Any surplus time will be used for open-ended discussion.

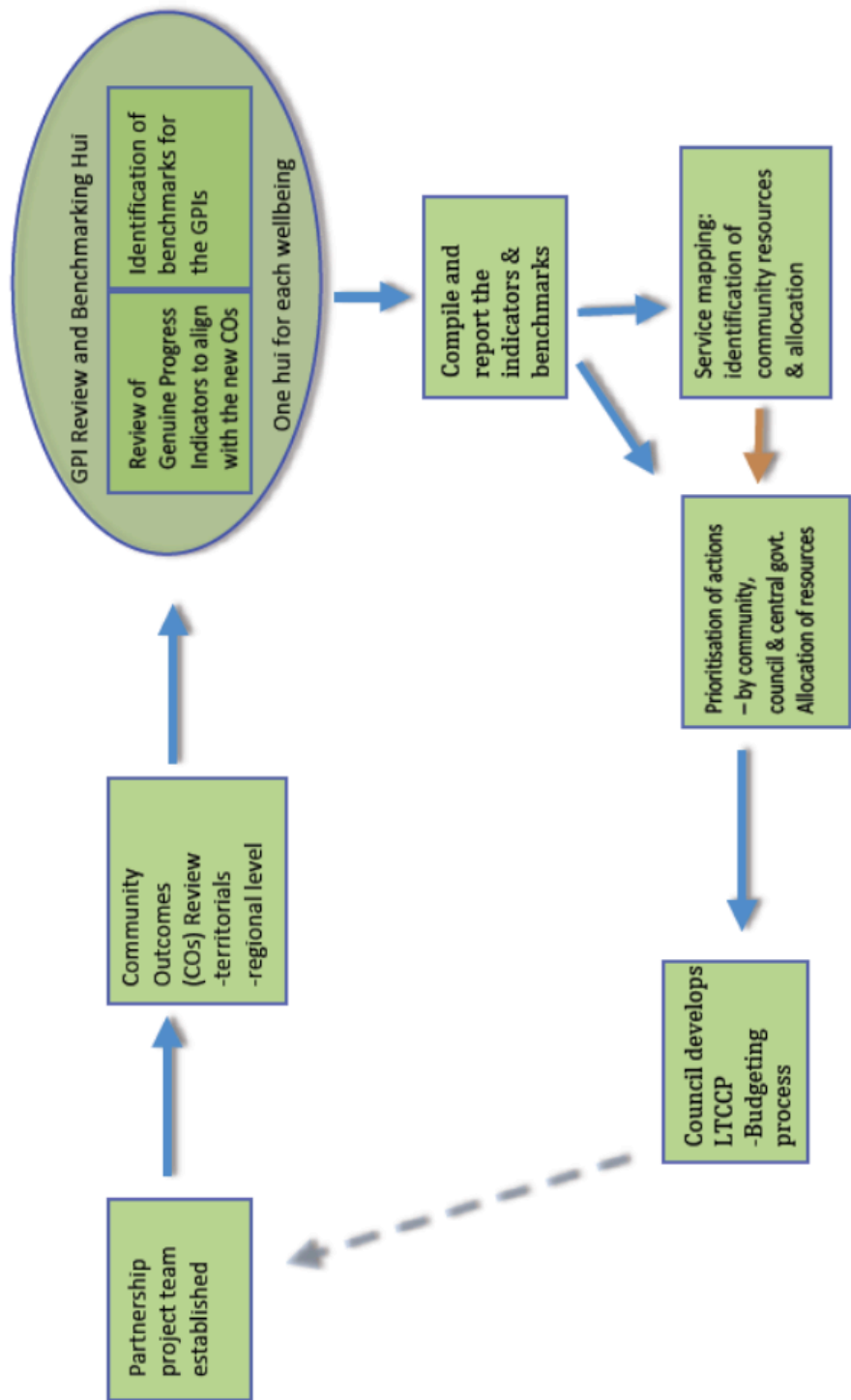
Process diagram used in local government case study interviews



Interview schedule to Wellington Regional Councillors and Council Officers

1. Do you think that a GPI is useful for monitoring and communicating progress or wellbeing in the Wellington region? If so, could you expand on how you see its merits.
2. Do you think that the GPI will sufficiently report on progress toward the COs – as required under Section 91 and Section 92 of the LGA 2002?
3. How do you think the council could make best use of the GPI as a tool to report on the community outcomes?
4. Should the COs be integrated between territorial authorities and GW?
5. Is it important that the WRGPI can be scaled down to the territorial level? If so, how?
6. How do you see the Wgtn Region GPI fitting into planning processes?
7. What do you see are the primary issues in respect to integrating the GPI into a) council governance and b) council operations?
8. What do you think are the most important considerations for the effective communication of the GPI to the wider public?
9. The GPI are not indicators of sustainable development. As Hecht suggests, they “tell us where we stand now but do not tell us whether our current position can be sustained in the future” (Hecht, 2007:4). To make the WRGPI a sustainable development index, benchmarks of sustainability need to be determined for each indicator.
 - a) Do you think it is necessary to benchmark the WRGPIS?
The process of reviewing the community outcomes (at least once every six years as required under the LGA 2002) could be one such way to develop benchmarks for the indicators.
 - b) Do you think that this would be an important linkage?
10. Are you familiar with the full-cost accounting procedure? Do you think that it is important that full-cost accounting is done?

Process diagram used in Wellington region interviews



Appendix Three: Results of meta-analysis of Burke's (2004) case studies

	1. Representation: socioeconomic vs interest group/stakeholder	2. Scope of inclusion: narrow vs. broad	3. Information sharing or deliberation?	4. What level of participation was used?	5. What influence did participation have? Limited, moderate or high	6. How were the costs covered?	7. Recommendations & challenges for next time	8. How were the views of Maori integrated?
The Waitakere Way	Interest group led, socioeconomic sample gained by household survey and open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Collaboration was aimed for	Moderate-high	The costs were no more than usual	Consultation overload, 'building robustness' – on economic and env't wellbeing	Specific hui, and already established links
Tomorrow's Manakau	Interest group led, some socioeconomic through open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Collaboration at the reference group level, consultation at the broader level	Moderate –High, Developed the COs, the reference group had decision-making powers	Not referenced	There is a need to set targets rather than just identifying indicators	Tailor-made approach, conducted in parallel
Tauranga Tomorrow	Interest group developed vision, socioeconomic through open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Collaboration at the reference group level, consultation at the broader level	Moderate	Not referenced	It is easy to get agreement on outcomes, but "how will we do it?"	Not referenced
Future Taranaki	Interest groups, socioeconomic sample gained by household survey and open invitation to meetings	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Consultation	Low-moderate, provided feedback on council proposals	Not referenced	"How to work with other agencies" to achieve the outcomes	Separate hui held, but turnout less than hoped for
Wanganui's Future	Interest group, open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Consultation	Low-moderate, contributed to the development of the community outcomes	Not specified, but resource intensiveness was highlighted	"How you write comments is important"	Attempted to hold hui, but did not eventuate
Choosing Futures	Interest groups, open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Involve→Collaborate	Moderate-high, successfully influenced council decisions	No extra costs incurred, but process was 'not sustainable'	Important to have expectations that 'people understand long term planning'	Iwi were worked with to provide input
Future Path Canterbury	Interest group led, socioeconomic sample gained by household survey and open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Consultation & involvement	Low-moderate. Developed scenarios, but unclear link to decision-making	Not referenced	Make better use of the media	Not referenced
Place-based Community Plans	Interest group, open invitation	From broad to narrow	Information sharing	Collaborate→inform/consult	Low-moderate, Did not hugely affect decision-making, but contributed to COs	Not referenced	Strongest conflict will be in 'how the outcomes are achieved and by whom' not the outcomes themselves'	Iwi only wanted to be informed of the outcomes, did not want to participate
Our Way Southland	Council led, socioeconomic sample gained by household survey and open invitation	From narrow to broad	Information sharing	Consultation	Low-moderate, formed regional vision/outcomes	Not referenced	"The report will reflect the majority view – we won't please everyone"	Iwi involved on the steering committee and at workshops

9. How were councillors involved?	10. Was it considered a success by a) the authority & b) the community?	11. What methods of reporting were used?	12. Were multiple councils involved (joint approach)?	13. What engagement techniques were used?	14. Were external facilitators used?	15. Were school groups or youth groups involved?
The Waitakere Way	Councillor led	Feeling of 'still learning', but generally successful.	No	Interactive display boards in public places, video interviews, workshops, community meetings, focus groups, school visits, newspaper, letters to Mayor, formal consultation, and a household survey.	No	Yes – through questionnaires, video interviews
Tomorrow's Manakau	Councillors involved throughout	"We had a paradigm shift from representative governance to participatory democracy"	No	Citizens perceptions surveys, focus groups, residents associations, youth forums, key stakeholders involved through the reference group.	No	Yes – youth forums
Tauranga Tomorrow	Involved in the Tauranga Tomorrow Teams (reference group)	Yes, but 'it is much bigger than the council alone'	Yes - Tauranga City Council & Environment Bay of Plenty	A city wide 'roadshow' that travelled to public places and events. Interactive display boards. Went out to existing meetings.	No	Yes – the roadshow travelled to schools
Future Taranaki	Involvement of councillors was 'low key'	Yes, reasonably so	Yes - Taranaki Regional Council and all district authorities	Public meetings, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, telephone survey.	Yes – for the public & stakeholder meetings	Not referenced
Wanganui's Future	At least one attended each meeting & often facilitated	The community was 'generally happy'	No	89 community meetings – "going to where the community is"	No	Not referenced
Choosing Futures	Involved at all stages	Yes – mostly	No	42 community meetings, GIS maps of neighbourhoods at various scales	Yes – to train staff	Not referenced
Future Path Canterbury	Councillors involved as participants – like the community	Some concern was aired with the regional approach	Yes – Environment Canterbury and all district/city councils	Telephone survey, workshops, 32 community conversations, an education programme for schools	Yes – sometimes	Yes – a schools education programme
Place-based Community Plans	Not referenced	Yes, but not well incorporated into decision-making	No	Community group meetings, public meetings, questionnaire for youth, prepared submissions by local groups, discussion with schools	Yes – planning consultants	Yes – questionnaire & discussions
Our Way Southland	On the steering committee	Incomplete at time of writing	Yes – Environment Southland and all district/city councils	Website, postcards & posters, displays at public events, household survey, workshops	Yes – a project coordinator	Not referenced

Appendix Four: WRGPI indicators

Prosperous Community	Connected Community	Entrepreneurial & Innovative	Healthy Environment
All members of our community prosper from a strong and growing economy. A thriving business sector attracts and retains a skilled and productive workforce.	Our connections and access are efficient, quick and easy - locally, nationally and internationally. Our communication networks, air and sea ports, roads and public transport systems are world class and enable us to link well with others, both within and outside the region.	Innovation, creativity and new endeavours are welcomed and encouraged. Ideas are exchanged across all sectors, resulting in a creative business culture. We have excellent education and research institutions, and benefit from being the seat of government	We have clean water, fresh air and healthy soils. Well functioning and diverse ecosystems make up an environment that can support our needs. Resources are used efficiently. There is minimal waste and pollution.
Headline indicators	Headline Indicators	Headline indicators	Headline Indicators
Regional GDP per capita	Peak AM and PM congestion reates on key roads	Investment in R & D (Total and New)	Compliance with national air quality standards and guidelines for outdoor air, in particular those set for particulate matter (PM ₁₀), carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NOx)
Labour force participation rate	Walking and cycling connected networks	# of start-ups	Total number of contaminated sites
Unemployment Rate - number of employed people as % of labour force	Public transport patronage per capita (ferry, bus, train)		Compliance with national microbiological water quality standards for fresh water recreational areas during the summer bathing season
Labour Productivity ie GDP per FTE	% people living within 400m of PT stop		Compliance with national microbiological water quality standards for coastal/marine recreational areas during the summer bathing season
Household income	% households with access to a motor vehicle		Volume diverted from landfills
Value of unpaid work	Freight movement tonne/km growth by mode (rail, road, coastal)		Area under QEII covenant and other areas of covenanted protection
	Percentage of residential population with phone, mobile phone, internet /broadband		Presence of nationally threatened native freshwater fish species at representative monitoring sites in the Wellington region
			Total Ecological footprint (hectares per resident)
			Total energy use per capita or GDP
			Greenhouse gas emissions per capita (region)
Secondary indicators	Secondary indicators	Secondary indicators	Secondary indicators
Value of building consents (residential and non-residential)	Perception of ease of use of public transport		Residents' rating of air pollution as a city problem
Value of volunteering in Wellington region	Overall perception of public transport in Greater Wellington	% GDP spent on R & D	Soil quality at representative sites across high quality soils in the Wellington region
Retail spending (Actual retail sales)	International arrivals	# & % of workforce employees in scientific research & higher education	Area of erosion prone land
	Domestic visitors	Total # registered businesses	Nitrate concentrations in groundwater
	Travel time variability across all modes		Macroinvertebrate health at representative river and stream monitoring sites in the Wellington region
	Speed of broadband – update and download speeds at key MUSH sites		Landfill waste - volume per capita
	Cost of broadband		Compositional nature of landfill waste
	Reliability of internet connection		Disribution of 3 selected native birds
	Travel time reliability across all modes		Per capita water usage
	Airline destinations		
9	17	5	19
6	7	2	10
3	10	3	

Source: WRS, 2009 (<http://www.wrs.govt.nz>)

Quality Lifestyle		Sense of Place		Regional Foundations		Healthy Community		Strong and Tolerant Community	
Living in the Wellington region is enjoyable, and people feel safe. A variety of healthy and affordable lifestyles can be pursued. Our art, sport, recreation and entertainment scenes are enjoyed by all community members – and attract visitors.		We have a deep sense of pride in the Wellington region and there is strong community spirit. We value the region's unique characteristics – its rural, urban and harbour landscapes, its climate, its central location, and its capital city.		High quality and secure infrastructure and services meet our everyday needs. These are developed and maintained to support the sustainable growth of the region, now and in the future.		Our physical and mental health is protected. Living and working environments are safe, and everyone has access to health care. Every opportunity is taken to recognise and encourage good health		People are important. All members of our community are empowered to participate in decision-making and to contribute to society. We celebrate diversity and welcome newcomers, while recognising the special role of tangata whenua	
Headline Indicators		Headline Indicators		Headline Indicators		Headline Indicators		Headline Indicators	
Participation in sport, leisure, arts & cultural and/or community activities/events		Percentage of people that feel a sense of pride in the way their city looks and feels		Percentage of estimated resident population who receive their water from community water supplies that complies with either the 2000 or 2005 Drinking-water Standards for NZ relating to <i>E.Coli</i> and <i>Cryptosporidium</i>		Prevalence of high blood pressure		Residents' perceptions of availability of support	
Satisfaction with overall quality of life		Number of volunteers		Security of electricity supply - # of days with loss of supply		Prevalence of overweight / obesity		Ethnic mix on decision-making boards	
Satisfaction with use of leisure time		Residents rating of feeling a sense of community in their local neighbourhood		Unplanned road closures		Physical activity rate		Voter participation - proportion of voters who exercise their vote in local council, DHB, regional council, and general elections	
Percentage of people who think the Wellington Region (or their City in the Wellington Region) is a great place to live				Gas outages by property or days		Prevalence of smoking		Perception of public influence on Council decision making	
Total reported crime per 10,000 population						Individual perception of health (self rated health stated)		Residents' perception of diversity	
Perception of individual "happiness"						Perceived mental health		Number of Maori population who can speak Te Reo Maori	
Perceptions of safety						Life Expectancy		Change in population by ethnicity	
						Cancer registration rate			
						Population preventable hospitalisation rate			
						Ambulatory sensitive hospitalisation rate			
						Injury preventable hospitalisation rate			
						Avoidable mortality rate			
						Percentage of population living in deprivation			
						Proportion of population living in Household Crowding			
						Avoidable morbidity (incidence or rate of an avoidable condition)			
						Road crashes (Police reported fatal and injury crashes/ 100,000 population)			
Secondary Indicators		Secondary Indicators		Secondary Indicators		Secondary Indicators		Secondary Indicators	
Housing - New Zealand Corporation - waiting list size, cities with more than 500 on list						Diabetes prevalence		Number of Maori health providers	
Satisfaction with work/life balance						Asthma prevalence or hospitalisation rate		Number of children in Kohanga Reo classes	
Number & types of events, eg round the bays						Lung cancer registration rate		Residents reported contact with neighbours	
Visitor Guest Nights - hotels									
Occupancy Rate of hotels									
Visitor stay nights - hotels									
Individual perception of "richness and diversity" of arts scene									
Residents' rating of access to their local park or other green open space									
Residents' rating of graffiti, vandalism and litter as a problem									