



Report of the twelfth meeting, seventh triennium, of the Environment Committee of Horizons Regional Council held in the Missoula Room, at the offices of Palmerston North City Council, 32 The Square, Palmerston North, commencing at 10.05 am on Wednesday 9 December 2009.

## **PRESENT**

Crs AK Main (Chair), L Bailey, LR Burnell (from 10.28am), VJF Chettleburgh QSM ED, MW Plowman, and GP Murfitt (ex officio).

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Crs EB Gordon (from 10.10am), and MC Guy.

Chief Executive  
Group Manager Regional Planning & Regulatory  
Group Manager Environmental Management  
Committee Secretary

Mr M McCartney (to 2.40pm)  
Mr G Carlyon  
Mr C Mitchell (to 2.23pm)  
Ms K Booth

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Ms A Russell (Manager Environmental Protection, to 11.48am, from 1.00pm), Ms F Maseyk (Senior Environmental Scientist – Ecology, to 2.23pm), Ms R Fryett (Environmental Compliance Officer, to 11.25am), Mr G Cooper (Manager – Land, from 10.42am to 11am), Mr R Munneke (Policy and Consents Manager, from 11.37am to 11.48am, from 2.25pm), G Shirley (Group Manager Regional Services & Information, from 10.21am to 12 noon, from 1.09pm to 2.50pm), Mr A Beveridge (Manager – Biodiversity and Water Quality, from 1.00pm to 2.23pm), Mr P Taylor, (Coordinator Plan Implementation, from 2.12pm to 3.30pm), Mr L Bowler (Rural Advisor, from 2.12pm to 3.30pm), Mr P Hindrup (Senior Consents Planner, from 2.25pm to 2.43pm), Mr I Lowe (Coordinator District Liaison, from 2.25pm to 3.12pm), and Mr C Pepper (PNCC, to 10.55am) and Ms E Howarth (Animal Health Board from 1.00pm to 1.08pm) and a member of the Press to 12 noon.

## **APOLOGIES**

**ENV 09-80**

**Moved**

**Plowman/Bailey**

*that an apology be received from Cr White (on other Council business), and Cr Burnell (for lateness).*

**CARRIED**

An apology from Cr Meads (on other Council business) was noted.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING RIGHTS**

There were no requests for public speaking rights.

## **LATE ITEMS**

There were no late items.

The Chair advised there would shortly be a presentation from Mr Chris Pepper from Palmerston North City Council, that Ms Fleur Maseyk and Ms Rebecca Fryett would provide presentations during the Environmental Management Progress report, that Ms Elizabeth Howarth from the Animal Health Board, would present on behalf of Mr Alan Innes at 1pm, and there would be a presentation to accompany the public excluded item.

## **MEMBERS' CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There were no Members' conflict of interest issues.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**ENV 09-81**

**Moved**

**Bailey/Chettleburgh**

*that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 14 October 2009, as circulated, be received and confirmed as a correct record.*

**CARRIED**

## **PRESENTATION: BIOMASS TO ENERGY - Mr C Pepper**

Mr Chris Pepper, Water and Waste Services Manager, from Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) gave a presentation to Members on the work undertaken by PNCC in converting waste / biomass, into energy. He covered the areas of sustainability, the carbon footprint and waste minimisation, and advised that Massey University was involved in the research projects. He talked about the renewable energy target, the organic waste to energy options, and mentioned the sale by PNCC of carbon credits. Mr Pepper said it was important to communicate to understand what other councils were doing and thereby derive benefits from working together. He explained that Palmerston North city was encouraging other districts to bring their waste for PNCC to process. Mr Pepper responded to Members' questions. The Chair thanked Mr Pepper for his presentation.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

*Report No: 09-196*

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 October 2009.

- Catchment Management Activity
- Water Quantity and Quality Management Activity
- Living Heritage Protection
- Environmental Reporting and Education
- Biosecurity Activity

Members went through the report and asked questions in regard to the auditing of expenditure in the Whanganui Catchment Strategy project by the Whanganui River Enhancement Trust, monitor farms, and nursery pole production.

## **Presentations: Pond Size Calculator and SMART FARMS - Ms R Fryett**

Ms Rebecca Fryett (Environmental Protection Officer) provided Members with a presentation on the Pond Size Calculator (PSC), followed by a presentation on SMART FARMS. Both

projects were initiated by Horizons Regional Council working with Massey University, with funding through an Envirolink grant. Ms Fryett explained how the PSC worked, and how it provided farmers with options on pond sizes and storage requirements. The Chief Executive (CE) commented that it was a very worthwhile initiative and an example of Horizons having a 'solutions focus', as well as a regulatory one. The Group Manager Regional Planning and Regulatory (GMRPR) clarified Members' questions on the PSC.

Ms Fryett then referred to the SMART Farms project which detailed Decision Support Technologies available to assist farmers with effluent management. She also mentioned findings from the five case studies, and said a final project report was available to Members. Members asked questions of clarification. The Chair thanked Ms Fryett for her presentations.

### **Water Quantity and Quality Management Activity**

Members continued their perusal of the report and asked about control of purple loosestrife at Lake Horowhenua. There was a discussion of the access problems faced by staff to do control work, and the Chair of Council noted it was a serious matter and the council wished to work with local iwi towards a solution.

Members commented on the recent negative publicity in the media in regard to the health of the Manawatu River, following a report from the Cawthron Institute initiated by Horizons. The Chair of Council advised there would be a presentation at the Council meeting on 15 December. There was a suggestion for Horizons to host a Forum/discussion on the Manawatu River, involving representatives from different sectors, and the Chief Executive (CE) undertook to scope the suggestion and come back to Council.

### **Presentation: Groundwater Quality State and Trends – Ms F Maseyk**

Ms Fleur Maseyk gave the presentation on behalf of Mr Hisham Zarour (Senior Environmental Scientist) and Dr Jon Roygard (Manager Research), who were attending the One Plan Hearing. She covered the project's main objectives, the research methodology and a list of the parameters investigated. She noted that the dataset trends over the last 40 to 50 years showed no decline in quality, and that generally across the Region there was no human effect, except for Horowhenua which showed some higher nitrate readings in the Horowhenua sand. In general, all groundwater in the Region was of suitable quality for livestock consumption, however it required treatment for drinking water standard. Members asked questions of clarification.

Further discussion on the Environmental Management Progress report was adjourned until after the presentation from Ms Howarth (Animal Health Board).

***The meeting adjourned at 12.10pm.***

***The meeting resumed at 1.00pm.***

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

*Report No. 09-190*

This report informed the Environment Committee of the Vector Management, Animal Health Board (AHB), and Tb Free Committee activity for the Region, for the period October-November 2009. Ms Elizabeth Howarth, AHB Community Relations Advisor attended the meeting on behalf of Mr Alan Innes who sent his apologies. She drew Members' attention to the Tb Free report, referred to the positive feedback in regard to submissions to the National Bovine Tb Pest

Management Strategy, mentioned the change of office location, and updated progress on the operational programme. Ms Howarth clarified Members' questions

**ENV 09-82**

**Moved**

**Main/Chettleburgh**

*that the Committee recommends that Council:*

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-190 and Annex.

**CARRIED**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT cont**

### **Living Heritage Activity**

Members continued to discuss the Environmental Management Progress report and Mr Beveridge (Manager – Biodiversity and Water Quality) clarified that the Top 200 Bush Remnants programme was into its third year, and the Top 100 Wetlands programme was into its fourth year. In response to questions about staff engagement with landowners of Top 100 wetlands, Mr Beveridge said it was the intention to make an approach to all landowners as workloads permitted, over a ten year period. Some landowners were keen to begin the programme, and while others were keen they might not be able to start the programme immediately. The need for a robust process of engagement was acknowledged. Mr Beveridge clarified Members' questions on Table 1 – supporting information on the Top 100 wetlands.

Members then considered the list of Top 200 Bush Remnants and asked about Horizons' involvement with community groups and trusts that look after bush remnant sites. Mr Beveridge clarified that staff assisted the groups and trusts where they could, and involved landowners in the clearing and maintenance. In response to a request to see more Palmerston North City bush remnants on the list, Mr Beveridge and Ms Maseyk said this matter would be included in the Councillors' biodiversity workshop planned for February 2010. Ms Maseyk added that more information had been received since the list was originally drawn up, and Members would have an opportunity to consider this at the workshop.

The Chair of Council advised he had spoken with the Chairman of Bushy Park about no further representation from Horizons and he understood the situation.

### **Environmental Reporting and Education Activity**

Mr Beveridge advised the procedure staff were required to follow if, while on Council work, they came across illicit sites.

In line with an earlier request to update Members on the re-theme of the Green RIG, Mr Beveridge distributed information on the proposed changes and then explained them. He said it was an education programme with a shift to sustainable communities, and a social science focus. The very popular topics, such as Floodopoly would be updated and retained, however as the Green RIG would be visiting some schools for the second time, it was important they see new information. The CE added that following the review of the Green RIG, it was being targeted more towards schools and education with more balance around urban and rural areas. Civil defence / emergency management would be the focus of the Land Wall. Mr Beveridge answered Members' questions and advised it was intended to be trialling the re-theme through February 2010, make the necessary amendments, and then roll it out on 1 March 2010.

## **Biosecurity**

Members continued to note concern with the lack of pest plant management on rail corridors. The Chair asked for an update after officers had talked further with the company responsible for pest plant management of those corridors.

Members discussed possible control of the pest plants, Tutsan and Field horsetail, and the GMEM referred them to the annexed reports on both pests. Ms Maysek advised that Field horsetail – a topic of some submissions to the Regional Pest Plant Management strategy - had the potential to become a threat to production areas. Mr Beveridge noted it grew easily in gravel and could be spread as heavy machinery moved from one area to another. He said that staff notified TAs and Kiwirail about the pest plant and the spray treatment, however as the spray was not specific to Field horsetail it affected all plants in the spray area.

**ENV 09-83**

**Moved**

**Chettleburgh/Bailey**

*that the Committee recommends that Council **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-196 and Annex.*

**CARRIED**

## **REGULATORY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORTS**

*Report No. 09-195*

This report presented two items for the information of Members:

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

### **Environmental Protection Team Report**

Ms Russell (Environmental Protection Manager), spoke to this Report and clarified an abatement notice question. In response to a question about when was an abatement notice issued, and when was an infringement notice issued, she explained the process that was followed to determine which one applied. The Chair of Council explained he received calls from consent holders from time to time on this matter.

### **Resource Consent Activities**

Mr Munneke (Policy and Consents Manager) highlighted that as a result of the changes to the Resource Management Act, the Consents Team was proactively meeting with consultants and other people regularly involved with the process, to discuss the new working environment to encourage more complete applications and a smoother process. There were questions around the costs for Mighty River Power Ltd (Turitea Wind Farm), and when the Meridian Energy decision could be received. Information was sought on the Levin Landfill which had its final pre-hearing in October 2009. Mr Munneke advised a further meeting would be held prior to Christmas.

An additional column to Table 8 (Scheduled pre-hearings and hearings) was requested so Members would know the basic area where the activity was involved. There were questions about consents under appeal for TAs' sewage treatment plants. Mr Munneke responded to a question about permits to take water from the Manawatu River. He advised that what was proposed for the One Plan was the same water allocation model that was currently being used.

**ENV 09-84**

**Moved**

**Murfitt/Chettleburgh**

*that the Committee recommends that Council:*

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 09-195 and Annexes.

**CARRIED**

## **PLAN CHANGE AND SUBDIVISION SUBMISSIONS**

*Report No. 09-188*

The report informed Members of the submissions that Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) made as part of the District Liaison activity over the period 1 April – 30 November 2009. Mr Ian Lowe (Coordinator District Liaison) introduced the report. He clarified that he liaised with the TAs and provided them with the information requested.

The matter was raised, of Members receiving Council and Committee Agendas from the TAs in their constituencies to enable them to be aware of items of interest that were being discussed. The Chair said she understood from an earlier discussion on this matter, that if Members were not already receiving copies of TA Agendas, they were going to request them, or ask the Committee Secretary to arrange it on their behalf. They would then alert staff to any items of interest.

The Chair and Chairman of Council clarified that Members could ask the respective Group Managers for information and outcomes of the meetings referred to in the report.

Members discussed the report and its annexes, and asked questions of clarification.

**ENV 09-85**

**Moved**

**Chettleburgh/Bailey**

*that the Committee recommends that Council:*

- a. **receives** the information in Report No. 09-188 and annexes.

**CARRIED**

## **RURAL ADVISORY TEAM REPORT**

*Report No. 09-198*

The item informed Members about the functions of the Rural Advisory Team and some of its activities and results. The GMRPR introduced Mr Peter Taylor (Coordinator Plan Implementation) and Mr Logan Bowler (Rural Advisor), to the meeting. Mr Taylor began by highlighting their roles, and the way forward in the next six to eight months. He noted the dairy farm 'warrant of fitness' had captured imaginations. The GMRPR added that the team was meeting with people one-on-one, and Members expressed approval of this approach. It was agreed this report would become a regular item on the Environment Committee agenda.

**ENV 09-86**

**Moved**

**Chettleburgh/Bailey**

*that the Committee recommends that Council:*

- a. **receives** Report No. 09-198 entitled 'Rural Advisory Report'

**CARRIED**

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cr Chettleburgh asked about the change of Commissioners for the Taonui Basin Hearing. The Chair said she had explained the reason at the workshop following the November Council meeting, and she also mentioned a presentation by Mr John Maassen on conflicts of interest.

**ENV 09-87**

**Moved**

**Main/Bailey**

*That the public is to be excluded from the Audit, Risk and Investment Committee meeting as disclosure would not be in the public interest because of the greater need to enable Council to carry on without prejudice or disadvantage commercial negotiations in accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.*

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution	Grounds under section 48 (1) for passing this resolution
PX1 Hill Country Spraying	As disclosure would not be in the public interest because of the greater need to enable Council to carry on without prejudice or disadvantage commercial negotiations.	That the exclusion of the public from that part of the meeting is necessary to prevent the disclosure of information for which good reasons for withholding exist.

The meeting moved into public excluded at 3.30pm and resumed at 4.09pm.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.

Confirmed

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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CHAIRPERSON

## ANNEX A

§ **Public Excluded minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 9 December 2009**

**At the public excluded part of the Environment Committee meeting held on 8 March 2010, resolution PX ENV 10-05 stated that the Public Excluded minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 9 December 2009, be moved to the public part of the meeting**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



Minutes of that part of the Environment Committee meeting of Horizons Regional Council held on Wednesday, 9 December 2009, from 3.30pm until 4.09pm, in the Missoula Room, at the offices of Palmerston North City Council, 32 The Square, Palmerston North to which the public were excluded, pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the specific grounds under Section 48(1) LGOIMA are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution	Grounds under section 48 (1) for passing this resolution
PX 1 Hill Country Spraying <i>Report No. 09-206</i>	As disclosure would not be in the public interest because of the greater need to enable Council to carry on without prejudice or disadvantage commercial negotiations.	That the exclusion of the public from that part of the meeting is necessary to prevent the disclosure of information for which good reasons for withholding exist.

**PRESENT**

Crs A K Main (Chair), L Bailey, LR Burnell, V J F Chettleburgh QSM ED, MW Plowman, and G P Murfitt (ex officio).

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Crs EB Gordon and MC Guy.

Group Manager Regional Planning & Regulatory	Mr G Carlyon
Policy and Consents Manager	Mr R Munneke
Environmental Protection Manager	Ms A Russell
Committee Secretary	Ms K Booth

**APOLOGY**

An apology was received in the public part of the meeting from Cr White (on other Council business).

## **HILL COUNTRY SPRAYING**

*Report No. 09-206*

The Group Manager Regional Planning and Regulatory (GMRPR), distributed the Report with annexed copies of flyers about hill country spraying, a map of the distribution area of the flyers, a copy of relevant Rules from the Regional Air Plan (1999) and the Land and Water Regional Plan (2003), and a copy of a letter to companies undertaking agricultural spraying within the Region. He wanted Members to be aware of the information should they be contacted by their constituents in the future; Mr Munneke added he was encouraging people to call Horizons – if in doubt - ask.

Ms Russell (Environmental Protection Manager) made a presentation to Members, which included aerial photographs of vegetation on hillsides that had been adversely affected by spray. ~~diff~~. Members asked questions about the photographs, and the annexed distribution map.

Mr Munneke played an excerpt of his interview with the Morning Rural News on 3 December 2009, where he explained about applying for and obtaining consents for spraying. He advised that consent fees would be waived for this season as the Council needed to move quickly on this matter, and would be calculated at a later date once costs were known. Mr Munneke answered further queries about the process.

The Chair of Council congratulated officers for their wonderful initiative.

**PX ENV 09-02**

**Moved**

**Chettleburgh/Murfitt**

*That the Committee receive Report No. 09-206 and annexes.*

**CARRIED**

**PX ENV 09-03**

**Moved**

**Main/Bailey**

*That the Committee moves out of Public Excluded.*

**CARRIED**

The Public Excluded section of the meeting concluded at 4.09pm.

Confirmed

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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CHAIRMAN