



Minutes of the fifth meeting, eighth triennium, of the Environment Committee of Horizons Regional Council held in the Tararua Room, Regional House, 11-15 Victoria Avenue, Palmerston North, at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 14 September 2011.

## **PRESENT**

Crs JJ White (Chair), VJF Chettleburgh QSM ED, GM McKellar, MW Plowman, CI Sheldon, and EB Gordon (ex officio).

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Crs JJ Barrow, GL Cox, PW Rieger  
Chief Executive  
Committee Secretary

Mr M McCartney  
Ms K Booth

## **ALSO PRESENT** at various times during the meeting:

Mr G Cooper (Environmental Manager – Land), Dr J Roygard (Manager Science), Mr P Taylor (Plan Implementation Coordinator), Mr R Munneke (Policy and Consents Manager), Mr G Shirley (Group Manager Regional Services and Information), Mr B Martyn (Manager-Biosecurity), Ms F Maseyk (Senior Environmental Scientist), Mr G Carlyon (Group Manager Regional Planning and Regulatory), Mr A Beveridge (Manager – Biodiversity and Water Quality), Mr L Brown (Environmental Scientist – Water Quality), Mr I Lowe (Coordinator District Liaison), Mr P Hindrup (Senior Consents Planner), Ms A Russell (Manager Environmental Protection), Mr C Mitchell (Group Manager Environmental Management), Mrs C Rowe (Media and Communications Manager), Dr Jonathan Procter (Chair of Lake Horowhenua Trust), Mr R Warrington and Mr M Wiremu-Matakatea (Lake Horowhenua Trustees), Mrs C Hadley (CE Rangitikei District Council), Mr B King (CE Tararua District Council), and Members of the Press.

## **APOLOGIES**

The Committee noted an apology from Cr Guy.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING RIGHTS**

There were no requests for public speaking rights.

## **LATE ITEMS**

There were no late items notified.

## **MEMBERS' CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Chair referred to her explanation at the previous Environment Committee meeting, that she would not take part in any discussions relating to either the Defence Force or the Manawatu District Council Feilding Sewage Treatment plants.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Addendum to Minutes

## CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Chair referred to page 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the **Environmental Protection Team** section, 2<sup>nd</sup> line and suggested the word “issue” be replaced with the words “*inform them of the non-compliance*”. She mentioned the discussion at the August Council meeting about the wording, where it was agreed the appropriate place to change the wording was at this Environment Committee meeting. Members agreed to the change.

The Chair also noted on page 6 of the minutes, last paragraph, that the science café was run by Te Manawa, not Dr Roygard, and that Dr Roygard and the other people mentioned had spoken at the session.

In response to questions, the Chair advised that the report on stormwater treatment and discharge by territorial authorities would be brought to the November Committee meeting.

**ENV 11-30**

**Moved**

**Plowman/Chettleburgh**

*that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 26 July 2011, as circulated, be received and confirmed as a correct record, with an amendment to the word ‘issue’ page 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of Environmental Protection Team section, 2<sup>nd</sup> line and replacing with “...**inform them of the** non-compliance notices”.*

**CARRIED**

Cr Gordon, Chair of Council, asked to speak about the Order Paper and made a recommendation about Item 10, *Palmerston North City Council – Sewage Treatment Plant*. He referred to the public interest following a media article the previous day, and believed it was very important that the public understand what the report meant. He had met with the Mayor of Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) who wished to understand the issues and Cr Gordon believed it was important for PNCC to have an opportunity to understand the issues and respond prior to any discussion by Members. He recommended that the report lie on the table and come to the next Strategy and Policy Committee meeting or Council meeting, dependant on when the reports were able to be clarified.

**ENV 11-31**

**Moved**

**Gordon/Chettleburgh**

*That the report, ‘Palmerston North City Council – Sewage Treatment Plant – Update to Councillors’ lie on the table and come to next Strategy and Policy Committee meeting.*

Cr Sheldon said she would vote against the motion as there was nothing contentious in the recommendations. Cr Gordon said the issue was about the discussion of the report before there was a full understanding by PNCC. Cr McKellar said he would speak against the motion for the same reasons as Cr Sheldon and wished to ask a few questions. Cr Rieger strongly supported the recommendation and said that in his view the issue was not about the report which was a public document, but about deferring public discussion before the Mayor and Councillors of PNCC had an opportunity to consider and understand the report. He did not, however, wish the report to lie on the table for too long. The Chair wanted to have all the evidence in front of her, did not believe she had all the evidence at this stage, and was therefore happy to support the motion. Both she and Cr Rieger commented they did not wish the report to lie on the table for too long.

The Chair put the motion. As there was an equality of votes, she said she would use her casting vote to vote in favour of the motion. The matter would lie on the table until the next Strategy and Policy Committee meeting on 11 October 2011.

**Against: Crs Plowman, McKellar, and Sheldon**  
**CARRIED**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

*Report No: 11-156*

The purpose of this item was to inform the Environment Committee of progress made towards outputs listed in the following activity areas of the 2009-19 Long-term Council Community Plan: Catchment management activity, Water quantity and quality management activity, Living heritage activity, Environmental reporting and education, Biosecurity activity. The report covered the period July 2011 to August 2011.

### **Catchment Management Activity**

The Chair referred Members to the Exception Report/Executive Overview which highlighted features that might be of particular interest. She suggested that Members refer to this page during discussion of the full report.

Mr Grant Cooper reported on a recent Whanganui River Enhancement Trust (WRET) meeting where he provided an update on Horizons' progress with environmental grant works and also discussed riparian management and other areas of interest. Mr Cooper updated WRET on environmental grant applications received for this financial year and advised a funding application had been submitted to WRET for them to consider. He commented that as the timing of WRET annual meetings was not aligned with Horizons' annual planning and long-term planning processes, he had undertaken to consider how these could be better aligned. Members asked whether environmental grants were allocated to the best projects, or as they were received; the Chair asked for this matter to be discussed at the next Environment Committee meeting.

In response to questions, Mr Cooper clarified that Soil Health Plans provided opportunities for landowners not within SLUI or dairying areas, to access information on better management of the soils on their properties. The soil workshops being held would cater for a number of landowners. The Chief Executive advised the number of plans had been scaled back from some years ago. They looked at soils as a resource, and the objective was to help landowners manage the soil in a way to maximise the return from the land.

In response to a request for an update on the Akitio coastal restoration project, the Chief Executive advised an assessment of the activity would be brought to the next Environment Committee meeting.

Dr Roygard (Manager Science) responded to questions about the SLUI initiative. He advised that SLUI Whole Farm Plans looked at all areas of the farm, not just slopes above 20 deg, and a lot of land over 20 deg. had had some erosion control applied to it. Dr Roygard also provided full answers around catchment modelling and updated on meetings and workshops with AgResearch, NIWA, and Landcare as a part of the broader nationally funded research programme.

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

Mr Taylor (Plan Implementation Coordinator) responded to Members' questions about the activities discussed in the Rural Advisory Team report. He referred to a previous suggestion that a workshop be held on the effluent storage calculator, and suggested he arrange this workshop for October, which would include Members and other interested parties.

The Chair advised she would not allow a question from Cr Plowman as it was not appropriate for the Environment Committee which was a Committee of report. Cr Plowman continued to ask the question saying the Chair was out of order. The Chair rose to her feet and Cr Plowman was advised by another Member that in accordance with Standing Orders, he could not continue to speak while the Chair was on her feet. Cr Barrow asked a further question in line with that of Cr Plowman. The Chair then advised she was ruling Cr Plowman's and Cr Barrow's questions out of order as she did not believe it was an appropriate issue for the Environment Committee to discuss and asked for comment from the Chief Executive. He clarified that the Environment Committee was a reporting committee on the activities that the Council had undertaken over the last two months. He believed the issues raised by Crs Plowman and Barrow were policy questions, and said once the questions were fully understood, they could be brought back to an appropriate Committee. The Chair asked Crs Plowman and Barrow to put their questions in writing to the Chief Executive. She also expressed disappointment at Cr Plowman's inappropriate behaviour and lack of understanding of what it meant when the Chair stood during a meeting.

A short video was played relating to the new priority catchment - Pukemiku Stream. Mr Beveridge (Manager – Biodiversity and Water Quality) clarified Members' questions around plantings.

The Chair advised that Dr Roygard would give a presentation on the '*Lake Horowhenua Review : assessment of opportunities to address water quality issues in Lake Horowhenua*'. She noted apologies from Mayor Brendan Duffy and Chief Executive David Ward from **Horowhenua** ~~Tararua~~ District Council, who had been invited. She welcomed Dr Jonathan Procter (Chairman of the Lake Horowhenua Trust) and Mr Robert Warrington and Mr Marokopa Wiremu-Matakatea (Trustees of Lake Horowhenua Trust) to the meeting. The presentation covered the overall goals of the review, the key aims of collating historical information, documenting 'lessons learned', identifying options for remediation of Lake Horowhenua, and providing recommendations on lake monitoring. The key findings were that restoration was possible, and that would be best achieved by multiple actions working together and a sound understanding of the science. Dr Roygard amplified on the key aims and findings during his presentation, and put forward some recommendations for the next step. He said he was seeking Councillors' permission to engage with stakeholders in the community around this, and he also sought Councillors' view on bringing together a comprehensive programme to restoring the Lake as part of the Long Term Plan function, which would provide options for Members to consider.

The Chair invited Dr Procter to comment. Dr Procter mentioned the successful 'owners' planting day, where children were taught how to plant trees, about the Lake and the stream, and of its history. He said 700 – 1000 plants were planted during the day, and over the following few weeks members of the iwi, Horizons' staff, Trustees, beneficiaries and owners had completed the planting. From the Trustees' point of view, and that of iwi, it had been a success, especially with the children being interested in the Lake, and the history of the Lake.

Members asked questions of clarification around information in the presentation. Dr Roygard explained the aim was not to restore the Lake to how it was in 1800, but through engagement with stakeholders, a way forward to restore the Lake could be agreed. Dr Procter outlined the importance of Lake Horowhenua: culturally; for drainage of the whole catchment; and for horticultural and agricultural activities. He was looking forward to working with Horizons, Horowhenua District Council, and the community, and also with the owners and beneficiaries of the Lake, to progress this through consultation and implementation. He stressed the importance of good science to provide good environmental management solutions and said that each small improvement to the Lake would no doubt see greater interaction from the community.

The Chair put forward a motion.

**ENV 11-32**

**Moved**

**White/Chettleburgh**

*that the Committee:*

- a. **receives** the report;
- b. **requests** a formal item on the implementation options including comprehensive costs and in consultation with appropriate parties including the Trust Board and the District Council;
- c. **considers** the options and makes recommendations to Council.

**CARRIED**

The Chair thanked Dr Procter and Trustees of the Lake Horowhenua Trust for attending the meeting.

Dr Roygard referred to and distributed a copy of a report entitled, "*Benthic Cyanobacteria and Toxin Production in the Manawatu-Wanganui Region*". He provided Members with a summary of the report and suggested that after Members read the report, he was happy to answer their questions. The Chair asked Members to provide these questions in writing to Dr Roygard. The Chair believed it was important for this work to continue, and asked the Chief Executive to consider a budget for this work.

*The meeting adjourned at 12.08am.*

*The meeting resumed at 12.55pm.*

### **Living Heritage Protection**

The Chief Executive advised no meetings had yet taken place in regard to Kitchener Park. Cr Chettleburgh asked for progress on Totara Park and Camp Rangi Woods. The Chief Executive provided an update on a successful diversion put in place around erosion of the roadside area, and noted it was Pohangina Valley East Road (not West). He also advised that due to restructuring within the Ministry of Conservation, the vesting issue had not yet been discussed by the Conservation Board but it was hoped this would happen in November. This would then need sign-off by the Minister. Cr McKellar provided more information on the 'Living Legends' planting. Members asked questions relating to the freshwater fish monitoring.

### **Environmental Reporting and Education**

Dr Roygard highlighted the completion of the dissolved oxygen monitoring review, and advised a copy of the report from NIWA and Cawthron had been received. A copy of this report, "*Continuous measurement and interpretation of dissolved oxygen data in rivers*", was distributed to Members. In terms of key findings, he referred Members to Table 2 on page 19, and the paragraph above that table about ecosystem metabolism in the Manawatu River. He noted that only the Hopelands data had been collected by Horizons, all the other data was independent. The Chair asked Members to read the report prior to it coming to the next Environment Committee meeting.

The Chair advised that discussion would be adjourned on the Environment Management Progress Report until later in the meeting, as the Chief Executives from Rangitikei District Council and Tararua District Council had joined the meeting. She referred Members to the Regulatory Management Activity reports.

## REGULATORY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORTS

Report No. 11-158

The Chair welcomed Clare Hadley (Chief Executive of Rangitikei District Council) and Blair King (Chief Executive of Tararua District Council) to the meeting. The GMRPR commented that there had been discussion at Council about issues faced by territorial authorities (TAs) around infrastructural maintenance, management and upgrades. He said his team had been working with TAs in a positive way over the last year analysing the issues of the TAs and working with them on those issues. He commented that both Rangitikei and Tararua District Councils had communities of similar sizes, and were facing the same resourcing issues and infrastructure upgrade issues. He said that Mrs Hadley and Mr King had been invited to Council today to provide Members with an opportunity to hear about the TAs' experiences of the process in which they engage with Horizons on a day to day basis. The Chair asked if they wished to make any comments. Both Mr King and Mrs Hadley commented on the problems faced by their respective Councils in regard to infrastructure issues and non-compliances etc. They also commented positively on working with Horizons' staff, and the good relationship that they enjoy with Horizons. Members asked about the progress the TAs had made towards compliance, and the timeframe for the future. Horizons' Chief Executive elaborated on some of the processes that TAs had to follow when applying to the Regional Council for resource consents, and variations to consents. He thanked Mrs Hadley and Mr King for their interest in addressing these issues, and the Chair thanked them for attending the meeting.

This report presented two items for the information of Members:

- a. Environmental Protection Team Report – 1 July 2011 to 31 August 2011
- b. Resource Consent Activities for July and August 2011

### **Environmental Protection Team**

The Chair thanked the GMRPR and Ms Russell (Environmental Protection Manager) for responding to Members' requests for more information in this report. Ms Russell said that there were increasing calls from customers asking for suggestions for improvement. She commented that farmers were very grateful when the Environmental Protection team highlighted when they were at risk of non-compliance and made suggestions. She advised the Dairy e-newsletter had been sent out and it was suggested that if Councillors became aware of farmers who wanted to receive it, but had not, they ask the farmers to pass their details onto Ms Russell.

The Chair passed on a compliment she had received in regard to actions taken by Horizons over a spill at the Mangaone Stream, both for customer services, and also the assistance of the officer who attended the incident. There was some discussion over smoky fire complaints, both urban and rural. Members discussed the report of non-compliances and asked questions of clarification.

Cr McKellar was pleased to receive the improved reporting. He proposed an extra graphic to go with Fig. 2 'Detected Non-Compliance by Customer Type' which would provide extra information. He moved a motion to that effect. There was discussion on the information requested and whether or not it was necessary.

**ENV 11-33**

**Moved**

**McKellar/Sheldon**

*that the Committee **requests** a graphic from the Environmental Protection Team on Detected non-compliance by customer type as proportion of total number of consents held for that customer type.*

**CARRIED**

There was reference to Table 10 with a query about the descriptor wording. Following Ms Russell's explanation, she offered to amend if Members wished, however noted that each year Audit reviewed a random sample of non-compliances (and other samples) from Horizons with those from other regional councils to ensure consistency. In response to a suggestion of recognising dairy farmers' achievement, the GMRPR advised that regional council staff were currently working on a way to acknowledge dairy excellence in a way that would suit the respective landowners and provide encouragement for them to continue.

### **Resource Consent Activities**

The GMRPR clarified that Horizons' policy about appointing commissioners to hearings was through a recommendation from officers to the Chairman. With regard to wind farm hearings, as they were joint hearings it had been agreed to have independent commissioners. Members asked further questions of clarification.

**ENV 11-34**                      **Moved**    **Chettleburgh/Sheldon**

*that the Committee:*

- a.        **receives** the information contained in the Annexes to Report No. 11-158.

**CARRIED**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT (cont)**

### **Biosecurity Activity**

Mr Martyn (Manager – Biosecurity) referred Members to the map on page 72 of the Agenda about rabbit haemorrhagic disease survey results which showed no clear areas. He commented on research underway on calicivirus strains to isolate the strongest strain with a view to releasing in new areas. All conventional means of controlling rabbits were still able to be used. Members commented on information provided in the report, and asked questions of clarification. There was a question whether the same Horizons' staff could undertake both possum control and also pest plant identification, and Mr Martyn undertook to discuss further. Mr Martyn also undertook to change the highlighted colours in Table 14 to be more distinguishable.

**ENV 11-35**                      **Moved**    **Chettleburgh/Gordon**

*that the Committee:*

- a.        **receives** the information in Report No. 11-156 and annexes.

**CARRIED**

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

*Report No. 11-159*

The purpose of this item was to inform the Environment Committee of the Vector Management, Animal Health Board (AHB), and Tb Free Committee activity for the Region, for the period July to August 2011. The Chief Executive advised that the Deed of Funding with AHB had been signed, consistent with resolutions of Council.

**ENV 11-36**

**Moved**

**Sheldon/Chettleburgh**

*that the Committee:*

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 11-159 and Annex.

**CARRIED**

## **DISTRICT PLAN AND SUBDIVISION SUBMISSIONS**

Report No. 11-161

This report informed Members of the submissions that Horizons Regional Council had made as part of the District Liaison output over the period 1 December 2010 – 31 August 2011. Mr Lowe (Coordinator District Liaison) addressed the Committee regarding his report and answered Members' questions. He noted that although it had been a long reporting period, he had tried to keep each Councillor updated on matters in their constituencies.

**ENV 11-37**

**Moved**

**Sheldon/Plowman**

*that the Committee:*

- a. **receives** the information in Report No. 11-161 and Annexes.

**CARRIED**

## **RESPONSES TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS – ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE JULY 2011**

Report No. 11-157

This report provided responses to Members' questions and/or queries raised at previous meetings or Committees of Council. A map showing areas of Old Man's Beard was to be sent to all Councillors. The Chief Executive advised he had a meeting scheduled with the Conservator (Department of Conservation) in regard to Pukaha Mt Bruce.

**ENV 11-38**

**Moved**

**Plowman/McKellar**

*that the Committee:*

- a. **receives** the information in Report No. 11-157;
- b. **notes** management's response to the queries.

**CARRIED**

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cr Sheldon referred to a follow up to invite the Mayor and elected members of Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) to meet with the Committee for an update on compliance progress, and also referred to the paper, '*Palmerston North City Council – Sewage Treatment Plant – Update to Councillors*' that was resolved to lie on the table – and asked for an update. Both the Chair and Chief Executive responded that the report would go to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting on 11 October 2011 and the Mayor and elected members of PNCC would have an opportunity to be present and hear the debate and questions.

Cr McKellar distributed some pictures he had googled of the PNCC outfall into the Manawatu River (taken in 2007) and wondered whether they would have a negative economic impact on tourism. The Chief Executive did not believe anyone in the room was qualified to answer the question, and provided his own personal viewpoint. Cr McKellar also distributed a picture of the Tutaenui Stream outfall and noted the green verges of the stream. He suggested the information could be passed onto PNCC as the councillors may not be aware of these pictures in the global domain.

Cr Barrow referred to dairy effluent consents, and asked if farmers could be informed that although a big pond might be required, it would not be required immediately. Cr Barrow agreed with the GMRPR's suggestion to send this information through the Dairy e-newsletter.

Cr Chettleburgh advised that an Horizons' staff member had been granted a Jaycee Scholarship to travel to Indonesia.

The meeting closed at 3.17pm.

Confirmed

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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CHAIR

## **ADDENDUM 1 -**

To the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 14 September 2011 as requested by the Chair during confirmation of the minutes at the Environment Committee meeting of 9 November 2011.

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### **Verbatim of Environment Committee Meeting of 14 September 2011 - Conflicts of Interest declared at the beginning of the meeting**

#### **Conflict of Interest**

Cr White

**(Chair)**

“Just as last month I indicated if there is any discussion about the NZ Defence Force Sewage Treatment Plant at Waiouru or the Manawatu District Sewage Treatment Plant, I will be taking no part in the discussion. Is there any other ... Cr McKellar

Cr McKellar

I just have a question. When we come to discuss the PNCC sewage treatment plant, is there any perceived conflict of interest given that any members of the Committee have been on that – involvement - given the historical nature of what it is talking about.

Cr White

No I don't think there is.

Cr Rieger

13 years ago? You think that is a conflict of interest?

Cr McKellar

Well, I am just asking the question.

Cr White

Well I don't believe so. I think that there is sufficient time and distance and circumstances.

Cr White

And moving now onto the minutes of 26 July. If you remember at the Council meeting when this was debated, I suggested there should be a change made on what is page 4 of this paper, under Env. Protection Team. And that is that the paragraph that said “issue” and change to “inform”.....”