

Environmental Reference Group Minutes

Monday, 13 April 2014, 5:30-7:45 pm

Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St, Committee Room 2

Howard Markland in the Chair

Present

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

Councillors: Cr Ritchie, Cr Foster

Officers: Simon Wright (Policy & Reporting), Haydn Read (Manager, Strategy Asset Management)

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cr Pannett, Janet Young, Paula Warren and Yvonne Legarth for being unable to attend.

1. Introduction and conflicts of Interest

Howard welcomed everyone and informed the group that Nick Crocker had resigned. Howard will respond to the resignation on behalf of the ERG.

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. Matters arsing

Submission on Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan

Sophie and Graeme presented the ERG's submission on Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan. Issues that need further work include:

- making it easier to understand how all the Council's environmental strategies, policies and plans work together
- strengthening provisions for aquatic biodiversity as current documents focus mainly on terrestrial biodiversity.

It was suggested that the Council needs a 'Blue Belt action plan with a 50-year vision and a set of actions.

5. Chair of Transport and Urban Development Committee

Cr Foster presented a summary of the Council's draft Urban Development Plan. Some key points included:

- Wellington is growing and the CBD will become the biggest 'suburb'
- Underlying principles include
 - a compact city
 - A liveable city
 - A city set in nature
 - A resilient city
- The Council would like there to be more work near suburban centres
- Car commuting is trending downwards, active modes of transport are trending up
- Growth is targeted in the Johnsonville-Kilbirnie spine, in some suburbs (Karori and Tawa) and in greenfields sites in the northern part of the city
- Improving the cycle network is both a priority and a challenge
- The plan provides for improving the management of stormwater and restoring some stream.

The Council is developing hydraulic models to inform its decision making in this area. Questions were raised about:

- ensuring that Water Sensitive Urban Design principles are used. Cr Foster noted that practices are improving.
- Whether the models have variables for impervious surfaces and rain intensity

Haydn Read, Manager of Strategic Asset Management, responded that the models will take 2-3 years to develop, include geographical, topographical and hydrological dimensions, can be used to inform integrated catchment management approaches, and will be able to model different scenarios and carry out sensitivity analyses.

Concerns were expressed about the Council delaying climate change related decision making while the models are being developed. The response was that good decisions about water infrastructure cannot be made without the models being developed.

The management of water contaminants and local rainwater retention at standalone houses was also discussed. It was noted that hydraulic models are not need to reduce the level of contamination, that retention systems are required for large apartment blocks but that there are multiple reasons for not requiring these for standalone houses.

The role, capacity and capability of Wellington Water were discussed.

Hydraulic models for the northern suburbs should be prioritised to inform the work of the Porirua Harbour Whaitua committee.

The ERG expressed interest in learning more about the hydraulic models. Simon will arrange another session with Haydn. Members were advised to review the Service Plans if they want greater levels of detail.

Cr Foster invited the ERG to:

- flag any issues it believes are relevant to the Transport and Urban Development Committee
- review the Transport and Urban Development Committee's Forward Programme when it is published in July or August for opportunities for early involvement in projects.

6. Panel Session to inform submissions

The panel session was cancelled. Haydn provided the ERG with more information about the Council's asset management strategies and systems.

7. LTP, Urban Growth Plan & Infrastructure submission

After discussing whether the ERG should make submissions or not, a process for finalising the ERG's submission was agreed. Simon is to seek an extension on behalf of the group as submissions close on 17 April. Members are to make final comments on drafts by 17 April. Lead writers are to finalise drafts by 20 April. Howard and Simon are to consolidate the drafts into a final document, submit it and request oral submission slots for each section of the submission.

8. Other Business

LTP forum for advisory groups

The LTP forum for advisory groups is on 14 April in the Mezzanine Community Room.

Action Summary

- Howard to respond to Nick Crocker's resignation on behalf of the ERG
- Simon to arrange another session with Haydn on hydraulic modelling
- Simon to seek an extension on behalf of the group as submissions on the LTP close on 17 April
- Members to make final comments on submission drafts by 17 April
- Lead writers to finalise submission drafts by 20 April
- Howard and Simon to consolidate submission drafts into a final document, submit it and request oral submission slots for each section of the submission