Environmental Reference Group

Terms of Reference – June 2014

1. Purpose of the Environmental Reference Group (ERG)

- Advise Council on the best ways to improve Wellingtonian’s quality of life environmentally, socially, culturally and economically by protecting and enhancing the local environment.

- Bring knowledge and insight into Council around the environment, including water, energy, waste, biodiversity, urban design and transport management, in the context of Council’s roles and priorities.

The ERG will not be seen as representing all views on the environment in the City.

2. Expectations

Members will be accountable for their efforts to provide:

- Constructive advice – on Council projects and policies, where possible identifying evidence and solutions, whilst taking into account of wider needs, issues and views.

- Communication - where practical, provide information about the work of the Council to their networks and provide information from their networks back to the Council.

- Advice on Council engagement – provide advice to Council staff to help Council involve more people from Wellington’s communities in the setting and meeting of city objectives, in-line with the Council Engagement Policy. The Council is ultimately responsible for full community consultation.

The specific work areas where members will contribute will be set out in the annual work programme. The work programme will be finalised reasonably quickly and in a collaborative way. That annual work programme will be determined jointly between the ERG, Council officers, Chair of the appropriate Committee and Councillor representative. This will take into account the Council’s priorities as well as the skills, experience, interests and commitments of ERG members. This will enable members to have early input into Council’s work.

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1 Within their capabilities and any legitimate time / resource constraints.
2 Work of Council includes Council’s strategy and policy development, planning and service delivery.
Council officers will report back to the ERG on how advice was considered, and whether or not officers and councillors chose to act on that advice, with reasons given at the appropriate time through e-mail and at ERG meetings.

The Council liaison officer, working with the Chair, will track meeting attendance and contribution to workflows. Issues considered will include:

- Punctuality and attendance of meetings
- Behaviour in relation to the role and Code of Conduct
- Degree of active involvement in the work of the group.

*See number 7 Terms of Appointment.

3. Reporting

The ERG will publicly report to the appropriate Council Committee within the last four months of each financial year. The report will outline the agreed work plan and progress against this over the previous year, and any issues it wishes to raise with Council.

The names of members, their attendance and minutes of the group’s meetings will be available on the Council website and annual report.

4. Meetings

There will be up to 12 paid meetings per year of the full ERG. A provisional meeting schedule will be agreed once the work programme is finalised. This schedule can be varied throughout the year.

5. Training for members

The Council will provide members with:

- An induction explaining the Council’s function and processes and the role of the ERG
- Training or resources as necessary to fulfil their roles as an ERG member. For example, Chairing, contributing at meetings, understanding the role of local government and presentation skills as needed or on request.

6. Key membership criteria

The ERG will include up to 15 members.

Members need to have:

- a familiarity with the natural or built environment of Wellington City
- some involvement (or knowledge of) practical environmental initiatives
- demonstrated awareness of and enthusiasm for natural or built environmental issues
- links into the community and a willingness to make use of those links for contributing to the agreed work programme
- an ability to give a balanced view that aims to find solutions.
Subject to the above, the Council will try to include in ERG an appropriate balance of experience and expertise and of men, women and youth.

In addition, a representative from Council’s mana whenua partners will be invited to be a member of the ERG. Council officers will maintain a communication link between mana whenua partners and the ERG.

Further details of the roles and accountabilities of members (including Chairs) and non-members that support the ERG are in Appendix A.

7. Terms of Appointment

The standard term of appointment will be two years. An ERG member’s membership will cease if that member resigns and may cease if that member:

• misses more than three consecutive meetings without apology or 4 meetings within one year
• does not work proactively during any one-year review period, or
• behaves in a way that violates the Code of Conduct (Appendix B) or is otherwise seen as detrimental to the effective operation of the ERG.

A member can apply to be appointed for up to three terms.

No member can sit on the group for more than three consecutive two year terms.

8. Payment

Members will be paid $110 per meeting for up to 12 meetings per year that they attend of the full ERG.

The Chair will be paid $150 for every meeting of the full ERG attended per year. If the group decides to have more than one member in the role of Chair, the additional $40 available to the Chair will be split between the Co-Chairs.

The Council will also support the group by providing refreshments at up to 12 meetings per year.

Council at its discretion will consider providing extra resources to ERG on a case-by-case basis (including for planning) and where those extra resources enable the group to meaningfully contribute to the Council’s objectives.

9. Budget and representation issues

The ERG is an advisory group set up to inform the work and activities of the Council. The group will not be given an independent budget to commission work or undertake activities outside of this advisory role.
10. Conflict Resolution

Should conflict occur, the Chair/Co-Chairs and group will work with Council Officers to resolve the conflict.

If there are any concerns, members should raise them:
- with the Chair of the group if concerns are about other members
- with the responsible Councillor and/or senior Council officer if concerns are about the Chair of the group
- with the Chair of the group (who will decide whether to raise them with an appropriate senior Council officer) if concerns are about employees.

11. Conflict of Interest

Members will be asked to complete a conflict of interest form when they join the ERG and at the beginning of each year they sit on the group. This will be provided by the Council liaison officer.

Members are also expected to notify the liaison officer of any new or emerging conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting where the liaison officer is present.

For the purpose of the ERG, conflicts of interest are deemed to occur where a member advises on work-streams that impact on:
• money or other resources the member has invested outside Council
• the member’s family, or
• official positions the member holds on groups or bodies outside of Council.

12. Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required. ERG will be involved in any review. All changes to the Terms of Reference will need approval by the appropriate Wellington City Council Committee and the Council.
Appendix A: Role descriptions for the ERG Chair, members, Liaison Officers, Responsible Council Manager, and Appointed Councillor/s

Members

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<tr>
<th>Member position</th>
<th>Roles and accountabilities</th>
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| Chair | • encourage open communication where all members can effectively contribute  
• work with Council officers to compile meeting agendas  
• work with Council officers and members of the ERG to develop, complete and implement the group’s annual work programme referred to in section 2  
• be the ERG spokesperson representing the views and recommendations of the group, including presentations to Council and other groups as required  
• work with the Council liaison officer to review the contribution of ERG members at the yearly review and raise any concerns with the appropriate Council Officer  
• sign off minutes from the previous meeting.  
The Chair will hold the position for a maximum of two consecutive years. After this another Chair will be nominated by the ERG. The ERG will decide whether the role should be allocated on a rotational basis. |
| Co-Chair | • support the other Co-Chair in their role  
• act in place of the other Chair if the other Chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest |
| All ERG Members (including Co-Chairs) | • be prepared for meetings and consider issues with an open mind  
• actively participate in ERG meetings and contribute to the actions set in the agreed annual work programme  
• keep a broad knowledge of issues affecting the natural and built environment  
• turn up to meetings on time  
• be available and attend any other training/meetings that may be planned  
• be committed to appropriately providing information between their networks and Council  
• not take individual issues to ERG that can be dealt with via general enquiries to Council’s information Centre  
• comply with the new Code of Conduct in Appendix B  
• have their contributions reviewed annually against the current “Terms of Appointment” |
### Non-Members who will work with ERG

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<th>Roles</th>
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| Council liaison officer   | • administration, support and promotion of the group. This will include the induction of new members, development of agendas, recording meeting minutes and following up on action points to report back to the group  
  • work with the Chair/Co-Chair to set the meeting agenda  
  • work with the Chair to track attendance and review the contribution of ERG members at the yearly review  
  • work across Council business units to help them effectively engage with ERG in the development and implementation of policy, strategy, planning and service delivery in the city  
  • ensure officers attending the ERG are informed of, and present information to the group, in accordance with the ERG’s presentation guidelines  
  • progress projects agreed between ERG and officers, including ensuring officers across Council’s business units engage with ERG in the right ways and at the right stages of a work-stream. |
| Responsible Council Manager | • approve the ERG’s annual work programme  
  • help the Council liaison officer ensure officers work with ERG in the right ways and stages.                                                                                                       |
| Councillor/s               | • act as a communication link between Council (councillors and officers) and the ERG by attending meetings on a regular basis  
  • provide with officers, information, advice and explanation of the Council’s political process and agreed Council policy when required and facilitate feedback from the ERG to Council. |
Appendix B: Code of Conduct

1. Objective

The objective of the code is to enhance:
- mutual trust, respect and tolerance between members as a group and with Councillors and Council staff
- the credibility and accountability of the Council within its communities.

The following is the standard of behaviour that is expected from members of Wellington City Council reference and advisory groups.

2. Relationships with others

Members will conduct their dealings with each other, and elected members, in ways that:
- are open, honest and maintain integrity
- focus on issues rather than personalities
- avoid aggressive, offensive and abusive conduct
- maintain confidence in their group.

3. Relationships with Council staff

The effective performance of the group also requires a high level of cooperation and mutual respect between members and Council staff. To ensure this is maintained, members will:
- treat all employees with courtesy and respect (including the avoidance of aggressive, offensive or abusive conduct towards employees)
- observe any guidelines that the Chief Executive puts in place regarding contact with employees
- not do anything which compromises, or could be seen as compromising, the impartiality of an employee
- avoid publicly criticising any employee in any way, but especially in ways that reflect on the competence and integrity of the employee
- raise concerns about employees only with the Chair of the group, who will then decide whether to raise the issue with an appropriate senior Council officer
- not seek to improperly influence staff in the normal undertaking of their duties.

4. Contact with the media

Groups may have the opportunity to input into a number of different initiatives and for consistency, it is important that a single point of contact is established to respond to any media enquiries.
- All media enquiries shall be redirected to Council staff.
- If it is agreed with Council staff that it is appropriate for a view to be expressed by the group, only the Chair, or the Chair’s proxy, can represent the group to the media. The
Chair will work with the Council’s External Relations team in relation to any public comments.

- Views expressed to the media on behalf of the group must have been previously agreed on by the group as a whole.
- If a member is contacted by a journalist for a view from their group, they must refer the journalist to the Chair or Co-Chair.
- Members are free to express a personal view in the media or the view of other organisations of which they are a member, at any time. However, they must make clear that these represent their private views as an individual, or the view of their organisation.

5. Confidential Information

In the course of their duties members will receive information that they need to treat as confidential. This will often be information that is either commercially sensitive or is personal to a particular individual or organisation.

Members should be aware that failure to observe confidentially will impede the performance of Council and could expose the Council to prosecution under the Privacy Act 1993 and/or civil litigation.

6. Individual queries

Members will not bring individual issues to their advisory groups that can best be dealt with by going through the Council’s Service Centre.

7. Honesty and Integrity

Members have a duty to act honestly. They must declare any private interests relating to their duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts of interest in such a way that protects the public interest. They must not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their families, friends or business interests.

8. Complaints

Any complaints about other group members, officers or Councillors should be addressed confidentially to the Chair who can then raise the issue with relevant Council officers.
Appendix C: Recruitment and Selection Process

Recruitment of new members will be managed by the Council liaison officer (Appendix A).

The Council will call for applications from within the city’s boundaries via a number of different media (newspapers, social media, the Council website, community radio etc.).

New members will be selected by the ERG liaison officer and the Chair or Co-Chairs of the ERG to fill any gaps in the group’s membership.