



Report 06.178
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Committee Environment Committee
Author Nigel Corry, Divisional Manager, Environment

Divisional Manager's report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Environment Division and about any matters that have arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' reports

The Department Managers' reports, along with the Divisional Accountant's report, follow as **Attachment 1**.

3. Long Term Council Community Plan Submissions

We received about 90 submissions on environmental issues relating to our work as part of the Long Term Council Community Plan submission process.

A large number of these submissions related to water quality issues, giving both positive and negative feedback on the way in which we manage water quality in our rivers, lakes and coast. Climate change was also raised frequently, as was the issue of air quality management, where the general perception was that we were not doing enough in this area.

Our environmental education programme attracted favourable comment, and we were able to reference this programme when drafting replies to those who submitted on waste management, especially in relation to recycling and waste reduction. We also had quite a few people commenting the Council's role in managing genetically modified organisms.

Draft replies in relation to submission on environmental matters were considered by Councillors at the Planning and Monitoring Subcommittee meeting on 16-18 May.

4. Divisional Structure

I am currently looking at the structure of the Environment Division, and have recently sent a memo to all staff outlining a draft proposal for the way in which the Division could function into the future for their comment. While still in the consultation phase, the formation of the Environment Management Division has allowed for the opportunity to coordinate our activities on a functional, rather than geographic, basis.

As we develop a structure that integrates the work of the Division more closely, the way in which we report to the Environment Committee will also evolve. I anticipate that Managers will report on their work regionally, integrating the work in both the Wairarapa and Wellington offices for Councillors information. I hope to be able to report more fully to the next meeting of the Environment Committee on the outcomes of consultation with staff over the Divisional structure.

5. Regional Policy Statement Discussion Document

Our region – their future, a discussion document on the review of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS), was sent to a mailing list of over 200 people and organisations on 22 May. Feedback on the document closes on 30 June 2006, and the response that we get to questions posed as part of *Our region – their future*, will hopefully form a valuable component of the broader RPS review process.

6. Agricultural Chemical Collection

The Ministry for Environment (MfE) recently announced a three year extension to their programme which funds the disposal of unwanted agricultural chemicals. This programme essentially funds the disposal of agrichemicals, if regional council cover the cost of collection.

Between 2000 and 2002, as part of this programme, we collected 22 tonnes of unwanted chemicals from rural properties in the region, with MfE covering disposal costs. Since this time, we have maintained a register of people with agricultural chemicals that they wish to dispose of. We intend, in the first instance, to go back to those on our register and see if there is sufficient demand for Greater Wellington to facilitate the collection of further chemicals. If this demand exists, we will then apply to MfE for the funding of their disposal. Costs associated with the collection work will be funded through current savings in the Environment Division budget.

7. John Sherriff

Councillors may be aware that this is John Sherriff's last meeting with the Environment Committee.

John is leaving the Council to take up a position with the Environmental Protection Agency in Queensland. John has been with Greater Wellington for more than 11 years, with over 8 of these years as Manager of the Resource Investigations Department. His experience, skills and knowledge will be sorely missed. We are sad to see John go, but wish him and his family well as they tackle their new adventures across the ditch.

8. Environment Division Quarterly Review to March 2006

The latest quarterly review, to 31 March 2006, is provided for your information as **Attachment 2**.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. receive the report; and*
- 2. note the contents.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Department Managers' Reports

Attachment 2: Environment Division Quarterly Review to 31 March 2006