

# ENVIRONMENTAL REFERENCE GROUP

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Purpose

The Environmental Reference Group (ERG) will be a primary forum for advice on issues and will provide the Council with a sounding board and peer review group on issues relating to the management of the natural environment, including energy and waste management.

The ERG will not be considered to be the sole representative of the community's views on natural environment issues, but should provide a balanced commentary on direction and topical issues.

The group is not intended to remove or reduce Council's responsibilities to maintain the level of resources necessary for the effective officer management of the natural environment.

### 2. Role

The role of the ERG is an advisory one, to provide:

- feedback, peer review and advice on natural environment policy, planning and asset management matters (including the development of the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan) in the projects' developmental stages
- an information conduit to and from Council
- representation of the broad spectrum of community expectations and concerns associated with the management of the natural environment.

The ERG will not make submissions on draft policies and plans put out for public consultation, as its input will be made in the projects' developmental stages.

The ERG will not have an independent budget to commission work or undertake activities outside of the group's advisory role, although it can recommend to the appropriate Council Committee that work is undertaken on certain natural environment policy areas.

The Council has other advisory groups – and is seeking increased cooperation between those groups. ERG members may occasionally be asked to attend meetings of the other groups to share information.

### 3. Membership

#### Number and make-up of members

The group will have up to 15 non-Council members and at least one Councillor representative (invitations may be extended to other councillors to participate, particularly if the focus is on a related portfolio).

It would be preferable for the group to have both geographical and issue-based representation.

In addition to the above members, a representative from each of our two Treaty partners, Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Rūnanga o Ngati Toa, will be invited to be members of the ERG. If representatives from either of our Treaty partners are unable to participate relevant Council officers will maintain a communication link with the Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira to assist in providing a Māori perspective in the work of the Group.

### **Chair**

The group will be chaired by a member nominated by the group. Should this person not be present, the group will elect the Chair for that meeting. Co-chairs are permitted. The term of the Chair shall be three years, and at the conclusion a new nomination process will be conducted.

### **Criteria for membership**

- Level of expertise
- Level of local/city knowledge
- Degree of involvement in practical initiatives
- Demonstrated awareness of and enthusiasm for natural environmental issues
- Links into the community and a willingness to utilise those links.
- Ability to represent a balanced view.

### **Members' responsibilities**

- Work collaboratively with other members of the group to fulfill the ERG's role and responsibilities
- Share information from their different networks.

### **Chair's responsibilities**

- Chair the meetings of the group fairly and in a manner that supports the group in fulfilling its role
- Meet with officers and the Councillor involved prior to each ERG meeting.

## **4. Term of Appointment**

A member's term of appointment cannot exceed three years without reapplying for their position through a further selection process. The term of appointment can be less than three years if a member:

- resigns, or
- misses three consecutive meetings without tendering an apology.

A member can be appointed, following selection, for consecutive periods of three years.

## **5. Selection and Removal of Members**

If it becomes necessary to appoint new members to the Group, Council will call for applications and, in association with the Group's membership, will select the required number of new members.

## **6. Reporting**

The group will report to the Strategy and Policy Committee annually, outlining its achievements and the issues it wishes Council to consider further.

## **7. Frequency of Meetings**

The group will meet approximately every two months.

## **8. Operation**

The maintenance and servicing of the group will primarily be the responsibility of the appropriate Council directorate. The group will be supported by an officer who will be responsible for compiling agendas, writing minutes, and providing other administrative and advisory support to the group.

It is also expected that members of the Council's other business units will liaise closely with the group as appropriate.

New members joining the group will be introduced to Council processes by Council officers.

## **9. Payment**

Members will be paid \$110 and the Chair \$150 for every full ERG meeting they attend, to a maximum of six meetings per year. If the group decides to have co-Chairs, the additional \$40 available to the Chair will be split between the co-Chairs.

The Council will also support the group by providing refreshments (e.g. tea, coffee, juice, biscuits).

## **10. Review**

The operation of the advisory group will be reviewed every two years, with the next review being in 2009.