



Report of the eleventh meeting, seventh triennium, of the Environment Committee of Horizons Regional Council held in the Tararua Room, Regional House, 11-15 Victoria Avenue, Palmerston North, commencing at 10.04 am on Wednesday 14 October 2009.

PRESENT

Crs J White (Deputy Chair), L Bailey, L Burnell, VJF Chettleburgh QSM ED, M Plowman, and GP Murfitt (ex officio).

IN ATTENDANCE

Crs EB Gordon, MC Guy, DB Meads, and P R Rieger QSO (to 2.38pm).

Chief Executive	Mr M McCartney
Group Manager Regional Planning & Regulatory	Mr G Carlyon
Group Manager Environmental Management	Mr C Mitchell
Committee Secretary	Ms K Booth

ALSO PRESENT

Ms A Russell (Manager Environmental Protection, to 12.30pm, from 1.45pm), Ms F Maseyk (Senior Environmental Scientist – Ecology, to 12.30pm), Dr J Roygard (Manager – Science, to 12.05pm), Mr A Beveridge, Manager-Biodiversity and Water Quality, to 12.30pm), Mr G Shirley (Group Manager Regional Services & Information, from 10.45am to 11.49am), Mr T Hynes (Animal Health Board from 1.12pm to 1.45pm), Mr A Innes (Animal Health Board from 1.12pm to 1.45pm), Mr P Hindrup (Senior Consents Planner, from 1.40pm to 3.25pm), Mr C White (Senior Information Technologist, from 10.55am to 11.49am), and Mr and Mrs Lane and Mr and Mrs Paton (members of the public).

APOLOGIES

ENV 09-72 **Moved** **White/Bailey**

*that an apology be received from Cr Main **due to continuation of a Hearing.***

CARRIED

The Chair of Council advised Members about workshop dates that had been cancelled through to 21 January 2010, and the reasons why. He also advised a new Annual Plan workshop had been scheduled for Monday 14 December 2009.

PUBLIC SPEAKING RIGHTS

Mr Kelvin Lane had requested, and was granted, Public Speaking Rights in regard to Item 7 on the Agenda (page 80) – 'Table 3: Report of non-compliance for August-September 2009', New Zealand Pharmaceuticals (NZP) – discharge to water. Members asked questions of clarification. The Chairperson asked the Group Manager Regional Planning and Regulatory (GMRPR) to respond to that part of the non-compliance report while Mr and Mrs Lane were present, following

which the GMRPR undertook to write to Mr Lane with an update on his talks with NZP. The Chairperson thanked Mr and Mrs Lane for attending.

LATE ITEMS

An updated version of the Environment Committee Progress Report' (Annex A to Report No. 09-159) was distributed to replace the version in the Agenda (pages 9 to 70).

MEMBERS' CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no Members' conflict of interest issues.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The arrival time in the minutes of Ms F Maseyk of 9.20am, was amended to 10.20am. In response to Cr Murfitt's question about when a tour of bush remnants and wetland sites would be organised, the GMRPR advised summer 2010; initial suggestion of February.

ENV 09-73

Moved

Bailey/Plowman

*that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 12 August 2009, as circulated and with the arrival time of Ms F Maseyk amended to **10.20am**, be received and confirmed as a correct record.*

CARRIED

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Report No: 09-159

The purpose of this item was to inform the Environment Committee of progress made towards outputs listed in the following activity areas of the 2006-16 Long-term Council Community Plan, for the period to 30 August 2009. The Group Manager Environmental Management (GMEM) explained about the tabled report and apologised that a draft report had appeared in the Agenda. He drew to Members' attention that the new format of the report was following the LTCCP format.

- Land Management Activity
- Water Quantity and Quality Management Activity
- Habitat Protection
- Strategic Management Activity
- Biosecurity

Whanganui Catchment Strategy

Paragraph 1.2, third row, the number "15" was amended to "25".

Research and Monitoring – Land

Cr White ~~The Deputy Chair~~ said she would be interested in an agenda item, as suggested in the report, on the pond size calculator, and the SMART Farms project to the next Environment Committee meeting. The GMRPR updated Members on discussions with Massey University and the commercial agency in regard to the SMART Farms project.

Waterway Enhancement and Protection

Mr Beveridge (Manager Biodiversity and Water Quality) clarified the words “rolled out” referred to ‘implementation’. Members commented on the ongoing discussions with the Lake Horowhenua Trust Board in regard to Purple loosestrife control work.

Water Quality Monitoring and Research

Dr Roygard (Manager – Science) explained about the DRP concentrations referred to in Box 2, with further clarification from the GMRPR in regard to ongoing non-compliances with discharges into the Rangitikei River. He advised these non-compliances had appeared in earlier reports from the Environmental Protection Team. Dr Roygard clarified the information in Box 2 was from NIWA scientists.

Groundwater Monitoring and the Research

In response to questions about 7.3.3 – Groundwater quality trend analysis, Dr Roygard offered to bring forward an Agenda report to a future Environment Committee meeting.

Living Heritage Activity

The GMEM distributed large folders containing maps in support of the Living Heritage activity. He advised they would be updated prior to each Environment Committee meeting, and be available in the Councillors’ Room for perusal prior to the meeting. Ms Maseyk explained the bush remnant map did not show all the bush remnant sites at this stage, and would be updated as data was received; it was a starting point she noted. The GMEM and GMRPR responded to Members’ questions relating to the information shown on the maps, and about funding of the programme which limited the number of sites that could be evaluated each year. It was agreed to include the funding discussions with the next round of Annual Plan workshops.

Community Biodiversity

Cr Murfitt advised that the current representative on the Bushy Park Trust, Cr Main, did not see a requirement for an Horizons representative on the Trust. While Cr Walker had indicated an interest, he had recently taken on a new commitment. Cr Murfitt suggested a letter was written to Bushy Park withdrawing Council’s requirement to have a representative on that Trust, and he asked Committee members for their thoughts.

ENV 09-74

Moved

Murfitt/Guy White

that the Committee recommends that the Chair of Council writes to the Bushy Park Trust Board indicating that there will no longer be Horizons Regional Council representation.

CARRIED Against: Cr Chettleburgh

Mr Beveridge advised Horizons contributed towards the pest control programme at Bushy Park and explained there was a predator control line outside the pest proof fence at Bushy Park to provide support to the fence. He clarified that the information in the report on Kia Wharite related to the Department of Conservation (DoC) possum control programme.

On request, Mr Beveridge updated Members on a recent meeting held with the Manawatu Estuary Managers. Work was continuing pending a plant survey of the Estuary after which a weed management plan could be developed. Mr Beveridge believed the work currently being undertaken was on track and would be completed prior to the review of the Ramsar designation. He was requested to provide a written update report on work undertaken at the Manawatu Estuary, to the next Environment Committee meeting.

Environmental Monitoring and Reporting

Dr Roygard advised that the monitoring was ongoing, that no readings had breached the threshold, and no exceedences had been notified.

Environmental Education

Mr Beveridge responded to questions about the Enviroschools programme. He advised that this year the Green RIG would visit schools in the main centres which would result in increased visitor numbers. Ongoing feedback on the Green RIG from teachers and students, was being collated and was available for Members to read. He clarified the acronym in paragraph 6.3.6 “LEOTC” stood for “Learning Environment Outside The Classroom” and advised he would keep Members informed about positive progress with funding applications.

Animal Biosecurity – Rooks

The GMEM answered Members’ questions in regard to rook populations in the Region, explained the impact from rookeries in the Hawkes Bay and Greater Wellington regions, and commented on the success with rook control in the Environment Canterbury region.

Animal Biosecurity – Possums

The GMEM answered Members’ questions in regard to possum control operations.

Plant Biosecurity – Non-Rateable and Crown Agency

The GMEM explained it was early in the season and the agencies had not yet begun their control programmes, and progress would be noted in future reports. It was suggested that consideration could be given to the training of field staff in plant identification.

Plant Biosecurity – Production Species

The GMEM elaborated on the process followed once enquiries were received, and how problem boundary areas were resolved through negotiation with landowners and neighbours where possible, including reverse boundary control. The request was made for the GMEM to supply outcomes in Table 10 as well as the species and number of enquiries, in future reports. Positive comments were made on the increased level of detail that was being provided to Members in the reports.

Plant Biosecurity – Biological Control

The GMEM reiterated his explanation that it was too early in the season for progress to be reported. He clarified the process whereby Horizons Regional Council purchased bio-agents.

Plant Biosecurity – Zero Density/Containment Species

There was discussion on the issue of Purple loosestrife at Lake Horowhenua with the GMEM and Chair of Council providing updates.

Ms Maseyk responded to a question about Field horsetail and clarified that it was an extremely old pest plant and resilient to any form of control. In response to a question on how to elevate Field horsetail to a National level, it was agreed a report would be brought to the next Environment Committee for Members to consider how to proceed with this matter.

ENV 09-75

Moved

Bailey/Burnell

*that the Committee **requests** the minutes from the meeting of 14 October 2009 acknowledge that the new Environment Committee Progress report document, tabled on the day, replaces the document set out on pages 9 to 70 in the Environment Committee Agenda of 14 October 2009.*

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 12.30pm.

The meeting resumed at 1.12pm.

Cr White ~~The Deputy Chair~~ asked Members to formally receive the Environment Progress Report.

ENV 09-76

Moved

Bailey/Chettleburgh

*that the Committee recommends that Council **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-159 and Annex.*

CARRIED

VECTOR MANAGEMENT, ANIMAL HEALTH BOARD, AND TB FREE COMMITTEE REPORT

Report No. 09-156

This report informed the Environment Committee of the Vector Management, Animal Health Board, and Tb Free Committee activity for the Region, for the period August-September 2009.

Mr Hynes provided updates on infected herds nationally. In this Region there were four infected beef herds, two situated ~~in up~~ the **Upper** Whanganui River **catchment**, one at Raetihi and one at Marton. There was one Tb positive feral pig found through a Proof of Freedom Survey and the DNA results indicated it was an introduced pig to the area. Mr Hynes elaborated on the release of pigs into areas.

Mr Hynes provided several copies of the National Pest Management Strategy Review for Members and advised submissions were due with the Minister at the end of November. He mentioned some of the proposals which included movement restriction of animals from infected herds, and putting in place special movement control areas.

Mr Hynes updated Members on earlier issues around the use of Brodifacoum, and clarified questions in his report in regard to herd movements and proposed restrictions, and the checking of statutory declarations of truck operators carrying cattle.

Mr Innes provided updates on vector management issues. He drew Members' attention to the move to a new permanent office. He invited Members to the 'opening' of the new office on 19 November and said they would receive a written invitation in due course.

Cr White ~~The Deputy Chair~~ thanked Messrs Innes and Hynes for their attendance.

ENV 09-77

Moved

White/Chettleburgh

that the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-156 and Annex.

CARRIED

REGULATORY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORTS

Report No. 09-155

This report presented two items for the information of Members:

- a. Environmental Protection Team Report – 1 August to 30 September 2009
- b. Resource Consent Activities– August and September 2009

Resource Consent Activities

Mr Hindrup (Senior Consents Planner) advised the Te Rere Hau Windfarm hearing was presently taking place, and he drew Members' attention to the information in the report on the work arising from the RMA Amendments, and the appeals. Mr Hindrup clarified Members'

questions in relation to Affco Wanganui and the length of time from application to decision granted, the DB Breweries Tui plant, the Pahiatua Sewage Treatment plant, the e coli standard for sewage treatment plants, and the Feilding Sewage Treatment plant.

Members sought clarification on the notified consents that require resolution including the sewage treatment plants, and Winstone Pulp. The GMRPR and Mr Hindrup provided information, and in response to a question advised the Consents team was working with the Defence Force about its discharge. They answered further questions of clarification.

Environment Protection Team Report

Ms Russell (Manager, Environmental Protection) gave a visual presentation, including details of the Shannon Sewage Treatment Plant consent originally granted in 1970 to the present – and advised Horizons was awaiting an Environment Court decision. She noted that Horizons and Horowhenua District Council continued to work together to resolve issues, and clarified Members' questions. In response to a question about the resignation of two Compliance staff and subsequent recruitment process, the Chief Executive responded that the Council was not vulnerable with the current staff numbers.

There was discussion around the issue of idling Transit buses causing air pollution from the diesel. The Deputy Chair advised that following a meeting about this issue, the Transit Manager said he would appreciate being informed when it was happening. The old buses were being gradually replaced and the new buses did not require the same idling time.

Members asked questions of clarification around Nguituroa Farms Ltd's District Court sentencing, NZP's non-compliance, and burying of cows within 100m of a waterway.

Cr Rieger left the meeting at 2.38pm.

Ms Russell advised that 20 farms were involved with the Dairy 'Warrant of Fitness' (WOF) inspections. The GMRPR confirmed that the farmers were aware the WOF inspections were voluntary and not mandatory.

ENV 09-78

Moved

Murfitt/Burnell

that the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-155 and Annexes.

CARRIED

The Chief Executive (CE) introduced a question that Cr Guy had asked earlier in the meeting, which related to the involvement of and communication with Hearing Commissioners by staff once the Hearing was over and an appeal had been initiated. The CE advised that while Hearing Commissioners in the past had left staff to follow up with the appeal process, the issue raised by Cr Guy and other Councillor Hearing Commissioners (CHC) was the connection back to the CHCs by staff before the mediation process started and then after mediation concluded. Cr Guy said he was raising this for the learning experience that could be gained through communication back to the CHCs. He added that, as a CHC, he would like to know what stance was taken by Horizons' counsel at a recent Environment Court hearing. The GMRPR clarified the stance taken. The Chair of Council asked for a process to be set up to ensure CHCs were kept informed. **Cr White** ~~The Deputy Chair~~ asked for the CHCs to consider an appropriate time to meet to discuss the results of recent hearings and appeals.

HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES AND INDUSTRIES LIST AND CONTAMINATED SITES UPDATE

Report No. 09-157

The item provided an update on the Hazardous Activities and Industries List (HAIL) and Contaminated Sites. Cr Chettleburgh distributed a two page handout entitled "Information about unverified contaminated land to be released" from the Local Government New Zealand September 2009 newsletter.

The GMRPR spoke to the report and referred Members to paragraph 4 which informed Members a consultant had been engaged to undertake actions outlined, and information would be brought back to enable Members to make decisions. He noted paragraph 10 of the report identified that the Council did not have dedicated staff to undertake the actions mentioned in the report. Following the CE's comment about Members understanding their legal requirement in this activity, the recommendations were amended.

ENV 09-79

Moved

Murfitt/Plowman

that the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-157;
- b. **notes** that further updates will be provided as information is assessed and actioned;
- c. **requests** that the Chief Executive will provide this Committee with a report on the legal requirements of the Council.

CARRIED

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cr Guy referred to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) Bill that was currently going through Parliament, would require applicants of Kyoto forests to declare compliance with the Biosecurity Act which includes the Horizons' Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy. He asked if Council was alert to that, what would be Council's responsibilities, and what would be the cost to ensure there is compliance. The GMRPR said he would make enquiries and report back.

The meeting closed at 3.36pm.

Confirmed

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON