

Environmental Reference Group Minutes

Monday, 20 October 2014, 5:30-7:30 pm

Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield Street, Committee Room 2

Bev Abbott – in the Chair

Present

Bev Abbott (Co-Chair)
Howard Markland (Co-Chair)
Nick Crocker
Peter Gilberd
Kate Mitcalfe
Janet Young
Yvonne Legarth
Martin Payne
Graeme Sawyer

Apologies

Paula Warren
Mark Fenwick
Stu Farrant

City Councillors

Councillor Ritchie
Councillor Pannett

WCC Liaison Officers

Martin Rodgers

1. Urban Growth Plan:

The Chair enquired into whether there would be an opportunity for submitters to speak to submissions through oral hearings as was the Council's usual practice. The Councillors and Martin confirmed that there would not be. Martin suggested that this was because some aspects of the Plan had already been extensively consulted on (e.g. Adelaide Road) and that others would be consulted on closer to implementation (e.g. the intensification of housing rules in suburban centres). Martin said that the group can speak as part of public participation at the start of the Committee meeting where the submissions will be considered.

The Chair asked that it be noted in the minutes that this course of action seems to be inconsistent with Council's Engagement Policy, especially in relation to critical strategic questions, and against the expectation of submitters that they would have an opportunity to make oral presentations to the decision-makers.

2. Work programme:

Martin re-emphasised that the purpose of the work programme was to identify key projects and policies that officers would work on with ERG throughout the course of their development and implementation. It was not intended to capture all the matters that ERG might consider and comment on during the year and other items can be added in agreement with the Liaison Officer during the year.

Councillors Pannett and Ritchie both felt that there should be a stronger focus in the letter on the reviewing the Big 8 Ideas and monitoring the Climate Change Action Plan.

Actions:

- Officers would prepare a draft programme for ERG meetings through to

June next year to see the range of topics to be worked on and the time available for additional items.

- Officers would redraft letter and circulate for agreement.

There was a request for clarity and access to key documents that would enable new members to strengthen their understanding of issues and Council approaches.

Actions:

- Officers to circulate a list and links to key documents.

3. Wellington Water:

Colin Crampton (Chief Executive) and Iqbal Idris (Senior Projects Manager) were introduced to the group.

Colin introduced Wellington Water emphasising the following points:

- It was moving to away from an outputs focus to an outcomes focus in terms of its accountability to customers
- Its customers were the five councils, who have the relationships with their communities in terms of the services provided
- It is focussed on three outcomes:
 - Safe to drink
 - Respectful to the environment
 - Resilience now and in the future
- The great opportunity is to promote consistent levels of service and approaches to issues across the councils
- This is done with the Water Committee made up of political appointees from the councils. Cr Pannett is the Wellington City Council's appointee
- Wellington Water has agreed a common performance measurement framework across the shareholding councils but each council can have its own targets
- They want to strengthen the links between the work programme / outputs and the outcomes sought.

Iqbal spoke about the work they were doing in the area of stormwater including:

- They have undertaken stage 1 of their work on an Integrated Catchment Management Plan (ICMP), the report from which is available here: <http://www.capacity.net.nz/your-water/stormwater>
- It is starting work on stage 2, the approach to which they will be able to share soon
- They are open to approaches other than just engineering solutions
- They are improving monitoring regimes and how they respond to issues
- They are starting to engage with the Water Sensitive Urban Design project and will look at it as part of the ICMP work
- They are taking the points raised about the Stormwater Consultative Committee seriously and have recently improved the delivery of the education programme
- They are willing to involve ERG in the workshops as part of the next

stage of the ICMP work.

4. Conflicts of interest:

New members who had not yet completed their conflict of interest declaration forms were asked to return these to Council.

Graeme Sawyer notified a potential conflict of interest for the session with Wellington Water given that he has done part time contractual work for Wellington Water on storm water education programmes.

5. Biodiversity Action Plan:

It has been agreed that Myfanwy will come to the November meeting to hold another session on the plan.

6. Performance measures:

It was agreed that officers would come to the November meeting to discuss the overall approach to reviewing the Council's measurement framework as part of the Long-term Plan ahead of a workshop at the December meeting on the measures for the environment-related Council activities.

7. District Plan Review

In anticipation that ERG's Work Plan would include contributing to the review of some sections of the District Plan, departing ERG member Claire Graeme had prepared a list of sections likely to be of interest to ERG. Whilst ERG's draft Work Plan does not mention the District Plan, Claire's list should be appended to the minutes so that this advice is available to members of ERG and Council staff in the future.

8. Any other business

The Chair recommended that members follow the agendas for the relevant Council committees to identify issues that may be of interest to ERG. As an example, she noted an item from the Environment Committee's last meeting which initiated the process for revocation of reserve land in Newlands, an area of the city likely to experience population growth under the Urban Growth Plan.

Martin noted that other reference groups do not see themselves as having a role in reviewing all Council's work for issues but were focused on working with officers to progress their work programme. Martin did not think that the reviewing function was consistent with the intention of the new terms of reference.

Bev thanked Martin for servicing the group during the transition to a new Liaison Officer.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

Attachment:

ERG input into the WCC District Plan

Oct 2014

ERG would like to be consulted/ kept informed regarding any proposed changes to the District Plan that relate to the following topics or sections.

Key issues:

- That new growth is sustainable, well-sited (doesn't fill gullies, piping water bodies or remove important vegetation, create flooding or floodable) provides for SUDs, is designed to high standard for living, emergency proof (water tanks etc.).
 - Existing infill development – SUDs
 - Coastal and natural areas protected – currently seems to lack a natural area/vegetation schedule and/or protection rules from clearance or infilling, crushing.
 - Freshwater environment protected and restored
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1. Anything relating to the Natural Environment Chapter (Conservation Sites and Open Space Areas)
 2. Rural Section where it relates to new subdivision. We are particularly interested in:
 - The ability to apply sustainable design standards, drainage systems, sustainable energy requirements.
 - Identified ridge lines and hilltops
 - 14.2.3.3 Values of Belmont Hills
 - 14.2.4 – Subdivision
 - 14.2.4.4 esplanade reserve requirements
 - 14.2.5 – maintain and enhance natural features
 - 14.2.5.3 encourage retention of existing vegetation (ERG consider this needs strengthening)
 - 14.2.6 –coastal environment
 - 15.1.1 rural activity
 - 15.1.8 clean fill areas - no specified distance from waterways or treatment of discharge
 - 15.3.3a – residential dwellings
 - 15.4.2 building in identified ridgelines and hilltops
 - 15.4.5 – subdivision
 - 15.4.7 appendices re: special areas for subdivision

- 15.4.8 – Waiving esplanade reserves – What are the requirements? shouldn't be able to do this for financial reasons – should only be if some historic physical impediment
 - Heritage – not interested? (check with ERG)
3. Urban Growth Area
 - a. Lincolnshire Farm structure plan (if changes proposed) – structures plans are important as contain detailed framework for how subdivision will take place e.g. Gullies protected or filled etc.
 4. Suburban areas – less important - is generally infill except for Ohiro Valley. There appear to be good rules specifically covering the Ohiro Valley development but would be good to have an oversight to these especially as they relate to the indigenous vegetation and stream. Very good opportunity to get good design around runoff control, energy use etc.
 - a. 4.2.1.4 – *encourage energy efficiency in the residential area* (just advocacy – where is the regulation around this for new development and even when upgrading places?)
 - b. 4.2.1.5 – *'promote' a sustainable built environment*. Sites the building code, but the district plan could go further than this. E.g. '0' impact new subdivision for storm water etc.
 - c. 4.2.3.1b *minimising hard surfaced areas within new residential areas through advocacy, design guides*. This is good but need to see this translated into district plan rules.
 - d. 4.2.3.1c *encourage retention of trees and bush...* This isn't strong enough.
 - e. 4.2.3.4 a – *management residential development in Ohiro Road*. Relates to retaining existing gullies and ephemeral streams. Good policy. Check that this is carried through more generally for other subdivision in the district plan.
 - f. 4.2.5.1 – protection significant landscapes (coastal cliffs)
 - g. 4.2.6 – Maintain and enhance the quality of the coastal environment...
 - h. 4.2.9 – Road design and public spaces, access
 5. Residential areas: rules and design standard around hard surface coverage. Is there anything stopping an owner hard surfacing their entire section? Implication for runoff to streams and harbour. Relevant for Infill but also new subdivision.
 6. Renewable energy section: Just about structures like wind turbines so less important but could keep on the list to ensure is facilitative and not restrictive of this development.
 7. Earthworks – need to ensure it fits in with the idea of retaining natural drainage features. E.g. gullies and streams retained and don't fill these.
 8. Contaminated land – this is about subdivision and use of contaminated land – think is ok not to see this section?

9. Utilities – don't need to see this section
10. Designations – don't need to see this section
11. Airport – Generally I don't think ERG is interested in this unless it has bits that relate to proposed expansion of runways.
12. Institutional precinct – no interested
13. Suburban centres – not interested

Related documents that we are interested in seeing:

- Northern Growth Management Framework