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Committee Council
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Committee
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Report on the Regional Sustainability Committee Meeting held on 15 October 2008

1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Regional Sustainability Committee that took place on 15 October 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

Public participation

In public participation, Hilary Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainability Trust, outlined the Trust's work. It is a non-profit charitable trust, based in the Wellington region, that supports local communities in addressing sustainability related issues. It focuses on sustainability at the household level by improving assets in households (with the use of subsidies) and providing advice on behaviour change. Its project portfolio focuses on energy efficiency, waste minimisation, transport, climate change and community. The Trust involves 5,000 households a year in the region and has a target of a 70% uptake rate. This would result in a 10% reduction in resource use relating to that area of sustainability. Hilary spoke in support of Greater Wellington's sustainable energy, climate change and water strategy work – as these were on the meeting agenda – and also of the sustainable transport work. She emphasised the need to identify and focus on benefits for households as the best way to achieve the desired result. The Trust considers that best way to achieve a reduction in resource use is by engaging at the household level. Hilary emphasised the Trust's desire to collaborate with local authorities,

saying that such collaboration would provide positive opportunities in what is a challenging environment.

Next in public participation was Dawud Meeran from Newtown. He talked about the lack of a sense of community and supportive community networks, making people more reliant on social services. He advocated the use of community gardens with a two step approach. First should be neighbourhood/street gardens whereby joint gardens are created on someone's property; second, as people get to know each other and develop their skills, would be local community gardens. Dawud's reason for approaching Greater Wellington was to inform the Committee about the programme and see what it could do to support the project, e.g. supply compost, top soil etc. Cr Wilde reported that this issue had come up at a recent meeting with Hutt Valley District Health Board and pointed out that Greater Wellington does not own or manage very much urban land. She advised Dawud to talk to the territorial authorities, saying that she would provide him with some contact names and addresses.

Communities for Climate Change Programme (CCP)

Alison Lash, CCP project manager, provided an update on progress with the CCP programme. She made the following points:

Corporate Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Plan

- GW has already implemented a number of sustainability measures over the last couple of decades which have resulted in savings in greenhouse gas emissions. A list of these can be found in the Appendix to the Draft Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Local Action Plan (tabled). GW should be proud of these initiatives.
- The Plan is very much a working draft although close to being final. EMT have requested some more detail on implementation and some reformatting for ease of understanding.
- The challenge of this Plan will be a leadership one. In general, the approach will be to get teams to develop their own strategies for achieving the goals: one size will not fit all. This should create better ownership of the Plan.
- 75% of GW's footprint comes from water production and supply. Other sources must also be addressed.
- **Energy.** Building energy use issues can be addressed by the design of the new office in Masterton and by retrofitting in Wellington both of which suggestions have cost implications. Modelling sustainable energy use offers a good leadership opportunity in hard times as well as good: the economic downturn is clearly a real challenge in this regard.
- **Waste.** Note that sustainable procurement has been included under this heading on the basis that waste can be best managed at point of entry into the organisation rather than at point of exit.

- **Water.** Issues are complex because of the intersection between the corporate footprint and the community influence on emissions: community demand is what causes the emissions from electricity used for pumping which are counted as a corporate charge. GW's emissions from this source represent 8.5% of all of the region's electricity-related emissions. A further layer of complexity is added by the connection with the Regional Water Strategy under development. It is important to keep the distinction between the Water Strategy focus on litres available and consumed and the climate change mitigation focus on emissions clear although demand reduction may offer a way to achieve both sets of aims.
- Note that the 15% reduction in water-related emissions goal for 2012 is not dependent on demand reduction as it is intended to achieve it through using in-pipe mini-hydro plants at Te Marua and Wainuiomata to deliver these savings. Wider deployment of clean energy sources may also achieve the longer-term goals independent of demand reduction.

Community Action Plan

- The Emissions Reduction and Adaptation Working Group (ERAWG) has selected an inventory tool to recommend to the wider Regional Sustainability and Climate Change Group. It was noted that the total CO2 e emissions for the region have risen from the original 2001 inventory of 2.1M tonnes to 3.8M tonnes in the new 2006/07 inventory. The new inventory tool was developed by Landcare Research.
- Charts showing the differences in the composition of the various TAs' footprints were shown. Wellington, Hutt and Upper Hutt Cities all have very similar footprints with over 85% of their emissions relating to energy consumption, both liquid fuels and electricity. Porirua City's waste emissions require investigation. The three Wairarapa councils' footprints are composed of more than 85% of agriculture-related emissions. This last feature of the regional footprint has very significant implications for the Wairarapa economy given NIWA's current predictions for climate change in that area. The Wairarapa area is likely to become hotter and drier which will have major impacts on agriculture and forestry with flow-on social effects and major adaptation challenges.
- The indicative timeline for development of the regional reduction goals and Plan is acknowledged as tight.

Cr Buchanan expressed his discomfort with the approach saying that the new Emissions Trading Scheme was going to have more impact than anything we can achieve at the regional level, saying that Greater Wellington was focussing its energy and community resources in the area of emissions reduction without any examination of the outcome for the communities who are contributing. A discussion ensued about the need for Greater Wellington to show leadership. It was noted that as a signatory to the communities for climate change initiative, Greater Wellington had an opportunity and an obligation to show regional leadership in this context.

Regional Water Strategy

Jane Gunn, consultant, presented on progress with the Regional Water Strategy. Speaking to her paper, Jane showed a draft vision for the region with regard to sustainable water use and draft goals for water savings. Jane explained the approach she was taking to develop the strategy and reported on meetings with territorial authorities. She noted the support for demand management initiatives among district and city councils and outlined the proposed timetable for development of the strategy.

Cr Buchanan questioned the place of the strategy in regard to the Wellington Metropolitan Water Supply Strategy and highlighted the need for debate on effective demand management mechanisms.

Waste Minimisation Act 2008

Owen Cox, Ministry for the Environment, gave a power point presentation on the Act, a copy of which is attached as *Attachment 1*.

Regional Sustainable Energy Strategy

The planned discussion on the draft Strategy did not take place because of time constraints and councillors requested that it be the subject of a workshop discussion in the near future.

4. Unconfirmed minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the committee meeting are attached as *Attachment 2*.

5. Recommendations

That the Council:

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

Report prepared by:

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Committee

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Attachments: 1. Presentation by Ministry for the Environment
2. Unconfirmed minutes