

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASHLEY YOUTH
DETENTION CENTRE MET AT THE CHARLES FERGUSON BUILDING,
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND ON TUESDAY 22 MAY 2007.**

DISCUSSION WITH Ms ANDREA CURTIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER OF
UPPER HUTT CITY COUNCIL AND Mr MARTY GRENFELL, THE DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES OF UPPER HUTT CITY COUNCIL.

Ms CURTIS - Briefly, we had changes to our Local Government Act in 2002 that brought the notion of community wellbeing more entrenched in legislation so it gave councils a greater role in terms of social development and the expectations that we do more than just deliver rating, roads and rubbish, which is the more traditional thing. From that point on we have been looking at more ways of connecting the community and towards single government policy in terms of delivery of local initiatives, what we have available locally, making a difference locally and integrating all of that as far as possible so that we do not have 20 agencies going in and doing their own thing.

In terms of where we were at, we have a lot of central government money that we use locally to try to make a difference for our young people. We are a community that has a prison in it, which means that people perceive crime and criminality in our area in a particular way. We have four colleges, only two of which are public schools. We have increasing numbers of young people which is reversing the trend of a few years ago where we were having increasing numbers of old people. Because the housing market it is attractive to families, we are getting increasing numbers of youth. If you ask any young person anywhere, but particularly in Upper Hutt, they will say there is nothing for them to do.

Mr MARTIN - Can you describe Upper Hutt demographically?

Ms CURTIS - Thirty-nine thousand people. It is a microcosm of New Zealand in terms of its gender split and income and a range of other things - we are pretty much a template for the rest of the country.

We have a refugee and migrant population, we have a Maori population in line with the rest of the country, we have a senior population in line with the average of everywhere else. We are very much average New Zealand. We have a beautiful river and it has great hills and that is what people like best about Upper Hutt - its outdoors connection, just like Palm Beach.

CHAIR - We went up to Palmerston and we deviated off the right as we got up north and I think we ended up in this part.

Mr GRENFELL - As you look up the valley we are right up the top.

Ms CURTIS - Up the upper end of the valley. It is quite unique in that way as well because it does mean that we are the smallest city council and we are right next to a bunch of other quite big city councils.

CHAIR - So are you attached in an urban sense? Is it built up all the way up there or not?

Mr GRENFELL - More or less.

Ms CURTIS - There is an arbitrary kind of line between us and Lower Hutt but they have more like 100 000 people compared to our 39 000, their rating base is different and so their resources are quite different.

CHAIR - If you say 40 000 it sounds better. You said 39 000.

Ms CURTIS - In the next census I am sure we will have 40 000. It is a typical small city.

Mr GRENFELL - It was a suburb established as a feeder for workers in Wellington and so the history of Upper Hutt was that it blossomed in the 1960s and every second person was state servant, caught the train to work, lived on a quarter acre, there is a lot of green open space and bush and that is how it began.

Mr MARTIN - So it is mainly residential?

Mr GRENFELL - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - So it is a dormitory sort of suburb?

Ms CURTIS - Yes. The challenges that they have are the same as a lot of places everywhere in terms of access, services and things to do. The fact that we are near these bigger populations means a lot of the services and opportunities, especially for young people, aren't in Upper Hutt, they are in Lower Hutt. Even though it is only a \$3 train ride away it is a \$3 train ride away, especially if you don't have your own transport. So there are factors that, even though Wellington might be well set-up for things, it does not mean to say that our young people are going to be able to access them.

Mr WILKINSON - So far are we by car away from Wellington.

Ms CURTIS - Thirty-five minutes.

Mr GRENFELL - Twenty-five kilometres.

Ms CURTIS - We have quite a bit of rural area; we are the second biggest in terms of land size for city councils because we have such a wide rural base.

Mr GRENFELL - And hills.

Ms CURTIS - Lots of hills.

Mr WILKINSON - What about lawlessness in the city area?

Ms CURTIS - We are pretty impressively represented where we should not be. If you look at the top 10 of cities and the statistics for crime we feature in almost all of them.

Mr GRENFELL - Per capita.

Ms CURTIS - On a per capita basis - we even have kidnapping, as well as family violence -

Mr GRENFELL - A disproportionate number of homicides.

Ms CURTIS - Yes, and a disproportionate number of minor assaults - we have all the violence, all the drugs -

Mr MARTIN - Gang-related?

Ms CURTIS - It is partly gang-related, it is partly due to the fact that prison incidents are included in the overall crime statistics. It is also a feature of the fact that we are the last city to not have a liquor ban, which we have just changed in the CBD. So there are features of Upper Hutt that have been dissimilar from the rest of Wellington.

Mr GRENFELL - There is quite an unhealthy culture towards alcohol.

Mrs JAMIESON - So are suicide and self harm problems too?

Ms CURTIS - They are. Self harm in particular is something that we are measuring in next youth survey. We had a 60 per cent response rate on this youth survey. For a written survey for young people we were quite blown away and totally under-prepared for what that meant we had to do to analyse it. But the questions we are asking this year are far more around violence, bullying and self harm because those are the things that have come back as being a feature through some of other youth engagement mechanisms that we have used.

In terms of suicide, because we have an issue in this country around the non-media reporting of suicide, I could not tell you how many we have had. I know what I have heard on the grapevine, but nobody will give you a clear answer.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is there a single-parent profile at all?

Ms CURTIS - We are higher on the single parent profile and again that is something we are asking in this year's survey - who do you live with? From what we understand, a lot of our family violence is young people against their mothers, not drunken dad going home and bashing mum.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have much of an incidence of grandparents looking after grandchildren?

Ms CURTIS - We have a whole community group called Grandparents Raising Grandchildren so if they are strong enough to have that group, then that is a feature and they participate quite regularly in our community group forums.

Mr MARTIN - I notice that you have a bit of a drug abuse problem.

Mr GRENFELL - We have two public schools which feature at the highest end of suspension and expulsion rates and which is largely around the policy of drugs. They have a hardline policy and, of course, anyone caught with drugs -

Mr MARTIN - Most get suspended and that means a real problem.

Mr GRENFELL - Yes.

Ms CURTIS - I think the interesting thing about our survey was that young people themselves were concerned about it. This is coming from them and that has given us a lot of traction in dealing with government agencies and particularly I think in dealing with some adults in talking about our young people. With the youth development strategy at Te Aroah (?), you are meant to take the strengths-based approach and that has really challenged us when we looked at issues like truancy because initially we were going to do a truancy project and we were going to keep the kids out of the CBD during the day and then we became more aware of what strengths-based meant. So now our approach is a project called Love to See You After Three. It is not about kicking you out during the day, it is about encouraging you at the right time so it is giving retailers on board with discount cards and things that you can only use after 3 o'clock and that encourage participation at the time you are supposed to be there.

Mr MARTIN - Are you getting support for that from the businesses?

Ms CURTIS - It is hard actually. We have in the project a retailer base that doesn't target youth at the moment and it is a missed market for us because we don't have a really good mall. But we have a massive mall development down in Lower Hutt, so at the moment our young people will go down there and spend their money more positively down there rather than in their own backyard because we don't have shops that they want to go to or the things that they want to do. We are only just getting a cinema in August this year.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have a youth centre?

Ms CURTIS - No, we don't and the feedback that we had from our young people was that they didn't want one. What they wanted was adult activities in a youth-appropriate way. They want a youth café. We have a couple of really flash cafes in Upper Hutt where grown-ups can have their jazz nights, but the kids want their youth band there one night when they go to have their coffee made by the Barista kids that we are training at one of the colleges so that they lower their staff costs, so that they can have discounted coffee. That is the approach we are taking, I guess. By focusing these things through council, we can support that initiative of the college because here is how else we can use those kids that are being trained on that Barista course that we have helped to fund. I can take those kids and put them in work experience with our local retailers or put them into a youth café night. We are integrating all sorts of different ideas.

Mr GRENFELL - From a local government perspective, our rating base is restricted and we made a decision probably about 18 months ago that our role was to act as the middle person, the facilitator between central government policy and the needs of the community. We feel as if we are in a position now where we have a pretty good grasp on the needs of our community and what is accessible from a central government

perspective. We are bringing the two together and that is why all these initiatives are popping up.

Ms CURTIS - There is a section in here called Accomplishments 2006 which I have adapted from some other plan that we did which was talking how a bunch of our projects relate to youth services or young people and I guess that is an example of a summary of the sorts of things that we do and how we try to integrate that for positive participation.

Mr WILKINSON - Do you get much government help? Not enough I suppose.

Ms CURTIS - We have a couple of government departments that are superb at a regional level; they understand what we want and they give us what we need and they let us run with it. I think that is because we have tried to connect it up for them so that they can meet their outcomes. Everything we do we are trying to connect it back to what the community wants but align it with whoever else is funding it, what their outcomes are. There are very, very few of these projects that we fund at all, if any. We funded the youth survey, but everything else has been externally funded by government.

Mr GRENFELL - During the year we do get a lot of support from central government but we are the ones bridging their gap and it is really working superbly.

Mr MARTIN - What resources do you have? Just yourselves?

Mr GRENFELL - This is the really interesting part of it because if you look at our community services group, which might be 13 people, three of them are probably permanent ratepayer funded positions -

Ms CURTIS - Like me.

Mr GRENFELL - so we live in a tenuous world of catching for these contracts through which we employ people to deliver as well, but really we can only sign them on for as long as the central government is available. We are getting there. Just this morning we got news from the Crime Prevention Unit they had agreed to a three-year contract with us around crime prevention initiatives so that means that we can go out with some security.

Mr MARTIN - Are they pilot programs?

Ms CURTIS - Most of them are pilot programs and a lot of them we do try to build sustainability in advance where we know what the end point looks like. Probably the best example I can think of is we have a refugee migrant work placement program and the person who does that also does advice to all refugees and migrants, whether they were on the program or not. We based that position at our local community citizens' advice bureau one day a week so that members of the community got used to going to the CAB for information and advice rather than coming to council and that particular worker for advice on things. So long-term billets and cross pollination of skills in their with the volunteers at CAB so they now know the same sort of things that our worker knew and they will be able to continue to deliver that service when that funding goes.

So where we can build on sustainability we do with our community cadetship scheme which is one of the things I thought you would be most interested in as we have taken young people who have been in trouble - just out of prison in one case - and placed them in cadetships, not with council but with other employers.

Mr MARTIN - A good idea.

CHAIR - Out of prison or out of the youth detention centre?

Ms CURTIS - We have one out of prison - he was 18 - but a lot of them have been in trouble and left school because of the amount of trouble they got into and have been disengaged for quite a long time whether or not they have gone through any formal system or not. A lot of the people on that scheme fit their profile. Once those placements are finished what we have learned is in effect we have put 10 people into jobs for a year - it is the level of support and the other tools their employers need in order to be able to take on young people that fit their profile. So what we will get out of it at the end is a youth-friendly workplaces tool kit that we can give whatever ministry is interested in it or any local employer that is interested in it for them to see what they would have to do if they want to take a punt, which is how they view it, on a young person who has a bit of a challenge getting to that point.

Those sorts of things do not have to be subsidised. Our scheme is subsidised employment so the employers are not having to pay a full salary. But that has not been the critical factor for employers; it has been having an exit plan where they don't need to take that person on and go through formal performance mechanisms to get rid of them because it is quite hard to get rid of somebody once you are in a job.

Mrs JAMIESON - You cover them for insurance, compensation and all that sort of thing.

Ms CURTIS - We cover their risks. So we are covering the level of risk that they would otherwise go to. We have certainly have a young person at a vet, which is what he wants to do with his life, who had a policy of not employing young people because of the risks around long-term payment if there was an accident on ECC. We have found a contractual way of covering that risk for that employer so he took on this young person who is going off like a rocket and is doing his vet nurse calls at the same time. So that is the way we try to approach it. We try to look for the sustainable elements and we use it as proof of concept I guess. That is how we see our role at the moment because we do not have the resources to sustain any of these.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you go out and talk to your volunteer groups like Rotary and other groups like that and get them assisting?

Ms CURTIS - Yes.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you use mentors at all as well in a voluntary capacity?

Ms CURTIS - Not in a voluntary capacity so much because we are involved in some projects that are paid by the government to provide mentors so we would channel them in that route initially. We also know who in the community is paid to deliver that service so we

would channel things in that direction first rather than taking on that. It is a feature of all of our cadetship schemes so there is always a mentorship involved.

Mr GRENFELL - One of the highlights we are quite proud is that we only have I think at last count about 17 people under the age 19 who are officially on the unemployment and of course it is one of our challenges to try to know them by name and we feel as if we are in a really good position. We have been active as a council in bridging those kids into employment, which is something I guess local authorities would not necessarily see as their role.

Mr WILKINSON - Are those numbers down from previously?

Ms CURTIS - Yes.

Mr WILKINSON - So they are pretty low?

Ms CURTIS - It is very low. We had one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the country which is why we given this project on youth transition which I am sure is going to come up in your hearing if it hasn't already. They are called YTS - Youth Transition Services - in various areas throughout the country and the areas were selected on the basis of their youth employment numbers. We were in the second wave of those. Those figures are for joined up Hutt Valley though, not just our council.

CHAIR - Roughly what is your budget for community development and youth services if you like?

Ms CURTIS - Excluding central government funding?

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms CURTIS - It is \$500 000.

Mr GRENFELL - And overall it could be well over a \$1 million.

Ms CURTIS - If you added on the government funding.

Mr GRENFELL - There is a lot of money coming in from outside councils and funded through councils.

CHAIR - How do the elected members of the community feel about that? Are they comfortable with that?

Ms CURTIS - They are at the moment. In the sense that at the moment anything we do is so much better than what we had three years ago. It's a case of 'Hey, you have managed to get something for Upper Hutt without us having to increase rates'.

CHAIR - Where do you sit as a benchmark with other councils in New Zealand or is it hard to benchmark those sorts of things?

Ms CURTIS - I think it is quite hard to benchmark them. I know we box above our weight when it comes to giving government contracts and that is in partly because we understand the Wellington dynamic. If you understand how central government works, it is far easier to get funding out of them when you know what they are looking for. So I think proximity to understanding of those processes has helped our council.

CHAIR - Being right at the back door helps too.

Ms CURTIS - Being right on the back door doesn't hurt any, but also we have some, exciting and innovative things that they can get to. Because we are that microcosm, they can have a suck- and-see and if it works with us they might not have had to enlist very much to see whether it works.

Mr MARTIN - Just scanning through this, some of the projects look really interesting. The photo voice test culture - what is that about?

Ms CURTIS - Youth access to alcohol is an initiative over here - they call them YATA communities - and any mix of agencies in any given geographical area can be involved. With us it is just the two local councils and regional public health and police from time to time. We decided that one of the things we wanted to achieve was looking at how youth viewed living in the Hutt Valley and see whether alcohol came up as a feature or what other things came up as features. With that kind of methodology you are giving young people cameras and telling them to take photos of their experiences and having these kinds of reference groups where they talk to their photos and why they took them.

Mrs JAMIESON - Show and tell.

Ms CURTIS - Yes. We have them all on display boards. We have an exhibition that opened quite recently and I have a good report that I would be very happy to send you. It is very big so I couldn't bring it in. It is really quite fascinating because it is amazing how often alcohol and drugs are factors as is the boredom factor, the pressure that they feel around achievement and the skewed nature of how they view some of those pressures. That is coming from young people themselves. The cameras were given to a variety of young people and people who work with young people as well. So it was really fascinating methodology.

(Tape changed here - am sure there is a bit missing)

Mr MARTIN - So do you find that's working well?

Ms CURTIS - Yes, we do find that it's working really well. It gives us access to young people, which is helpful, doing what we do. Our youth adviser until Christmas had just left college and so he was a young person. That is one of the things that gave us a lot of traction with our community because he would go into the schools with the youth survey. He would be leading the group of people saying that they had young people's interests at heart and he could challenge them. We were very lucky to have somebody as skilled as he was at the age that he was.

Mr MARTIN - Do you employ youth workers?

Ms CURTIS - No.

Mr MARTIN - And you are telling me that he was –

Ms CURTIS - He went on to university this year, as he should have done - that was the right move for him - and we replaced him with somebody who was a little bit older. We were very lucky to find the mix of skills we needed in a young person. He was only 18. But it gave us a lot of credibility. The role is called youth adviser. Our current youth adviser facilitates the youth workers network, runs youth awards and stimulates youth events.

Mr MARTIN - Are you developing strategies to work on that?

Ms CURTIS - That's interesting. We are working with one of the government agencies now to get one of my team operating in the suburb of Timberley to do some investigative work to profile the community better. They don't engage in things like a census or special forms to be filled in.

Mr MARTIN - Is there an ethnic mix?

Ms CURTIS - Yes, it's predominantly Maori up there. There is a higher State housing element, there is a higher rental housing element than there is in other areas. It's not a huge problem, though, compared to some communities. That is one suburb that is overrepresented again on every statistic.

Mr MARTIN - And they are finishing up in detention in disproportionate numbers?

Ms CURTIS - Yes, they are. That is our next challenge. We have done some nice fluffy stuff. We have our traction and our credibility up, I think, in doing the nice fluffy stuff and now we're into doing some hard stuff and that's going to be a bit more challenging because we are going to need to involve more government agencies.

Mr GRENFELL - We're not afraid of it, though, because I think with our backgrounds we've both done the hard stuff. Andrea used to work with the courts.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is the police force behind you or with you or even in front of you with all these programs?

Ms CURTIS - My building is right next to the police station, and we are not afraid of writing to the commissioner or the minister if that is what we need to do for our community.

The last thing in here is looking at people who give challenges, and we are using sport and recreation as a positive mechanism. This is very much a draft paper. It has gone nowhere yet. It is us working with our YMCA and a local campus. It is an Australian-run campus. It has huge capacity. There are 170 students and it's built for 5 000 to 8 000. Instead of having a sport and recreation course and qualification, it is looking far more at those niche areas that people need to build on. Driving licences is a huge issue and has been a real barrier for young people. This kind of course can pay for that to happen. First aid, lifeguard skills and all those sorts of things can get them work because our pool is always looking for lifeguards and the YMCA is looking for personal trainers and so on. So we are looking at how we respond as a community and to have

partnerships like that in a sector that needs some more skilled people going into it. It will give people practical bits of paper at the end of it. There will also be employment experience.

Mrs JAMIESON - Building confidence and all that sort of thing.

Ms CURTIS - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - Twenty-six weeks and 35 hours a week. Who's paying for this?

Ms CURTIS - Nobody yet because we don't have it funded but we're expecting that the Government will. We've had nods so far from government as a trial but again, this would be proof of concept. As soon as we have shown that it works for that claim group then our Tertiary Education Commission would be a viable, long-term option. What we have agreement with locally is that if these people are on some form of benefit they won't lose their benefit by taking this option so there is no loss to them.

Mrs JAMIESON - The kids have left home or have become disengaged for whatever reason. Do you have adequate accommodation for them to go to?

Ms CURTIS - No.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is there any thought of maybe using youth hostels?

Ms CURTIS - We had a backpackers' hostel that just closed down. That was the extent of our cheap accommodation but this campus has 400 beds available so there are options to build on, connecting it with education and training. But in terms of 'I have nowhere to sleep tonight', that is another project that we have on the go – a feasibility study to look at what our need is in that area because I couldn't tell you whether we need it.

Mrs JAMIESON - It didn't come up as an issue in this survey?

Ms CURTIS - It didn't come up as an issue in our survey but there would have been people engaged because the responses came from people who were in training or in schools. We didn't have any responses from people not engaged in these things.

Mrs JAMIESON - So literacy could have been a challenge anyway for some of them?

Ms CURTIS - Absolutely. As I said, if we had had any idea how big it was going to be, we would have taken a different approach.

Mrs JAMIESON - Are you thinking of doing the second one yourself?

Ms CURTIS - We have designed the questions. We are hoping to get it out soon. We are going to go with what worked last time because I'm not going to knock a contract on the head but we will look at disseminating it in different places. The youth workers network is much stronger this year so we will use that for the people who are engaged. I don't know if that's of any use to you.

Mrs JAMIESON - It certainly broadens our horizons somewhat.

CHAIR - We need that perspective of what local government is doing.

Mr WILKINSON - You're fighting for backing, aren't you?

Mr GRENFELL - Yes, we are.

Mr WILKINSON - People leave prison and don't have the backup.

Mr GRENFELL - Absolutely.

Ms CURTIS - I think it's about encouraging positive participation at as early an age as possible. We are looking at a range of things around the other transition times. It is really easy for us to be funded for over 16s because that's when they can legally leave school. The Ministry for Social Development here is a natural funder for people who are going to keep over 16s employed in training or in education. Between 12 and 16 we have a problem. That is another one in the hard basket.

Mr GRENFELL - Drug and alcohol counselling for someone aged 13 or 14 is not acknowledged. It is not an issue. There are no facilities; there are no programs. There are some private providers that we are working with to work in that area and we are getting money from charitable trusts and so on.

Ms CURTIS - We are doing that now while we are building up the evidence base so we can take it to government because that's the problem; as you say, it's anecdotal and we're trying to take it from a really strong evidence base in the community so we can say that we know.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have families as well where you know there are problems?

Ms CURTIS - Most definitely but that's where council finds it hard to crack because every other agency under the Privacy Act has the mandate to be working with those kids and to get that individual information. Council doesn't have the right to be dealing with that individual information so if there's a case management kind of approach to those families, we find it hard to sit around the table because the other agencies wouldn't be able to give us that information, whereas they could share it with each other.

Mr MARTIN - Does that happen?

Ms CURTIS - Yes, they are managing in some areas – family violence is one and there is something called Strength in Families, so there are a range of initiatives that take that approach but we don't get the comfort necessarily.

Mr GRENFELL - We all sit around the table with four or five different government agencies and they will talk about it generically and of course they are all coming at it from different angles, focusing on their particular interests.

Ms CURTIS - They don't have the legislative ability at the moment to allow us that level of information.

Mrs JAMIESON - Would you be allowed to have any input into any legislative change that might be mooted?

Ms CURTIS - Yes, and that's the kind of irony, that we get to do that without actually knowing any detailed examples of what's going on.

Mr MARTIN - I was mayor of a council that 13 years ago started down this track so everything that you're doing we did a decade ago.

Mr GRENFELL - Yes, Australia's a lot more advanced in its social development re local authorities.

Mrs JAMIESON - In theory.

Mr MARTIN - Mine was a bit of a leader. I'm just interested in whether what you're doing is typical of local government in New Zealand or is it inconsistent?

Ms CURTIS - I think it's very inconsistent. I think that more and more councils are being able to see that that is how they contribute to this wellbeing concept. It's just how quickly we're off the starting blocks really and we were probably a little bit quicker than some.

Mr MARTIN - So until recently the Local Government Act –

Ms CURTIS - It changed in 2002. If they had community development it might have been on specific communities. Our approach previously was supporting community groups so we would help Barnardos or grandparents raising grandchildren and we would give them photocopies –

Mr GRENFELL - Take their notes at meetings.

Ms CURTIS - take their notes at meetings, give them cheaper rent on an office locally or something like that. We would give them some advice on how they should set up their constitution. That is how we used to deal with it and now it's quite different. It is way more hands on and way more strategic at the same time. That's one of the ironies, I guess.

CHAIR - The regional councils only deal with infrastructure and planning issues, do they? They don't get involved in this sort of thing?

Ms CURTIS - They don't. We are working with our local regional council.

CHAIR - Is there a Wellington regional area council? How does it work?

Ms CURTIS - Yes. Greater Wellington covers six or seven local authorities.

Mr GRENFELL - Of which we are one.

Ms CURTIS - They operate regional parks.

CHAIR - Do they have a mayor? Would you explain it to me?

Mr GRENFELL - No, they have a chair.

CHAIR - And they have elected members from the various local authorities?

Mr GRENFELL - Yes.

CHAIR - You would have a delegate to that?

Mr GRENFELL - Yes, although they are not a council member. I don't believe they can be a member of the local authority council and the regional.

Mr MARTIN - You appoint someone?

Mr GRENFELL - No, anybody can stand. It just so happens that it's the previous mayor.

CHAIR - When do they have elections, at the same time as the local council?

Mr GRENFELL - That's right.

Ms CURTIS - The regional councils are really light on the social stuff but particularly in the sport and recreation area is where you start to work with the regional councils because they own the regional parks, and the river and that kind of thing. So we work with them on sport and recreation stuff and then we slowly bring them around to other things.

Mr GRENFELL - Yes, they have wider social responsibilities.

Ms CURTIS - Yes. They also have much more of an environmental spin and that's one of the core areas of wellbeing that we're meant to be taking care of so we should be talking better together.

CHAIR - We're moving away from what we're doing here, but do you get much conflict between the local councils and the regional councils? Is there potential there for that?

Mr GRENFELL - Yes, there is. They just worked through the Wellington Regional Strategy and the economic development and the city council was the fly in the ointment and didn't want to agree to the way that the strategy was heading. We are very pleased with the outcome of the mediation process.

Ms CURTIS - And so is every other council now that they've realised what we were trying to do.

CHAIR - If there's a major industrial development, for example, is it the regional council that would go through the planning process?

Mr GRENFELL - Currently, no, it's the local authorities, and part of this economic development strategy was to give the regional council greater say over where urban growth and industrial growth happened throughout the region because that's something

the local authorities still want to have control of locally. We have a lot of greenfields area, Wellington is filling up and we see some great opportunity.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.