

# Environmental Reference Group Minutes

Monday, 4 May 2015, 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, Yvonne Legarth, Graeme Sawyer, Kate Mitcalfe, Janet Young, Mark Fenwick, Martin Payne

Councillors: Cr Pannett

Officers: Simon Wright (Policy & Reporting), Haydn Read (Manager, Strategy Asset Management), Myfanwy Emeny (Team Leader, Biodiversity & Urban Ecology)

## Apologies

Apologies were received from Cr Ritchie and Paula Warren for being unable to attend.

### 1. Introduction and conflicts of Interest

Graeme welcomed everyone

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

### 3. Strategic asset management and hydraulic modelling

This session continued discusses that were started with Haydn Reed at the April ERG meeting.

The models being used to manage the WCC's assets enable the WCC to explore a wide range of situations subject to the availability of data sets, and the right questions and assumptions. Models currently assume that consent conditions are complied with.

These models can be used to explore the economics of infrastructure under zero growth scenarios. It is predicted that Wellington will stop growing in 40-45 years.

The WCC is currently focused on improving the utilisation of infrastructure rather than building new things. For example, it is assembling real-time road demand data sets using Bluetooth sensors and cameras with shape recognition.

The models have been used to quantify the quantity and quality of green space to assist the Parks, Sports and Recreation unit develop policies and plan. They could be used to inform decisions on new development and land use

intensification by assessing the impacts and costs of different develop patterns. This sort of modelling could inform, for example, District Plan changes.

One water model for the Hutt, Porirua and Wellington is being developed to inform investment decisions.

New sensors will enable the WCC to understand pollution and environmental consequences better.

Developing the models is not about delaying action but about being sure that large investments achieve the desired results.

#### **4. Wellington's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan**

Myfanwy Emeny spoke with the ERG about how best to address some of the issues raised during the consultation on the Our Natural Capital: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

A lot of issues were raised about the freshwater environment and she intends to hand these using the document's existing structure rather than create new sections.

Our Natural Capital (ONC) will have a new section showing describing how the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan relates to all the other strategies and plans. Some thought should be given to using an environmental services framework so that the environmental aspects of decisions are given some weighting.

There will also be a new section on the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the governance of water, include that of the WCC. **Yvonne will provide Myfanwy with a schematic that shows roles and responsibilities.**

The issue of historical contamination of the harbour is a Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) responsibility. WCC does have a supporting role.

It was noted that port dredging and extending the airport runway, if this happens, are land-based activities with major impacts on the marine environment. Dredging for example could release DDT currently locked up in sediment into the wider environment.

The issue of reclamation was raised. This may be needed to accommodate growth in the CBD over the next 50 years or to deal with debris in the event of a major earthquake. Our Natural Capital could flag a work stream to plan how to deal with earthquake rubble. Reclamation is also a possible response to rising sea levels. Myfanwy will think about how best to respond to these issues.

ONC should protect threatened native final and plants, including local variants and local threatened speicies. The protection of threatened marine biodiversity and invertebrates should be considered.

ERG would like ONC to focus more on 'restoring' freshwater habitats. There should be no further loss of natural streams unless an equivalent stream is daylighted. Incentives for local groups to assist with daylighting should be offered with a focus on WCC parks and reserves. Work should be undertaken to remove fish barriers and attenuate peak flows, that is, restoring function if not

the streams. More should be done with Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD), including green spaces, to moderate storm flows in upper catchments.

ONC includes sections on trialing the use of local, native trees. Over the long term, this could see the city treescape transformed.

ONC will include improved sections on pest management, regenerating biodiversity, especially in transport corridors, as this aids resilience, and more on supporting community groups. Supporting community groups will be detailed in operational procedures rather than ONC.

The upcoming District Plan review will include rules for conversation sites, the destruction of habitat and the regulatory system.

The Chair thank Myfanwy for attending the meeting and for an informative and interesting discussion.

## **5. Minutes of last meeting**

Mark moved that the minutes be accepted as true and correct. Phil seconded the motion and it was passed.

## **6. Matters arising**

### **Submissions on LTP, Urban Growth Plan & Infrastructure Strategy**

The ERG's written completed submission on LTP, Urban Growth Plan & Infrastructure Strategy was tabled.

## **7. Oral submission on LTP, etc**

Simon is to use his judgement to try and secure a better time for the ERG's Long Term Plan oral submission.

## **8. Other Business**

### **Focus for next meeting**

Member suggested the following topics for the next meeting's Chair and the liaison officer to consider:

Presentation from the WCC's environmental compliance functions

Plans for Kent Terrace and Cambridge Terrace

Airport runway extension

Invite Meagan Millar and her manager to talk about waste

### **Web alerts**

To stay informed of the WCC's business, members were advised to sign up to the web alerts service – see <http://wellington.govt.nz/webalerts>.

## **Action Summary**

1. Yvonne will provide Myfanwy with a schematic that shows roles and responsibilities for water governance

2. Simon to try and secure a better time for the ERG's Long Term Plan oral submission
3. Members to sign up to the WCC's web alerts service – see <http://wellington.govt.nz/webalerts>

DRAFT