

Report No.	20-97
Information Only - No Decision Required	

NATURAL RESOURCES & PARTNERSHIPS PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this item is update members of Council's Environment Committee on the progress made in the Natural Resources & Partnership Group's activity over the period 1 April to 30 June 2020. The item provides updates on progress against the Annual Plan targets and aspects of the Natural Resources & Partnerships Group Operational Plan 2019-20. The item also provides some updates on work that will be completed or underway as a part of the new financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-97 and Annexes.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no financial impact associated with recommendations in this paper.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this sufficient to inform the public.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. It is considered that there is no significant risk impact of this item

6. SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

- 6.1. The Natural Resources & Partnerships Group activity includes the non-regulatory and science programmes across the land and water management, biosecurity, biodiversity and environmental reporting activities of the Long-term Plan. The group also delivers regulatory functions for biosecurity and supports Horizons' regulatory programmes.
- 6.2. This Environment Committee report is in a revised format and merges the reporting of the activities of the Science & Innovation Team and the Freshwater & Partnerships Team into a single report for the water quantity and quality activity of the Annual Plan. The report also merges the activity of the Biodiversity Implementation Team and the Biodiversity science work within a single annex for the Biodiversity Activity of the Annual Plan.
- 6.3. Over the reporting period the Natural Resources and Partnerships group prepared and presented a range of Council Papers including Environment Committee and Catchment Operations Committee reporting in June. Further papers were presented in July on the Jobs for Nature programme and Tōtara Reserve poplar removal as a part of an extraordinary council meeting.
- 6.4. A range of activity over the reporting period was impacted by COVID-19 response and recovery. During that period staff time was diverted to other activities including lodging applications to central government for COVID-19 recovery projects.

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- 6.5. Progress on the Land Management Activity within the Group was reported to the Catchment Operations in June. An update on the year end results for Land Management activity will be presented to the Catchment Operations Committee in September and via the Annual Report.
- 6.6. Progress on the Water Quantity and Quality activity is updated on in Annex A. the Freshwater Implementation programme met all of the stream fencing targets with around one third more fencing completed overall than the 79 km target. The riparian planting programme planted 122,000 plants being nearly double the 63,333 plant target, however one target was not met missing out by a few hundred plants. The fish pass activity was the most impacted by COVID-19 for the Freshwater Team with three completed for a target of seven. Thirteen community projects were completed for a target of 14.
- 6.7. The Water Quantity and Quality activity also includes the science activity which is arranged in a format of regional updates followed by updates in a catchment by catchment basis. The report highlights work on the monitoring network review, land use mapping and a range of estuary monitoring that has been completed.
- 6.8. The Biosecurity Animals programme (Annex B) reports on the year end results for the possum, rooks and amenity pest programmes. COVID-19 lockdown did impact on the overall possum programme with 96% of the planned PCOs being completed and only 74% of the 57,441 hectares of new area receiving treatment (42,765 hectares). The rook programme was not majorly impacted by COVID-19 as it was largely complete at the time of the lockdown. The programme was interrupted in terms of being able to record the number of kill at a site that had been treated. The amenity pest programme had a record year with 1,130 enquiries completed and the highest number of enquiries received since the inception of the programme in 2002.
- 6.9. The Biosecurity Plants programme (Annex C) was impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown with timing coinciding with a very busy time of year for the programme. The Annual Report results for the Biosecurity Plants programme are shown in the annex. The team were able to achieve the targets set against the long term goals in all measures. Key activity during the reporting period has included following up on finds of weeds in new locations, in particular alligator weed in the Mangaone Stream near Palmerton North.
- 6.10. The Biodiversity Programme (Annex D) was impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown with interruptions to a range of work to bring on to the programme new bush remnants and wetlands. Targets for the community biodiversity activity were exceeded with 27 projects completed or supported for a target of 12. Annual reports on the Tōtara Reserve Regional Park and biodiversity and research activity were provided to Council in June.
- 6.11. The Environmental Reporting programme (Annex E) was reported on to Council in June. The annex provides an update on a range of activities including drinking water research, science communication and climate change research. The climate change section updates on results from the regional emissions inventory commissioned by Horizons and the inventory results recently released by Statistics New Zealand.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

- 7.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Logan Brown

FRESHWATER & PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER

Rod Smillie

BIODIVERSITY, BIOSECURITY & PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER

12 August 2020

Abby Matthews

SCIENCE & INNOVATION MANAGER

Jon Roygard

GROUP MANAGER NATURAL RESOURCES & PARTNERSHIPS

ANNEXES

- A Water Quality and Quantity Progress Report
- B Biosecurity Plants Progress Report
- C Biosecurity Animals Progress Report
- D Biodiversity Progress Report
- E Environmental Reporting Progress Report