

Environmental Reference Group

Meeting Minutes

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Details: Date: Monday, 13 July 2020
Time: 5:03pm – 7:12pm
Venue: Ngake 16.09, Level 16, 113 The Terrace
Chair: Martin Payne

Members present: Steven Almond George Hobson
Mike Britton Martin Payne
Lynn Cadenhead Chris Watson
Isla Day Eleanor West
Sally Faisandier

Councillors present:

Democracy Services Staff: Hedi Mueller, Democracy Advisor

ELT Member: Moana Mackey (Chief Planning Officer)

| Topic | Description | Start time |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Welcome & Apologies Apologies were received from Michelle Rush, Clare Stringer, Arron Cox and Councillor Foon for absence, Mike Britton for early departure. Moved George Hobson, seconded Lynn Cadenhead CARRIED | 5:03pm |
| 2. | Conflicts of Interest No conflicts of interest were declared. | 5:05pm |
| 3. | Presentation: Te Atakura – First to Zero Tom Pettit and Melissa Keys gave an update on Te Atakura. WCC declared climate emergency in 2019 and Te Atakura – First to Zero was published as a blueprint of actions the city could take to cut carbon emissions. Wellington City Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report was prepared by AECOM, key thing to note is that we are trending in the right direction: since 2001 there has been a reduction in gross emissions by 7% and a reduction in net emissions by 6%. Other key points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">37% decrease in agricultural emissions, due to a reduction in livestock being farmed | 5:06pm |

in city

- Waste emissions reduced by 32% due to captured gas
- Transport emissions increased, diesel emissions alone rose by 38%
- Over the same time frame, GPD has increased by 59% and population has increase by 24% – this process is known as decoupling, where higher emissions are not linked to better economic outcomes for the city.

Critical that we front load reductions and take action now.

Due to COVID-19 it is likely that we will meet or exceed the 2020 target, it's an unintended side effect of a pandemic but globally emissions are expected to drop by 8% this year. It's heartening to see that reduction happen quickly but in the long term needs to happen without the high cost to wellbeing.

The city is dominated by transport emissions (including diesel, aviation and marine). Ways we could reduce these emissions are by reducing trips in private vehicles in favour of remote working, car share, electric vehicles or public transportation. We need to acknowledge aviation emissions as well – these have reduced thanks to COVID-19 but we will need to look at a long term plan.

We will be advocating for better policies and frameworks that are beyond the remit of council, and we need to walk our talk by reducing our own emissions, notably those from the landfills. We acknowledge we cannot achieve zero carbon emissions alone and need commitment from community.

We are using an evidenced based approach – we will be able to see actions that are helping, or ones that are not as successful as intended, and be able to identify areas to help reach goal.

The measurement criteria that actions are assessed against include greenhouse gas reduction potential, co-benefits, cost, and ease of implementation. Some actions can have long term affect such at LGWM and changes to buildings, whereas things like electric vehicles will have a short term affect.

Summary of analysis to date:

Te Atakura has 28 actions that have a measurable reduction in carbon emissions, these would reduce carbon by 14% by 2030. Based on modelling from the Ministry of Transport and from Transpower, Central Government could further reduce emissions by an extra 10%. There will still be a 19% gap that will need to be bridged by additional actions and investment, and we will need the community on board making individual changes.

Sector contributions – there is a gap in transport sector, where a 29% gap would be equivalent to taking 77,000 private cars off the road or changing them to electric vehicles. Further reductions will be needed in other sectors to offset transport emissions. One action is to invest in carbon sinks such as native forest.

In addition to 28 measurable actions, there are also enabling/accelerating actions which do not have a measurable impact but are still beneficial.

Plan will be going to ELT at the end of the month, to the Strategy and Policy Committee in August; and in September there will be business cases discussed at the Long Term Plan workshops. We have set up steering group with community representatives; the first meeting was a couple of weeks ago and will continue in October and January. We will get funding from the LTP in 2021.

Members discussed:

- Chris - How can we reduce waste? *Need a viable sewerage sludge option. This is the critical factor, which would unlock us from the resource consent requiring sewerage sludge to be mixed at set ratio with landfill waste. A digester is one of many options; we are currently going through process to identify what the best option would be. A business case for a Resource Recovery Park has been talked about for years, and there's funding for it in the Annual Plan. Central Government has a raft of advanced waste announcements they will make this year, including proposals around pricing and recycling facilities. There will be lots of work aimed at councils as owners of the landfills.*
- George – Were we on track to meet 2020 targets prior to COVID-19? *We are commissioning AECOM to calculate our 2020 footprint, and what it would have been without COVID. We expect to have this report in next few months.*
- George – in terms of sequestering carbon, are there detailed plans for long term native tree cover? *Parks, Sport and Recreation (PSR) commissioned work to see what potential there is for council land to sequester carbon. Also need to look at how we can incentivise and accelerate carbon farms on private land. Looking at ways to accelerate that without whole burden being on council.*
- George – Are there plans for greening the city, such as planting natives in the CDB? *Yes through ongoing PSR plan, also through the District Plan and Spatial Plan. A Green Network Plan is in its very early stages.*
- Chris – There is a memorandum of understanding with NZTA in building a motorway from Otaki to the airport, what recommendations are you making to get out of that agreement? *None, we don't make those recommendations, we need to work with NZTA and LGWM. It is more important to move forward and get as much as we can out of LGWM. LGWM no longer a bypass/flyover project, it's a complete reset in*

terms of city streets, active transport, bus priority and mass transit.

- Isla – At the LGWM Golden Mile workshop, there wasn't information about carbon reductions for each option. Has a climate lens been applied in this project? *We will come back to you about this.*
- George – Will the LGWM Golden Mile decision be made before the climate modelling information is out? *Moana to find out.*
- Steven – How can WCC work towards less aviation emissions? *Pre-COVID we couldn't imagine the world we're in now and how much it has changed. Those changes are an asset, if everyone in Wellington who could work from home one day per week did; that would be a 20% reduction in of total emissions in city. If we extend that to business trips to Dunedin or Auckland, the reduction in carbon emissions would be huge. We have cheap online tools that can act as substitute, so we need to exemplify that wherever we can and promote this through business support groups.*
- Eleanor – Does the Council plan to divest its 30% stake in the airport? *That's a question for Councillors, not staff.*
- Sally – In terms of urban design there are many quick fixes such as living walls or reductions in mowing, would love to see more of that. *Planting team tries to make that possible – each year they plant edible plants along the Golden Mile.*
- Sally – The LGNZ Climate Change Project doesn't appear to have anything happening – had emailed the contact person but not received a response in four or five months. *LGZ groups are pretty informal at the moment, currently Sustainability Managers from the region are meeting up fortnightly, nothing formal though. That work has been in hibernation.*
- Sally – Seems like people are divesting of reticulated gas, but very visible around town at restaurants for example. People will have expectations that this will last, is this intending to be phased out? *We've commissioned a study to see what asset lives are and what could replace it at end of life. For communities we have home energy saving audits, 500-1000 households are audited each year. We push low carbon/cheaper/more efficient directions. Not using gas is more resilient and carbon friendly.* Gentle advising is quite different to putting a finite time frame in place. Is this something that local governments could work together on? If we increase our sources of renewable energy then the cost of gas will be more expensive. If Councils can say no to wood burners then why not to natural gas? *Local government doesn't have the power to do that. It would be a lot easier if central government did it.*
- Martin – in the table of emission reduction targets, the city column had targets listed for each decade but the Council column didn't have a target listed until 2050, why is this? *Initially we had the same targets for the Council and the City, but we took out WCC target as we got a sense for how challenging the waste problem would be. Need to get sludge solution in place, then the resource recovery park, and then set the target. It's much easier to set targets for non-waste sectors – once we do something with waste, overall emissions are going to drop significantly. We can*

directly compare community projects with council projects, so we want to focus on both but the feedback we've had through consultation is that community projects are where we should focus.

- George - How official are targets? *They are legally non-binding as they are not law. A new council could overturn them, but would need to go through full consultation with public. The climate emergency is not a national civil defence emergency as declared by central government, so it doesn't come with emergency powers to do things under urgency with simplified processes. Once the implementation report has been approved by Council, we will focus on business cases to get some of the action undertaken. In terms of budgeting and audit we need to go through the business case process to see what will get us the most carbon reduction per dollar spent, and to justify why we are spending rate payer money.*
- Lynn - Would the current Council members confirm a climate emergency? *More so, as a collective.*
- Martin – What opportunity is there for the community to speak to this? *The community can submit during the LTP process, or can speak as public participants at the SPC meeting on 6 August.*
- George – Climate emergency declaration was pushed through by a lot of young people, what steps are being taken to hear those voices? *Generation Zero is on the steering group.*

Actions:

- Hedi to circulate presentation.
- Moana to find out about climate modelling information being published before LGWM Golden Mile decision is made.

4. Presentation – Consenting and Compliance

Matthew Borich gave a presentation on earthworks planning and compliance, outlined the goals of the Consenting and Compliance Team, and showed examples of earthworks going wrong.

Examples:

- 1) Cut collapsed as the consent holder didn't comply with methodology outlined in the consent, which was a series of cuts. There were issues with run off and this led to prosecution.
- 2) Methodology was not adhered to and the cut collapsed after a rain event. This led to runoff and a loss of property for the neighbours. This also went to court.
- 3) Inadequate runoff/erosion controls. Sediment runoff going into drains, streams and waterways.
- 4) Another instance of run off.
- 5) A 'dry' issue – insufficient dust control measures in place, lots of dust on and in

5:58pm

neighbouring properties.

The longer earthworks are left exposed, the more erosion you get.

Matthew outlined the rules listed in the District Plan (noting that in rural areas, the distance from streams/waterways is no closer than 20m). Consenting is required when rules in the District Plan are exceeded.

Some examples of earthwork mitigation method include:

- 1) Hydroseeding in Transmission Gully - to keep ground covered as much as possible.
- 2) Covering cuts with matting to prevent erosion, and drainage areas set up to control runoff.
- 3) Silt fences erected to control sediment,
- 4) Concrete pads to vibrate dirt and sediment off truck wheels, watering down trucks before they leave the work area

In terms of enforcement - people are meant to notify before they start, it's a very expensive process. Section 17 of the RMA allows for abatement notices and enforcement orders, which have starting penalties of \$30k. Prosecution is rare, especially for an individual and not a company, it is a criminal offense.

GWRC monitor streams and rivers through water sampling. Transmission Gully is across local Councils and GWRC.

Members discussed:

- Several examples of system not working:
 - Retaining wall built in stream bed, which ended up getting a retrospective resource consent
 - Substation built within 3 metres of a stream, resource consent required sandbags, discussion with site manager led to quick rectification
 - Two storey extension built without resource consent, told to put sediment controls in and haven't. Have said that they didn't require resource consent as they didn't know stream was there.

What can you do to make the system better? Matt happy to have emails passed on to him, sometimes the split between WCC and GWRC complicates things. Normally dealt with by GWRC if near to streams, we do investigate and take positive actions, we can take people to court. When we are aware of issues we do take appropriate action.

- Sally – is the FIXiT app relevant? Who gets pinged? Property owner, operator, both? *Depends on culpability. Always the consent holder, but also the person who did the action (eg put the dirt in stream or cut down protected tree) or the property owner.*

Consent can be rescinded if application provided with false information. Planners don't have a massive amount of discretion. Resource Consent means that the effects are reasonable, not that there are no effects.

- Eleanor – How should the public know that something is in breach of its consent? *Once consent has been granted, there are five years for someone to give effect to it and we have pre-commencement conditions for consent holders to let us know. WCC staff drive past and monitor sites. As soon as building consent is applied for, an alert will go through to the resource consent team as well. Most neighbours will know of consents – they often object directly to council as soon as spade hits the ground.*
- Lynn - Building inspectors need more training to recognise need for resource consent. *Good point about teams working closely together. We want a one stop shop approach. With recent restructure, Resource Consents, Building Consents, Compliance and Public Health are all now in one team, which has made a big difference. Moving towards more digital service and a one-stop-shop approach to make it easier on public.*
- Lynn – Recently an excellent report was published which tied in aspects of ecology and planning.
- George – Is the District Plan fit for purpose? Recent Stuff article reported a landowner in Newlands clearing hectares of native bush. *No – current District Plan is not fit for purpose, which is why SNA work has been done. We overwhelmingly had compliance from landowners and SNAs will become part of District Plan so in the future people would need resource consent to clear land.*
- Lynn – There were a few people at the Onslow Residents Association AGM which were not happy about the SNA project. *We've had a handful of people that have refused to engage, but the nice part of the process is that we've had many more people saying they would like to protect more areas.*

Actions:

- Lynn to send through examples of potential resource consent breaches directly to Matthew
- Lynn to circulate report.

5. LGOIMA Request Response

Chris Watson was not able to present on the Housing Crisis and Impact on Transport as a client has not yet given consent for images of their projects to be used. Instead, Chris spoke to the response he'd received to a LGOIMA request in regards to the airport.

Chris advised the following:

- That aviation accounts for 4.9% of global warming (Lee 2009) but flying is something that only 5% of the population do.

6:47pm

- An article in Sept 2016 on RNZ stated that the CE refused to disclose how much WCC had subsidised Singapore Airlines – however a different article stated that the subsidy was worth up to \$800,000/year for 10 years, about \$9m in total.
- Guardians of the Bays have said that WCC spent about \$200,000/year to attract longhaul flights, and about \$1m+ plus \$1.95m to pay for applicants’ resource consent.
- WCC doesn’t hold information on the economic impact of tourism. At Heathrow, the British tourists leave the country for every two international tourist that come in – tourism is a net loser in the UK as well as in Australia which loses \$14 billion per year (J Higham et al). Tourism in Queenstown or Rotorua is probably net positive, but Wellington tourism is presumed to have a net loss in economic terms.
- In 2018, Christopher Luxon that New Zealand should be the Switzerland, not the Cancun of tourist destinations – a premium destination that charges tourists more.

Members discussed:

- Isla – Divesting shares in the airport would make the situation worse, as privatising would put profits into private business. *Chris - Why not invest in landmines then? The Rockefeller Brother Fund have divested from fossil fuels and airports.*
- Sally – Can we develop economic principals to decouple economic growth from environmental concerns?

Actions:

- Chris to draft a list of actions that WCC could take, that could be included in a submission to the LPT proposal, and to circulate prior to August meeting.

6. General Business

Innovation Briefs and Social Media:

Sally has lots of energy to devote to this, not a lot of clarity about what happened with first issues. Also wondering whether ERG would like their own social media channel, as other Advisory Groups have them.

- Set aside time at next meeting to discuss how it will be sent out and by whom. Sally to think further about proposal and who it is targeted towards. Hedi and Sally to discuss prior to next meeting.

Let’s Get Wellington Moving – Golden Mile Consultation:

Michelle asking if ERG would like to make a formal submission on this, and if so is anyone available to assist?

- Lynn and Eleanor to discuss what’s needed with Michelle prior to submission close on 26 July.

Annual Report and Annual Plan:

- Lynn to circulate among the group.

7:03pm

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| 7. | <p>Confirmation of Minutes: That the minutes of the 8 June 2020 meeting were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Moved Eleanor West, seconded Steven Almond</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> | 7:13pm |
| 8. | <p>Next meeting Agenda items due 31 July 2020 Chair: Eleanor West</p> | |

Actions: The following tables the actions, responsibilities and deadlines from previous meetings

| Action Points | | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---------------|--|----------------|----------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |

| Portfolio Groups | ERG Lead | | Council Officer |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transport | Michelle Rush | | Joe Hewitt, Team Lead Transport Strategy and Siobhan Procter, Manager Transport and Infrastructure |
| Climate Change | Chris Watson | Isla Day, Steven Almond | Tom Pettit, Sustainability Manager |
| Waste | Steven Almond | Clare Stringer | Emily Taylor-Hall, Waste Operations Manager |
| Water | Chris Paulin | | Derek Baxter, City Engineer |
| Resilience | Lynn Cadenhead | | Mike Mendonca, Chief Resilience Officer |
| Urban Development Agency/Urban Growth | Eleanor West | Sally Faisandier | Vida Christeller, Manager City Design & Place Planning |
| Mana whenua iwi & Treaty Relations | | | Nicky Karu, Manager Tira Poutama-Iwi Partnership |
| Biodiversity/Open Space | Mike Britton | Clare Stringer | Michele Frank, Urban Ecology Manager |
| Heritage | Lynn Cadenhead | Clare Stringer | Mark Lindsay, Heritage Manager |