



Report 09.480
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Committee Council
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Report of the Regional Sustainability Committee meeting held on 4 August 2009

1. Purpose

To inform Council about the meeting of the Regional Sustainability Committee that took place at The Regional Council Centre on 4 August 2009.

2. Proposal to merge Greater Wellington and Department of Conservation awards

Matt Velde reported that the environmental awards that GW and DOC present tend to overlap with the same groups receiving similar commendations for the work that they undertake. By merging the two award schemes there is an opportunity to raise the profile of both brands, encourage more groups to take part and a potential for greater external sponsorship. There is also an opportunity to realise a small financial saving from working together.

3. Investigations into the potential use of wood waste

Barry Leonard presented some findings from a wood waste - off-cuts, branches and reject logs - trial that has been completed. A third party undertook the trial with Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) providing some funding. Such wood waste was taken away from the forestry harvesting site and dried using different systems. Good information about wood drying rates and fuel calorific value has been obtained and this helps make the product more attractive for sale. However, at present there is not a ready market for the finished product and further work is needed.

4. Energy Work Programme Update Status

Bruce Geden gave an outline of work completed to date. The Council has received a grant from EECA to publish a guide to the use and generation of energy and the document will focus on renewable energy sources and reducing demand for energy. Also, he reported that there was a keen interest for plug in

light electric vehicles and the potential for harnessing marine (tidal current) energy was being assessed.

In addition, work has been undertaken with the region mapped with wind farm sites identified. The maps are based on wind flows and criteria used to eliminate areas which would not be suitable for wind farming – e.g. urban areas, faultlines, areas prone to landslips, etc. This information will be published soon.

5. Proposed Insulation and Clean Heating Retrofit Scheme

Barry Turfey presented a proposal for the Council to participate in the EEACs home insulation scheme. The Council would provide a grant to cover a householder's costs up to \$2,600 for each property which would be recovered through a targeted rate levied on a property.

In discussion, Councillors inquired about publically owned properties being included in the scheme and the processes to be used to recover such grants. Mr Turfey advised that entities that are not obliged to pay rates to the Council could not take part in the scheme and that the proposed rate (a priority claim) remained with a specific property if it was sold to another party. Further, he advised that the scheme would be self-funding with an interest charge applied to such grants and these and the interest charge would be repaid through a targeted rate over a ten year period.

6. Divisional Manager's report

In general discussion, Councillor Buchanan advised that a report, *The Governance of Water* has been published by the Turnbull group, a group convened by Water New Zealand (previously known as the New Zealand Water and Wastes Association). The Council is a member of this association and participates in its affairs. Councillors will be provided an advisory paper which will detail the issues that the report raises at their next meeting.

7. Communities for Climate Protection

Councillors agreed to withdraw from the Communities for Climate Protection – NZ programme.

8. Public participation

Ian Shearer spoke in support of the Council becoming a more active participant of *The Communities for Climate Protection* programme especially because *The Ministry for the Environment* does not provide funding any longer. However, some smaller councils have continued to invest and be active in the programme.

Mary McIntyre, presented some findings of *Friends of Belmont Regional Park - Health & Wellbeing Benefits of Parks* - a Masters research project undertaken

at Belmont Regional Park by Flavia Prospero to examine usage and perceptions of park visitors.

Representatives of *Proven Energy*, a business which produces small wind turbines and solar systems for domestic use, presented a summary of their work and highlighted some issues that they encounter in New Zealand. They sought some support to resolve these as their work has a strong environmental and sustainable focus.

9. Recommendations

That the Council:

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

Report prepared by:



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