

Report No.	20-103
Decision Required	

CLIMATE CHANGE: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report recommends appointment of a joint committee to oversee action on climate change across the Region's local authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-103 and Annex.
- b. appoints a joint Climate Action Committee as described in the attached Agreement and Terms of Reference.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. Administrative support for the additional committee would be provided by Horizons from within existing budgets.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. This proposal focuses on coordination and governance oversight across the Region's local authorities. If established, a joint Climate Action Committee would provide a mechanism for more consistent engagement with communities on climate change in the future.
- 4.2. In the meantime, community engagement on climate change is the subject of a separate report.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. No significant business risk or impact associated with this proposal has been identified.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. In June 2020 (Report 20-82) Council received an update on Horizons' climate change work programme. That report noted that Regional Chiefs had invited Horizons to form a joint committee on climate change. Council directed the Chief Executive to proceed toward establishment of such a committee.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. A joint Climate Action Committee would provide a mechanism for shared governance oversight of relevant activity across the region's eight councils. It would receive information, facilitate collaborative action, and make recommendations to member councils. Immediate areas of interest would likely include regional greenhouse gas emissions, the regional climate change risk assessment, and development of a joint climate action plan.

- 7.2. As a committee of the participating councils, meetings would be publicly notified (s46, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987). In recent years, activist groups have criticised local authorities – in New Zealand and overseas – for apparent inaction and a perceived lack of transparency in their responses to climate change. Establishing a Climate Action Committee and conducting its business in the public domain may go some way toward allaying those concerns.
- 7.3. It is proposed that the Committee meet at least four times a year, to coincide with Regional Chiefs. Each Council would be represented by its Mayor / Chair or their delegate. An Agreement and Terms of Reference, as required by the Local Government Act 2002 (cl30A(2), Schedule 7) has been developed and circulated to Mayors. A copy is attached at Annex A.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1. Mayors and Chief Executives of the Region's territorial authorities have been consulted in developing the attached Agreement and Terms of Reference, through Regional Chiefs.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1. Regional Chiefs next meet on 1 September. Formation of the proposed Committee is on the agenda.
- 9.2. The Climate Action Committee's first formal meeting would likely occur in December 2020. Its efficacy would be reviewed annually.

10. SIGNIFICANCE

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

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ANNEXES

- A Joint Climate Action Committee Agreement and TOR