

Environmental Reference Group

Minutes

Date: Monday, 12 July 2021

Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Venue: Ngake (16.09), Level 16 Tahiwī, 113 The Terrace, Wellington

Purpose

- Advise Council on the best ways to improve Wellingtonian’s quality of life environmentally, socially, culturally and economically by protecting and enhancing the local environment.
- Bring knowledge and insight into Council around the environment, including water, energy, waste, biodiversity, urban design, climate change, heritage and transport management, in the context of Council’s roles and priorities.

Attendance

Chairperson:	Michelle Rush
Members:	Steven Almond, Mike Britton, Lynn Cadenhead (Co-chair), Arron Cox, Isla Day, Sally Faisandier, George Hobson, Michelle Rush, Clare Stringer, Chris Watson (via audiovisual link), David Batchelor
WCC Staff:	Moana Mackey (Chief Advisor to the CIO and CPO), Hedi Mueller (Democracy Advisor), Claire Barlow (Democracy Advisor) Kate Pascall (Principal Advisor Planning), Anna Stevens (Senior Advisor Planning)

Meeting Procedures

The meeting opened at 5:05pm.

1. Apologies were received from the following members:
 - David Batchelor – for lateness
 - Councillor Paul, Councillor Foon, Eleanor West – for absence.

Moved Michelle Rush, seconded George Hobson - carried.

No issues were raised with the minutes of the previous meeting.

Lynn Cadenhead, seconded George Hobson - carried.

2. Conflicts of interest: Arron working in policy to replace the RMA – views are his own.

Items

3. District Plan Review Process, *Presented by Kate Pascall and Anna Stevens.*

Kate gave an update on the final Spatial Plan and the key changes between the draft and the final Spatial Plan, including the walking catchments, city centre heights and character areas.

Anna discussed the difference between the Spatial Plan and the District Plan, and the key topics and issues within it, the time frame for consultation and notification.

Members discussed:

- Aspects of mitigation of climate change
- What is legal under the RMA
- Crucial to have a key design of the document to make it clear and not ambiguous – to ensure that the ambitious Spatial Plan be enabled, not dialled back through the framework.
- Making it accessible for people that aren't planners
- Concern about biodiversity and heritage
- Whether there is a way for ERG to assist with SNAs prior to October/November in a public excluded session.
- Whether there are other ways to frame the heritage/debate discussion – identifying heritage values by meeting criteria from NPS.
- Appreciate of holistic view of heritage and would encourage wording to lean towards values rather than the built environment.
- What integrations are happening between District Plan and Whaitua Report, National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, and Three Waters Reform.

- Whilst the Resource Management Act says 10-15 years for a new District Plan, realistically it is much longer before it will become operative.
- Is the DP working off the draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity? Until NPS is gazetted, Council will be working from the draft.
- Provisions for small sites and inaccessible sites in a six-storey minimum overlay (six storeys being in the CBD).
- What is Council doing in advance to work with landowners about Significant Natural Areas? Started the process two years ago. Letters to 1700 landowners and provided opportunity to have staff and ecologists review those.
- Which rules will be given immediate legal effect after notification (to prevent “gold rush” mentality)? This will be determined by the RMA and will have to be applied from notification in mid-2022
- To what extent can the DP force change in housing shortage areas? Pretty difficult. Council has other tools they may be able to use. So have Central Government (eg. Kainga Ora)
- Is there a way that objectives and policies can include liveability rules for heritage buildings? Difficult to do with already-built environments but scope to do with new consents.
- Consultation process: Keen to raise the profile of other issues – not just built form getting ‘airtime’. WCC Communications will be around the more holistic aspects of the DP but media will dictate what gets picked up.

4. ERG Work Programme, *Presented by Hedi Mueller.*

- What do you want to do with content, format etc?
- What have you enjoyed/not enjoyed? Burning topics? Any specific presentations you want?
- LTP Workshops were enjoyed.
- Not enjoying presentations by Council officers and/or not having clarity about what feedback they are seeking and how that is being used.
- Does a presentation have to be done at a monthly meeting? Could they have more workshops around policy and provide views to officers?
- Better to get consistency across addressing all portfolios so that, in the course of a year, every portfolio is covered. Looking ahead to see what is coming so able to ask which topics should be presented to group.
- Meeting time might be better used to work on submissions.
- ERG needs to operate within the parameters of how Council does things. Due to political nature it is better to present an agreed view and leave the things that we are divided about off the table.

- Topic - District Plan will require quite a bit of work.
- Topic - RMA replacement submissions to do.
- Would like meetings to focus less on discussions and more on working, drafting submissions, workshops, and engaging on topics.
- Perhaps the group could come up with an agreed set of principles, rather than trying to present too many views or not addressing issues that are contentious. Some good models are out there for reaching consensus.
- Appreciate involvement with other groups.
- Don't often debate things at high level (eg. Climate Change).
- More opportunity to engage with councillors.
- Front-foot some agreed topics for submissions.
- Officers to feed back to group in a timely fashion
- Worst meetings are the ones with little preparation.

5. Members shared the following updates with the group:

- **Climate change:**
 - a. Climate change: German Federal Constitutional Court's decision to make emissions target compliant with 55% reduction by 2030.
 - b. Australia: Children have taken the Australian Government to court over their responsibility for the protection of lives and welfare, including against carbon emission. Australian Government is to appeal.
 - c. NZ: Lawyers for Climate Action have taken Climate Change Commission to judicial review over its advice to Minister.
- **Waste:** Single use plastics banned, encouraging reuse. Wary of quick fixes that create new problems. Steven to draft a letter to the Minister.
- **Water:** Everything moves extremely slowly. Lots of issues with wastewater in streams and erosion with infill housing. Hutt City Council have some good (policy/rules) around what is required for stormwater in new builds. Tables provided.
- **Resilience:** Nothing to report. Need to follow up with Mike for a meeting. Sally wants to be part of that meeting
- **Heritage:** David, Sally and Lynn setting up a meeting with Mark Lindsey.
- **Urban design:** Eleanor would be pleased with the Spatial Plan in relation to housing in character areas. Usually meet with Alison and Vida once a month but haven't had a meeting prior to this ERG meeting. Will provide more info next meeting.
- **Biodiversity:** Monthly meetings with Daniela. The exposure draft of the Natural and Built Environments Act is out and George will be working on submission.

- **Mana whenua:** Would they like someone from ERG to meet with them to pick up their ideas? Hedi to ask Karepa if they would like an introduction or to have input into ERG.
- **Transport:** LGWM Cobham Dr open to consultation. Are group interested in having a say on speed limits and crossing? Perhaps have a set of agreed principles so that we can submit on the many consultations that are coming through LGWM.
- Cycleways projects workshop re: lessons learned – Innovating Streets Fund, two Island Bay Cycleway reviews, increase in funding in LTP for next ten years so this feedback very valuable.
- Ensure that all submissions are on Dropbox. Hedi to send access to David.
- Clare and Mike to look at Trading and Events in Public Places Policy consultation.

The meeting concluded at 6:53pm.

ACTIONS:

- **Hedi to touch base with Anna/Kate about the SNA session.**
- **ERG to come back at next meeting with topics to debate**
- **Steven to draft a letter to the Minister about single-use plastic replacements.**
- **David, Sally and Lynn to set up a meeting with Mark Lindsey.**
- **Hedi to ask Tira Poutama for input or introduction to group.**
- **Hedi to send Dropbox access to David.**
- **Clare and Mike to look at Trading and Events in Public Places Policy consultation.**

Information

Next meeting date: 9/08/2021

Actions from previous meetings:

1. Nil

Portfolio / Working Groups:

Portfolio Groups	ERG lead	ERG Support	Council Officer
Transport	Michelle Rush		Joe Hewitt, Team Lead Transport Strategy
Climate Change	Chris Watson	Isla Day, Steven Almond	Alison Howard, Climate Change Response Manager
Waste	Steven Almond	Clare Stringer	Emily Taylor-Hall, Waste Operations Manager

Water	Arron Cox		Zac Jordan, Principal Advisor Resilience Infrastructure
Resilience	Lynn Cadenhead		Mike Mendonca, Chief Resilience Officer
Urban Design Agency/ Urban Growth	Eleanor West	Sally Faisandier	Vida Christeller, Manager City Design & Place Planning; Phil Becker, Manager Build Wellington
Mana whenua and treaty relations			Nicky Karu, Manager Tira Poutama-Iwi Partnership
Biodiversity/Open Space	George Hobson	Clare Stringer	Daniela Biaggio, Urban Ecology Manager
Heritage	Lynn Cadenhead	Clare Stringer	Mark Lindsay, Heritage Manager