

14 July 2022

File Ref: OIAP-7-24547

Rod Badcock

By email: fyi-request-19680-3b09102e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Rod

Request for information 2022-078

I refer to your request for information dated 15 June 2022, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 15 June 2022. You have requested the following:

“In February this year Cr. Daran Ponter facilitated a meeting with GWRC and Metlink about improving integration of bikes with Trains in Greater Wellington. This followed some detailed discussion on the huge barriers and problems faced by people trying to use the Metlink service. This culminated in a meeting on 1st March 2022 where various people from Greater Wellington met and discussed problems encountered, and potential solutions to all the problems. This was attended by Metlink, GWRC and others (Chair Daran Ponter, Councillor Roger Blakeley, Councillor David Lee, Melissa Anderson, Daniel Pou, Emmet McElhatton, Lisa Colebrooke, Patrick Morgan, Rod Badcock, Alex Dyer, Tim Haiselden, Emma Osbourne).

An undertaking was made by GWRC to improve provision and take definitive actions to make improvements and facilitate mode shift and multimodal transport. GWRC issued their own set of minutes to this meeting on 14th April 2022.

Subsequently Samantha Gain took over from Scott Gallacher at Metlink, and Samantha Gain was directly contacted on 21 May 2022 to enquire what actions have been taken to better place multimodality, and facilitate more reasonable active transport provision on trains. In addition to that request for feedback, a reminder of key issues was made

- 1. Bike racks on some train replacement buses are rubbish, unusable etc*
- 2. Any sign of new policy on increasing carriage of bikes on trains?*

This written request has remained unanswered.

Given the case of a young family becoming stranded through Metlink, and the lack of provision for multimodal access when train replacement services used - I again highlighted the details to Samantha Gain on 25th May 2022 and requested an update with concrete actions and plans. This written request remains both unacknowledged and unanswered.

I therefore am forced to resort to this much more formal method to ask specific questions, for each item I would like to request:

- 1. What action is being planned?*
- 2. Who has responsibility for enacting?*
- 3. On what date were decisions made?*
- 4. When will actions be complete?*

These answers will be in response to:

- 1. Planned bus replacements. I gave a case from 24th May where planned bus replacements did not use buses fitted with bus bike racks which accommodate two unfolded bikes, demonstrating no change in provision.*
- 2. Unplanned bus replacements*
- 3. Additional bicycle training for front line staff*
- 4. Staff discretion for additional bikes on board*
- 5. Bike excluded services review "We intend to implement any changes to services by 1 July 2022, to allow for sufficient lead in time and public advertising."*
- 6. Future Development of the rail network and provision of improved facilities*
- 7. What interim solutions proposed by people at 1st March meeting are being considered"*

Greater Wellington's response follows:

We would like to extend our apologies for not responding to your original request for information. Due to an administrative error, your request was overlooked and never actioned. Please find below our response to the information requested.

The responses to your original questions are below:

Bike racks on some train replacement buses are rubbish, unusable etc

Transdev have confirmed that all planned bus replacements (for any services that are bus replaced due to planned maintenance work on the line) will use buses fitted with bus bike racks that accommodate two unfolded bikes. Folded bikes may also be taken on board, but must not block aisles or doorways, and may not occupy a seat.

Any sign of new policy on increasing carriage of bikes on trains?

As it stands each train carriage has space for up to three bicycles, meaning that each two-car train set can hold up to a total of 9 bicycles. It is restricted to this number so we can ensure that the three bicycles per train carriage can be safely tied. On services that have lower patronage i.e. off-peak services, the on-board train staff have discretion to allow more bicycles on, taking into account a range of factors including if there is any need for wheelchair customers or prams. We have been working with the on-board staff to ensure that discretion can be given if, for example a family needs to board the train.

What action is being planned?

We are in the process of reviewing the current services which don't currently carry bicycles, however, there has been a large increase in patronage month on month since April, likely aided by the half price fares currently in place. Once patronage figures stabilize, we can then accurately reassess which services can carry bicycles.

Who has responsibility for enacting?

Metlink works in partnership with Transdev to address any issues in relation to bus replacement services, this includes planning, operations, and customer feedback.

On what date were decisions made?

In relation to bike racks - The improvement to bus replacement services, including ensuring where possible bike racks were fitted or suitable coach storage is provided, has been embedded into Transdev's business as usual planning.

When will actions be complete?

This is already happening and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The responses to your additional queries are below:

1. Planned bus replacements. I gave a case from 24th May where planned bus replacements did not use buses fitted with bus bike racks which accommodate two unfolded bikes, demonstrating no change in provision.

We have spoken with the bus operator contracted for planned bus replacements and they have assured us that all buses now have bike racks fitted.

- *What action is being planned?* – Discussion with bus operators to confirm requirements
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink/Transdev
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* - Complete

2. Unplanned bus replacements

Our main priority is to ensure our passengers have an alternative transport option. We will always attempt to source buses with bike racks fitted for unplanned bus replacements in the first instance. However, this may not always be possible, particularly during the morning and evening peak periods.

- *What action is being planned?* – Attempt to source buses with bike racks fitted for unplanned bus replacements in the first instance
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink/Transdev
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* – Complete

3. Additional bicycle training for front line staff

We are working with Transdev on how we can assist improving their staff's awareness of bicycle customers on our network.

- *What action is being planned?* – Working with Transdev on improving staff awareness of bicycle customers on network
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink/Transdev
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* – Ongoing basis

4. Staff discretion for additional bikes on board

As mentioned above, on services that have lower patronage i.e., off-peak services, the on-board train staff have discretion to allow more bicycles onboard.

- *What action is being planned?* – N/A
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – N/A
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* – N/A

5. Bike excluded services review "We intend to implement any changes to services by 1 July 2022, to allow for sufficient lead in time and public advertising."

The decision to review bicycle excluded services has been delayed due to patronage increases. Once patronage levels stabilize, we will be able to review these services.

- *What action is being planned?* – Review bicycle excluded services
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* – Once patronage levels stabilize

6. Future Development of the rail network and provision of improved facilities

Metlink currently has business cases to future proof the rail network. However, there has not been any movement on funding from Central Government yet. If approved, this will cover purchasing new trains, upgrading infrastructure and allow the increase of both peak and off-peak frequencies. This will of course include how to best meet the requirements of passengers, including cyclists.

- *What action is being planned?* – Future proof of the rail network
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* – When/If funding is approved from Central Government

7. What interim solutions proposed by people at 1st March meeting are being considered

Our rail team have been reviewing patronage numbers and we have been working with Transdev to ensure staff are aware of the rules in terms of allowing bikes on trains. Further to this we have confirmed with all bus companies that all planned bus replacement services have bike racks installed.

- *What action is being planned?* – Review Patronage numbers, ensure staff are aware of rules in terms of allowing bikes on trains, confirmed that all planned bus replacement services will have bike racks installed.
- *Who has responsibility for enacting?* – Metlink/Transdev
- *On what date were decisions made?* – N/A
- *When will actions be complete?* - Complete

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



pp Mel Anderson for Samantha Gain

Kaiwhakahaere Matua | General Manager Metlink