

Environmental Reference Group Minutes

Monday, 6 July 2015, 5:30-7:30 pm

Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St, Committee Room 2

Sophie Mormede in the Chair

Present

Members: Howard Markland, Phil Hancock, Sophie Mormede, Paula Warren, Stu Farrant, Graeme Sawyer, Kate Mitcalfe, Janet Young, Mark Fenwick, Martin Payne

Councillors: Cr Ritchie

Officers: Simon Wright and Nicci Wood (Policy & Reporting)

Guests: Alastair Smaill (Greater Wellington Regional Council), Jimmy Green (Wellington Water)

Apologies: Cr Pannett, Yvonne Legarth, Jonathon Gulliard (Wellington Water)

1. Introduction and conflicts of Interest

Sophie welcomed everyone

Graeme declared a possible conflict of interest in that he does stormwater education work for Wellington Water.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cr Pannett and Yvonne Legarth for being unable to attend.

3. Whaitua Committee Process

Alastair Smaill, who is GWRC's Whaitua Project Manager, introduced Nicci Wood, WCC's support officer for the Porirua Whaitua (and probably for the Wellington Whaitua), and Jimmy Green from Wellington Water, who was standing in for Jonathon Gulliard.

The GWRC is in the process of revising the Regional Plan (RP), which needs to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

Whaitua is a Māori term for a designated area. In its Regional Plan Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) uses the word 'whaitua' to describe a catchment or sub-catchment managed as an integrated system. GWRC is using the whaitua process to 'give effect' to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS-FW).

The NPS-FW aims to improve freshwater management in New Zealand. It does this by directing regional councils to establish objectives for fresh water in their regional plans to meet community and tāngata whenua values, and to take a more integrated approach to managing fresh and coastal water. The Regional Council has identified five whaitua areas that place different demands on land and water resources and is

enlisting the support of local people to help understand local needs and make recommendations on how they are to be managed.

The Whaitua Committees have two years to develop a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) that will outline regulatory and non-regulatory proposals for integrated land and water management within the whaitua boundary. The WIP will be added as a chapter in the Regional Natural Resources Plan.

The GWRC has decided to develop these chapters using a community-led, collaborative approach using a representative model, not a stakeholder model. Whaitua Committees have been, or will be, appointed to set freshwater objectives and limits for each catchment. The Ruamāhanga Whaitua has been working for 18 months, the Porirua Whaitua, which is chaired by Stu Farrant, for 6 months, and the Wellington Harbour Whaitua is likely to start in mid-2016.

The Whaitua Committees will make recommendations to the GWRC after a consideration of local and national interests. Officials will ensure that recommendations fit within legal constraints. Regulatory instruments will go in the RP, non-regulatory approaches will not. There will be implementation plans that set out actions for sub-catchments. There is a risk that the GWRC will not accept the recommendations and has been no commitment yet to continue the Whaitua process after the RP is finalised.

This Council will have to have regard to the WIP through its District Plan, when issuing resource consents and managing our assets.

Officers are supporting the committee, with briefings and field trips. The committee will then start work on developing the WIP.

There will be no deliverables in terms of the WIP from this Council until late 2017.

The whaitua units were set up based on natural water sheds.

Discussion about the opportunity for the integration of Regional Rules, Infrastructure management and land use management (District Plan). The rules in the regional plan must work- or not be at odds with the District Plan, and vice versa. The approach needs to be consistent.

There is a project of 'collaborative modelling' running concurrently to the whaitua. This GW funding process has involvement of hydrologists, ecologists, economists, social scientists etc from NIWA, DOC and other CRI's. These modelling tools will be able to demonstrate the consequences of different management options. These models will be able to be developed and adapted to work for the other whaitua committees. This modelling work is different to the sewer and stormwater models which sought funding in the LTP, these models are local and specific to the individual networks. There is no cross over between the sewer/stormwater models and the collaborative modelling.

The whaitua WIP can be more prescriptive than the NPS bottom line standards- and call for a higher water quality in their catchment. If not this bottom line has to be maintained or improved. New consentable activities cannot cause further deterioration. Existing consents will be more difficult. Under the NPSFW it is possible for a community to 'sacrifice' a section of waterbody that meets bottom line standards, and focus efforts elsewhere, but recent case law did not find this way.

Whaitua committee will have to decide who bears what cost- public compensation to private interests who loss out; how much the community is willing to pay to see improvements happen quicker etc.

4. Minutes of last meeting

Mark moved that the minutes be accepted as true and correct. Martin seconded the motion and it was passed.

5. Matters arising

Rotating Chair

People leading main frameworks, developing relationships with relevant officers – ease the burden on Chair/co chairs.

Policy forward programme

Portfolio teams continuously assessing opportunities and when and how to act. Officers should be keeping on top of changes to forward programme.

6. Other Business

Letter to CEO

Assigned officer to do particular things, with sufficient time, skill and interest. Relationship with Officers, early engagement most valuable. Continuity of portfolios, meeting with EC chair. Paula to draft a letter from the Committee.

Leads on top of what council is doing and not doing and with relationship with officers so can identify timings.

Howards Email

Storm water Consultation Committee Meeting. Iona Pannett – quote from Wellington Water for modelling work, collated feedback from ERG members.

LTP assigned \$9m, request documents supporting, monitoring and modelling projects

7. Action Summary

1. Simon to set up Loomio thread.