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Committee Council
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Committee
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Report on the Regional Sustainability Committee Meeting held on 11 June 2008

1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Regional Sustainability Committee that took place on 11 June 2008.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Report

Mike Reid from Local Government New Zealand gave a presentation on “sustainable development and the LTCCP”. He explained the requirement in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) for councils to consider sustainable development, pointing out that the LGA provides for the “good governance of the community” with an emphasis on the future and aspects of well-being, as opposed to efficiency and effectiveness. It is a balance between representative and participative democracy.

He also referred to the principles of the LGA, many of which require councillors to make judgement calls and trade-offs. Critical is the requirement to take a sustainable development approach (s14(h)) which means that a local authority should take the following three things into account:

1. the social, economic, and cultural well-being of people and communities (when making decisions)

2. the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment (gives greater weight to environmental well-being)
3. the reasonable foreseeable needs of future generations (consider future impacts of decisions).

Mike emphasised that the Audit Office had made it clear that, in regard to the 2009 LTCCPs, it was going to look closely at the way that sustainable development is infusing the thinking of local authorities and about how community outcomes is guiding thinking. He pointed out that, in general, community outcomes had been set at too high a level and were not as useful as they should be as a guide to decision-making. Mike considered that there should be more national leadership on community outcome setting.

Then Mike Gould, Chair, Futures Thinking Aotearoa, gave a presentation entitled “Looking Ahead – The Wellington Region”. Mike explained that he had tailored his presentations to Greater Wellington’s responsibilities. He identified the following key issues for the region:

- Mega-Change Drivers (explaining that the convergence impacts of these drivers was really important)
- Looking Ahead (the need to check long-term plans against the mega-change drivers)
- Wild-Card Disaster (the need for resilient communications during an event and for plans as to how would rebuild after an earthquake)
- Water (the need for a good governance system)
- Social Cohesion (the need to encourage social bridges and to use the baby boomers in retirement)
- Global Warming (going to impact on pests, diseases and soil erosion)
- Energy- Oil/diesel prices (increased GW expenditure, the need for broadband infrastructure, key regional amenities to be sited near rail centres, infrastructure planning for electric cars (converted and new regional energy sources)

The Committee discussed the need to go to the public on the renewable energy issue.

Mike Gould’s presentation was provided to all Councillors through the Councillors’ Information Bulletin.

Wayne O’Donnell presented his report on Key Native Ecosystems, providing a background on this site led programme. He pointed out that the programme was so popular with the territorial local authorities that it was difficult to keep up with them, especially considering the 50/50 funding split. Wayne emphasised the need for monitoring to gauge whether the programme was making a difference.

The Committee discussed the importance of biodiversity for the region and said that, as part of the LTCCP, it was appropriate that the “what, why and who” were re-visited, especially in view of the roll-back of the Animal Health Board work.

Staff from the Wellington Regional Strategy provided an update report. There was a strong view about a need for a Council view on broadband issues, especially about provision and funding, but also on the way in which it will contribute to the resilience of the region. The Committee asked for an overview on broadband issues to be provided to the next meeting.

Councillor Bruce tabled a one page document on the need for a Community Resilience Plan. The Committee showed interest in the concept but asked for time to think about what such a plan would mean and how it would be structured. It was described as possibly “future-proofing” the region. Cr Bruce’s document was placed in the Councillors’ Information Bulletin.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

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