
ENVIRONMENTAL REFERENCE GROUP UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the activities of the Environmental Reference Group (ERG) during 2010, an overview of the ERG's advice on key issues for the Council to consider (attached as Appendix One) and options for the 2011 forward programme.

2. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note the Environmental Reference Group's (ERG) summary of key issues for Council consideration contained in Appendix One and that officers agree with many of the key issues highlighted by the ERG.*
- 3. Note that the key issues identified in Appendix One are being considered in the development of the Wellington 2040 – City Strategy and that the Council's response to these issues would be considered in light of this project and as part of the 2012/22 Long Term Plan.*
- 4. Note that the Strategy and Policy forward programme contains a review of the Council's Engagement Framework, which will include revised terms of reference for the four Council advisory groups including the Environmental Reference Group.*

3. Background

The ERG, established in 2001, provides the Council with advice and feedback on environmental policy issues. The purpose of the ERG (as stated in the 2008 Terms of Reference, attached as **Appendix Two**) is to “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.”

4. Discussion

4.1 Advice on key issues for Council consideration

The ERG used the final meeting of 2010 to discuss the contents of its Annual Report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC). The ERG identified key macro issues and mega-trends that it believes the Council should consider when developing policy. A summary of the ERG's advice to Council for 2011 is attached as Appendix One.

Officers note that the work of the *Wellington 2040 – City Strategy* has identified similar key issues and mega-trends as the ERG. Officers appreciate and agree with much of the conceptual framework provided by the ERG in its advice to SPC. The key issues identified by the ERG will be critical drivers of Wellington city's long-term future. Officers consider that the Council's response to these issues should be considered in light of *Wellington 2040* and as part of the 2012/22 Long Term Plan development.

4.2 Meeting content and frequency for 2010

The ERG met seven times in 2010. Appendix Three summarises the topics covered at each meeting, as well as attendance numbers. The ERG provided feedback and advice into key areas of Council policy including:

- the 2010 Climate Change Action Plan
- the draft Water Conservation Plan
- the recycling review and Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
- household sustainability (particularly energy efficiency)
- a review of the ERG's Terms Reference (which has now been included in the review of the Council's Engagement Framework).

4.3 Forward programme for 2011

The ERG will continue to meet bi-monthly and will focus on the Policy Forward Programme for 2011, which includes:

- Wellington 2040
- 2012/22 Long Term Plan development
- Climate Change Action Plan implementation
- Water Conservation Plan
- Waste Minimisation and Management Plan
- Capital Spaces Open Space Strategy Review
- Town Belt Legislation and Management Plan review
- Centre planning (e.g. Miramar Framework)
- the review of the Council's Engagement Framework.

4.4 Membership Changes

A list of current members is attached as Appendix Four. Four ERG members resigned in 2010 and recruitment for new members will not be initiated until the review of the Council's Engagement Framework is considered by SPC.

5. Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the activity and contributions of the ERG in 2010. It also summarises the ERG's advice on key issues the Council should take into consideration in policy development as well as the potential forward programme for the ERG in 2011.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This activity fits with the outcomes for the Environmental Strategy and Governance Strategy.

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

The ERG is managed within existing budgets.

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

No general consultation has been undertaken for this report.

b) Consultation with Maori

No consultation with Maori has been undertaken for this report.

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 support to ongoing environmental policy development.

APPENDIX ONE

The Environmental Reference Group's Brief to the Incoming Council from the WCC

Background: Purpose and Role of Environmental Reference Group

The Environmental Reference Group's (ERG) Terms of Reference states that the group is "to be a primary forum for advice 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 role of the ERG is advisory and the group provides:

- feedback, peer review and advice on natural environment policy, planning and asset management matters 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.

Brief to the Incoming Council

With the ERG's Terms of Reference in mind, the Annual Report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee is an opportunity for the ERG to advise the incoming Council on high-level environmental issues facing Wellington City and how the Council can engage with the ERG when developing policy and operational plans.

The advice offered by the ERG is based on the collective knowledge and skills of current ERG members. Council officers provide policy advice to the Council during the policy development process. This may at times differ from the advice offered by the ERG, but it is hoped that the framework proposed by the ERG will give the Council a filter that can be applied when considering a broad range of policy and operational issues.

Macro and global issues to be taken into account

In all areas of policy development, the ERG believes the Council should consider and take into account the following macro issues and trends:

- **climate change**, including the medium/long-term physical effects of climate change (i.e. sea level rises, storm events) and possible near-term economic impacts such as carbon pricing policies (domestic and international) and their impacts on economic growth, consumer choice and patterns of consumption
- **rapid resource depletion** and degradation issues such as soil degradation, water security, food security, minerals depletion and energy security issues
- possible **oil price shocks** in the next 3-5 years driven by supply and demand issues (commonly referred to as "peak oil"; for more information please see <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/ParlSupport/ResearchPapers/4/6/a/OOPLEco10041-The-next-oil-shock.htm>)
- **global and national economic downturns** linked to the above macro-trends and wider global economic trends
- **biodiversity loss and impacts of loss of ecosystem services** (water filtration, carbon sequestration, flood mitigation and soil erosion)

- the ever-present **risks from natural disasters** - earthquakes, tsunamis and extreme weather events.

The ERG recommends that the Council consider and take into account the above issues in all areas of policy development with the aim of increasing Wellington City's resilience to these and other impacts. A useful framework would be for the Council to consider the impacts of above factors in relation to the following broad headings:

- Environmental Strategy including:
 - Energy (generation, conservation and distribution)
 - Water and related infrastructure (supply, conservation and distribution)
 - Waste and recycling (risks and opportunities linked to above factors)
 - Biodiversity and ecosystem services (the city's contribution to national and international conservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, including opportunities of strengthening).
- Transport Strategy - transport and physical infrastructure (roads, rail, buses, cycling network, paths & tracks)
- Social Strategy - social infrastructure and social wellbeing (resilience of communities to cope and adapt)
- Urban Development Strategy - housing and urban development (town planning, open-space planning, built environment, housing quality and impacts on energy use, health and wellbeing)

The Council's forward policy programme could then be discussed/considered using the above headings to consider each of the high-level macro-issues. For example, the *Wellington 2040* process could explicitly consider these and take them into account in developing its long-term vision for Wellington. The following table provides an indicative idea of how the above macro issues can be considered for key policy items on the Council's forward programme.

Policy	Key macro issues to consider
Wellington 2040	(1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion (3) oil security (4) global and national economic downturns (5) risks from natural disasters (6) biodiversity loss
2012/22 LTCCP development	(1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion (3) oil security (4) global and national economic downturns (5) risks from natural disasters (6) biodiversity loss
Capital Spaces	(1) biodiversity loss (2) Climate change (3) rapid resource depletion
Waste Management and Minimisation Plan	(1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion
Climate Change Action Plan Implementation	(1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion (3) oil security (4) global and national economic downturns (5) risks from natural disasters (6) biodiversity loss
Water Conservation Plan	(1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion
Town Belt Management Plan	(1) biodiversity loss (2) climate change (3) rapid resource depletion
Urban development policies – Central City Framework, Kilbirnie Town Centre Plan	1) climate change (2) rapid resource depletion (3) oil security (4) global and national economic downturns (5) risks from natural disasters (6) biodiversity loss

APPENDIX TWO

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 fulfil 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.

APPENDIX THREE

2010 Environmental Reference Group Meetings

Date	Agenda Topics	ERG members in attendance
16 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and introduction to new members• Waste Minimisation and Management Plan• Draft 2010 Climate Change Action Plan• Terms of Reference Review	12
29 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms of Reference Review	8
27 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2010/11 Draft Annual Plan presentation• Draft Climate Change Action Plan• Water Conservation Plan	10
21 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms of Reference Review• Water Conservation Plan• Recycling update• Engaging households and businesses on reducing emissions and adaptation issues (session 1)	11
17 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging households on sustainability (session 2)	6
27 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellington 2040 overview• Key performance indicators• Progress with Walking Plan, Cycling Plan and bus priority projects	10
22 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate change adaptation workstream• Terms of Reference Review update• End of year report back	8

APPENDIX FOUR

Environmental Reference Group Membership as at December 2011

	Title	First name	Last name
1	Ms	Bev	Abbot
2	Mr	Hamish	Allardice (co-chair)
3	Mr	Mike	Ennis
4	Mr	Peter	Gilberd
5	Ms	Claire	Graeme
6	Mr	Tushara	Kodikara
7	Ms	Kathryn	Maxwell
8	Dr	Phillip	Mladenov
9	Dr	Sea	Rotmann (co-chair)
10	Mr	Marc	Slade
11	Ms	Sarah	Free

Resignations during 2010

	Title	First name	Last name
1	Ms	Mel	Cutler
2	Mr	Nick	Potter
3	Mr	Nigel	Smith (Youth Council)
4	Ms	Tami	Woods