

Environmental Reference Group Minutes

Monday, 2 March 2015, 5:30-7:45 pm

Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St, Committee Room 2

Phil Hancock in the Chair

Present

Members: Howard Markland, Phil Hancock, Sophie Mormede, Paula Warren, Stu Farrant, Yvonne Legarth, Graeme Sawyer, Kate Mitcalfe, Mark Fenwick

Councillors: Cr Ritchie, Cr Pannett

Officers: Simon Wright (Consultation & Engagement)

Apologies

Nick Crocker, Janet Young, Martin Payne for being unable to attend. Cr Ritchie, Cr Pannett, Sophie Mormede and Mark Fenwick for leaving early.

1. Introduction and conflicts of Interest

Phil welcomed everyone and led a discussion about role of the ERG, its work and the nature of its advice. The group needs to provide independent advice that may at times be critical of Council initiatives. The ERG's advice should be agreed by members. Individual members can make their own individual submissions if they have points to make that the ERG as a whole does not support.

There was a discussion about what constitutes a conflict of interest. Simon will circulate guidance on this.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were accepted as true and correct.

4. Working groups, Loomio and Drop Box

Five sub groups have been set up to help with the development of advice for the Long Term Plan, Urban Growth Plan and the Infrastructure Strategy. The groups may possibly be used for ongoing work in these areas as well. The five groups are water (including water sensitive urban design), waste, biodiversity, transport and urban sustainability, which is a place for issues that do not fit with the four other themes. While members have indicated their preferred sub groups, group membership is not exclusive and members should contribute to any discussions they feel they can add value to. The Loomio space is for discussion, comments

and decisions. The ERG's Drop Box is a place for storing and sharing ERG documents, including meeting papers, which will be circulated in advance of meetings.

5. Submission on Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan

Sophie volunteered to collate the points made by members on Loomio and then seek further input. Submissions on the Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (BSAP) close on 6 March.

The following questions and points were raised in discussion:

- Why are the strategy and action plan in a single document and how does the BSAP relate to other Council strategy and plans?
 - Combining the strategy and action plan is a response to the previous strategy not having any actions. It is also a way of keeping everything in one place.
 - The issue is not so much about the BSAP but how the Council ensures that the actions of its people and departments support biodiversity. Socialising the BSAP across the Council is especially important for units that do not consider biodiversity a core responsibility and/or function, especially given that current performance frameworks are not sufficiently developed to drive improvement. A possible way forward could be to develop project and report templates that require officers to state how their work is going to support the BSAP.
- A strong statement about the BSAP objectives would communicate the Council commitment more effectively. For example, the Council could commit to labelling and mapping every buried stream so that people know they exist and there is then a possibility that they will be day-lighted one day.
- The BSAP focuses on areas of 'high' value and does not pay enough attention to 'low' value land which can actually be extreme valuable. For example, rail corridors can also link areas of biodiversity, busy roadways can protect areas of biodiversity from predators such as cats, and highway retaining walls can be excellent skink habitat.

6. LTP, Urban Growth Plan & Infrastructure submissions

7. Working group and theme leaders

An overarching question the ERG submission should consider is whether the proposed economic agenda is sustainable.

The ERG decided that it would make a single submission covering the LTP, Urban Growth Plan & Infrastructure Strategy as these documents are all linked. The submission will offer advice on each of the themes noted in 4 above and some other areas too. The table below summarises areas that will be covered in the submission and who will lead the development of advice for each area.

Martin is to confirm that he is able to lead the waste focus area.

Simon is to link members to the LTP, Urban Growth Plan and Infrastructure Strategy consultation materials when they are available.

Focus area	Lead
Performance measurement and readability	Howard
Water	Stuart
Transport	Paula
Waste	Martin (tbc)
Urban Growth Plan	Graeme
Climate Change	Kate

8. Matters arising

Chairing ERG

The ERG will continue using the rotating chair approach. Howard agreed to chair the next meeting as Paula will be away. Simon will rework the chairing roster.

Inviting Cr Foster to ERG 13 April

Phil will invite Cr Foster to the ERG meeting on 13 April.

Annual Report, Environment Committee, 12 February

Bev Abbott and Peter Gilberd presented the ERG's Annual Report to the Environment Committee on 12 February. The Committee thanked Bev and Peter for their outstanding service.

7. Other Business

Performance measures feedback

Written feedback about changes to the Council's performance measure was circulated.

Public presentation on the Urban Growth Plan

Graeme (and possible Phil) will attend the UGP presentation from 6-8pm, 1 April in the Mezzanine Community Room of the Central Library.

Catchment management relationships

The ERG decided not to provide advice on Wellington Water's integrated catchment management programme after reviewing relational and jurisdictional issues.

Action Summary

- Simon to circulate guidance on conflicts of interest
- Martin to confirm he is able to lead the waste focus area
- Simon is to link members to the LTP, Urban Growth Plan and Infrastructure Strategy consultation materials when they are available
- Simon to update the roster for chairs and deputy chairs
- Phil to invite Cr Foster to its meeting on 13 April