
REPORT 1
(1215/52/IM)

ENVIRONMENTAL REFERENCE GROUP UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the activities of the Environmental Reference Group (ERG) during 2009 and an overview of the activities planned for 2010.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note that there were three resignations during 2009 and that vacancies will be publicly advertised for the appointment of new members to the Environmental Reference Group (ERG).*
- 3. Note that the SPC forward programme includes a review of the ERG Terms of Reference in 2010.*

3. Background

The ERG was established in 2001, to provide the Council with a sounding board and peer-review group on issues relating to management of the natural environment. In August 2005, the Terms of Reference were reviewed to align with the new Environmental Portfolio and clarify that the natural environment includes energy and waste issues. At this time the membership was reviewed and updated. In May 2008, the Council agreed to a revised Terms of Reference, introducing an attendance fee for members, allowing for the chair to be a member other than a Councillor, and permitting co-chairs.

4. Discussion

4.1 Meeting content and frequency for 2009

The ERG has met seven times since the last update report to SPC in December 2008. Appendix 1 summarises the topics covered at each meeting, as well as attendance numbers.

Some of the key topics for discussion over the past year have included:

- engagement on the LTCCP 2009-19
- the impacts of the Waste Minimisation Act (2008) and discussion and early input into the Council's planning for waste minimisation
- discussion of the key issues for the water network and providing some preliminary input into the water conservation work area
- a workshop on the draft 2010 Climate Change Action Plan to provide input into the process.

4.2 Membership Changes

Under the Terms of Reference, the ERG can have:

- up to fifteen non-Council members
- at least one Councillor representative
- representation from Ngati Toa and the Tenths Trust.

A list of current members is attached as Appendix 2. They include representatives from the Youth Council and from the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). All other ERG members do not officially represent any organisation with which they are affiliated. Three ERG members have resigned since December 2008. Nominations for new members open on 27 November 2009 and will close on 22 December. New appointments will be finalised at the start of 2010.

4.3 Value and benefits - memberships

The ERG has proven itself to be knowledgeable, engaged and a committed group. The group has a diverse range of expertise including:

- economics
- biodiversity
- environmental management
- energy efficiency and conservation
- business/corporate sustainability
- climate change impacts and emissions analysis.

A number of members are involved - on either a paid or unpaid basis - with various environment-related agencies, such as Victoria University's Environmental Studies programme, the Ministry for the Environment, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, the Department of Conservation and the Sustainability Trust. These connections are useful to understanding developments on Government policy, academic research and projects developing on a local level.

4.4 Existing role of the ERG and options for improvement

Officers have tried to ensure that meetings provide for exchanges of topical information and early input and discussion on policy development issues. External speakers have also been invited to meetings to discuss relevant issues for Wellington. Examples of external engagement include presentations by:

- the Department of Conservation on the Wellington Conservation Strategy Review
- the Greater Wellington Regional Council on the Draft Regional Policy Statement
- the Greater Wellington Regional Council on the Genuine Progress Indicator work.

ERG members have expressed an interest in more workshops on Council policy or projects where their ideas can be included in the policy scoping. Workshops are considered to be beneficial for officers and opportunities will be identified on future agendas.

A review of the ERG's Terms of Reference is on the SPC Forward Programme in June 2010.

4.5 Programme for 2010

Council officers and the ERG chairs will meet in December and January 2010 to:

- finalise the ERG member recruitment process
- finalise a forward programme for 2010
- identify improvements with benefits for ERG and Council.

The ERG will continue to meet bi-monthly and will focus on discussing policy being developed for upcoming SPC meetings, as well as other issues raised by group members or Council officers. Areas of interest to the group include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| • the Draft Annual Plan 2010/11 | • Capital Spaces Open Space Strategy Review |
| • environmental performance measures | • Wellington 2040 - The City Strategy |
| • the draft 2010 Climate Change Action Plan | • the District Plan review |
| • the Water Conservation Plan | • briefing the incoming Council |
| • the Waste Minimisation and Management Plan | • walking, cycling and bus priority measures. |
| • Town Belt Legislation and Management Plan review | |

5. Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the activity and contributions of the ERG in 2009. Collaborative work will continue with the ERG in 2010 on projects and issues relevant to Wellington.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This activity fits with the outcomes for the Environmental Strategy.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The financial impacts from administering the ERG can be managed with existing budgets. This includes costs such as members' attendance fees and catering.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications from this report.

4) Decision-Making

This report does not require a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Expressions of interest for the vacant positions in the group will be advertised in the Our Wellington Page and on the Council website.

b) Consultation with Maori

Both mana whenua partners declined to become members of the group when it was formed on the understanding that officers supporting the group would maintain a communication link with the Wellington Tenth's Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira to assist in providing a Māori perspective in the work of the Group. This agreed approach is reflected within the Terms of Reference for the Group.

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications from this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The activities of the Environmental Reference Group are consistent with existing policy and provide robust input to ongoing environmental policy development.

APPENDIX 1: 2009 Environmental Reference Group Meetings

Date	Agenda Topics	Non-Council Members in Attendance
2 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final recruitment selection 	NA
9 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTCCP engagement results • Sewage and stormwater mixing – inflow and infiltration • Sludge process • Waste Operator Licensing Bylaw 	12
2 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Minimisation Act 2008 implications • Wellington Regional Strategy • Water Day • Group Goals 	9
6 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Consumption Figures • Draft LTCCP consultation document • Greater Wellington Proposed Regional Policy Statement • Group goals discussion 	10
8 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngati Toa Treaty Settlement • Wellington Draft Conservation Strategy • Safe and Sustainable Transport Reference Group 	12
3 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERG annual report to the Strategy and Policy Committee • Energy planning update • Water update • LTCCP update • Climate change work update • ERG meeting structures and content – discussion on opportunities for value-added benefits for ERG and the Council • ERG draft forward programme 	9
22 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change workshop 	10
23 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Year End Report • ERG Forward Programme for 2010 • ERG member recruitment 	TBC
3 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Reference Group Update to the Strategy and Policy Committee 	NA

NA: Not Applicable.

APPENDIX 2: Environmental Reference Group Membership as at November 2008

	Name	Comments
1	Ms Bev Abbot	
2	Mr Hamish Allardice (co-chair)	
3	Dr Ralph Chapman	
4	Ms Mel Cutler	
5	Mr Mike Ennis	
6	Mr Peter Gilberd	
7	Mr Graeme Hastilow	
8	Ms Liz Hibbs	Resigned July 2009
9	Mr Tushara Kodikara	
10	Ms Kathryn Maxwell	
11	Ms Liz Mellish (Tenths Trust)	
12	Dr Phillip Mladenov	
13	Mr Tim Park (GWRC)	
14	Mr Nick Potter	
15	Dr Sea Rotman (co-chair)	
16	Mr Ian Shearer	Resigned September 2009
17	Mr Nigel Smith (Youth Council)	

WCC Representatives

1. Councillor Celia Wade-Brown and Councillor Iona Pannett (Alternate)
2. Mr Chris Cameron (Policy)
3. Mr Mike Oates (Parks and Gardens / Open Space Planning)
4. Ms Nicky Karu (Treaty Relations), on behalf of Council Treaty Partners
5. Mr Mike Mendonca (CitiOperations)
6. Others on an as-needed basis, depending on topics to be covered