

7. REPORT ON MAORI WARDENS INNER CITY TRIAL

Officer responsible Director of Policy	Author Terence Moody, DDI 941-8834
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The purpose of this report is to present the results of the trial of using Maori Wardens for inner city security and to determine whether the Council wishes to continue with this operation.

BACKGROUND

The Council at its meeting on 12 December 2001 resolved that the Council accept a proposal for a three-month trial of the operations of Maori Wardens in the inner city and the proposal that He Oranga Pounamu would undertake the determination of other stakeholder funding and support for the continuation of the service over a longer period. The proposal consisted of two parts, but from a longer-term point of view it was seen that these should be dealt with in the one contract.

The first part was that Otautahi Maori Wardens be contracted for an initial period of three months (12 weeks) to support the current level of Police and Youth Workers and to augment their own current voluntary effort. They would provide six wardens on each of Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to patrol the area in pairs and to accompany Police foot patrols on a rotational basis. They would also provide transport of youth to their homes in acute need situations if appropriate and maintain a presence at critical and particular locations (such as the vicinity of the Square toilets) as required.

The second part related to an ongoing commitment beyond the initial three-month contract. During the three month period He Oranga Pounamu would take responsibility for brokering and co-ordinating a longer term proposal involving obtaining commitment and funding from a wider stakeholder base, to include the affected business community, in addition to the Council, Otautahi Maori Wardens, and the Police. It was considered that this longer-term commitment was important to maintain the presence of the wardens in the area for at least a twelve-month period. This will enable the reinforcement and extension of the gains that have been made through the voluntary contributions to date and those expected to arise from the three-month trial.

There were delays in arranging the contract and in arranging Maori Wardens to undertake the work in sufficient numbers to fulfil the contract initially but the trial eventually commenced in March 2002. The contract was to finish in May but a one-month extension was granted to enable the activities to continue while the business survey was completed.

DISCUSSION

A report on the three-month trial and an assessment of local business support for the continuance of the operation has been received from He Oranga Pounamu and is attached. There are also copies of the monthly patrol reports from the three months.

It is difficult to obtain objective measures of the success of such patrolling activities such as these as the purpose is largely to provide a presence of additional persons with some authority in public areas to act, largely, in a preventative role. This applies to the Police and other security personnel as well as persons such as the Maori Wardens who do have legal powers under the Maori Community Development Act 1962. However, it appears to be clear that the wardens have had some influence in this area. Not least has been their ability to provide assistance to the Police in cases where the Police presence has been stretched. From the survey, undertaken by He Oranga Pounamu, of the business community it is stated:

The local business community consistently commented on the need to manage a difficult situation and welcomed the involvement of the Otautahi Maori Wardens as a positive initiative.

Another advantage is the amount of data that is being collected on inner city behaviour [at least in the areas patrolled and on the nights wardens are employed] that has not been previously easily available. The key trends over the three-month period are contained on pages 5 to 6 of the attached report. The He Oranga Pounamu report states that they consider it important to maintain the presence of the wardens in the area for a further twelve-month period. This would, in their view, reinforce the gains made over the initial trial; solidify an extended presence in the inner city amongst youth; and encourage the strong support from the business community.

There is funding available, in the 2002/03 budget of the Director of Policy, for a limited extension of the project but insufficient for the continuation of the project over a full year. If such a commitment were made to continue the project for longer additional funds from other City Council sources would be required, as it appears businesses are not prepared to contribute at this stage.

CONCLUSIONS

The trial has been useful in determining what kinds of activities occur in the inner city during the night hours and it appears that the presence of the Maori Wardens has been received favourably by local businesses. To a large degree it has been a learning process for the Maori Wardens but, from the reports, they have provided a useful service in dealing with some of the problems that have occurred in this period. Again, from the reports, it appears that there are continuing problems in the inner city, which need to be addressed, and the presence of the Maori Wardens may be useful in providing support for both the Police and Youth Workers for at least some of these. As noted above, however, the continuation of this service for the whole year would require additional funds to that allowed for currently in the budget.

The annual cost of this service, based on the current contract, is estimated at around \$72,000 and there is funding available in the 2002/03 budget for \$30,000 leaving a shortfall of about \$42,000. The options are to continue the service for a limited period until the current budget is expended; for additional funding to be provided to meet the cost of a year; or to cease funding the service. In the first two cases new contracts would be required as the current contract with the month's extension finished on the 30 June 2002. These new contracts would require to be negotiated with He Oranga Pounamu.

Staff

Recommendation: That consideration be given to entering into a further contract with He Oranga Pounamu for the provision of Maori Warden services in the inner city.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion.