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Committee Environment Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 27 October 2015

1. Purpose

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

2. Catchment Management

2.1 Biodiversity

2.1.1 General

The Executive Leadership Team has approved a project relating to volunteers in the region. The first part of the project, led by the Biodiversity department, will look at all aspects of GWRC's relationships with volunteers who work with us or on our behalf. Aspects such as the level and type of support, alignment with GWRC's strategic objectives, and health and safety requirements will be considered. The second, more complex part of the project will involve other agencies and review the regional picture.

A process for ensuring alignment of the Wetland Restoration programme with provisions of the proposed Natural Resources Plan is being undertaken by staff from the Biodiversity, Land Management and Environmental Policy departments. Staff will also work to determine how GWRC will coherently deliver the stock exclusion and riparian enhancement provisions in the NRP.

2.1.2 Key Native Ecosystems

Two KNE plans have been published: Trentham Memorial Park and Raroa - Pukerua Coast. A total of 14 KNE plans for KNE sites are now published.

2.1.3 Biodiversity Advice

A guidance document for territorial authorities on the identification of significant indigenous biodiversity values is currently being reviewed by all city and district councils. This document implements Method 21 of the Regional Policy Statement.

The department is preparing GWRC's submission to PCC on the draft document *Porirua's Outdoor Recreation Park*. This plan sets out how five green spaces in Porirua will be connected and new facilities developed to provide for cycling and walking. GWRC actively manages some areas of high biodiversity that are with the proposed new park.

The department has contributed to a GWRC submission on Hutt City Council's proposed plan change that would affect tree protection and vegetation removal rules.

2.1.4 Collaborative Restoration: Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

Seven entrance signs were installed at key visitor sites around Wairarapa Moana during September. This work implemented the first priority of a three-year Interpretation and Visitor Strategy.

2.1.5 Collaborative Restoration: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Project

In September, a community stream event was jointly delivered by the Healthy Harbours Porirua coordinator and the Porirua Harbour Trust education facilitator. The event involved a stream clean up with 40 volunteers, and school students showed participants some of the freshwater creatures found in the stream.

A paper was prepared on the biodiversity of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua. This was presented to the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee in September as part of the ongoing process of informing the Committee of information relevant to the management of water in the catchment. The paper covered the changes in biodiversity over time, some ongoing issues and trends, and the management steps being undertaken by a range of organisations to maintain and restore biodiversity in the area.

2.1.6 Biodiversity Advocacy

A contestable fund to support community restoration groups in both the Wairarapa and Porirua catchments has been developed and went live on the 13th October. Grants can be used to pay for native plants, materials for growing plants, pest plant and animal control, tools and refreshments for working bees. Groups will continue to benefit from the support and advice of GWRC staff.

GWRC will lead Restoration Day in 2016 and will work closely with TAs (especially WCC) to deliver an event that meets council requirements in line with the budget. Other partners are likely to be DOC and NGOs.

2.2 Flood Protection

Major achievements since the last report have been:

- Community consultation on two Integrated Concept Design options for the Hutt City Centre has been completed.
- Progressed with NOR/Consent application and the land entry agreements for the Jim Cooke Park stopbank project.
- Planning had progressed for the 2015/16 Capital works programme for the LWVDS project.
- Annual maintenance works programmes are underway. Willow and native plant programmes are almost complete.
- Asset repairs and clean-up work continue following the significant flood events in the previous quarter.
- Gravel extraction in the lower Porirua Stream through Porirua CBD has been completed.
- The Otaki River walkover has taken place with over 190 participants.
- The Pinehaven FMP community consultation recommenced and submissions closed on 16 October.

The key activities looking ahead are:

- Gaining HVFMS/Council approval of a preferred City Centre ICD option for the detailed design and NOR/Consents;
- Lodging NOR/Consent application for the Jim Cooke Park stopbank project;
- Completing flood damage repairs;
- Progressing 2015/16 river scheme works programmes;
- Finalise the draft Waiohine FMP for a final round of consultation;
- Working with MDC on their concerns over the Te Kauru hydrology and hydraulic model information.

2.2.1 Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

(a) Hutt River City Centre Upgrade Project

The Hutt River City Centre Upgrade Project is on track for seeking Council approval of an option for preparing the design and NOR/Consent applications. The community consultation on two options approved by Council is now complete. The community feedback period closed on 14 September and 273 feedback responses were received. The community has provided a clear preference (76%) for progressing with Option A (one step process). Consultation with 79 landowners whose land is required for the project is progressing. Out of 79 landowners 43 have provided feedback and 65% of them prefer Option A (one Step). Once Council approves Option A or B in December, there will be an expectation Council will purchase any of the identified land if offered for sale before the land is designated.

The process is for the HVFMS to recommend an option to Council on 26 November. Council decision is expected at its meeting on 9 December. The design and planning phase will commence in January 2016.

To aid community awareness a flood marker post has been fabricated and installed south of the Hutt City Park to give the public an idea of flood levels during historic flood events.



Hutt River Flood Pole Opening



Hutt River Flood Pole Installation

(b) Boulcott/Hutt Stopbank Project

The land surveys are complete and the survey consultants are currently preparing Survey Office plans to be lodged with LINZ for the necessary road stopping, subdivision and land swaps.

Safeway's compensation claim for \$381,600 with the Land Valuation Tribunal (LVT) and the fence claim with the District Court remain to be resolved.

(c) Ebdentown Edge Protections

The Ebdentown edge protection works are on track for completion by the end of the financial year. About 50% of rock requirement has been delivered to site. Construction is scheduled to start in March 2016.

(d) Hutt River urgent edge protections at Boulcott

There are three sites in the Boulcott/Belmont reach of the Hutt River where bank edge erosion has occurred in the last few years. The design for the site above the Kennedy Good Bridge (KGB) on the left bank was developed and the earthworks completed. Orders have been placed for the rock and delivery will commence in the second quarter. We expect to complete the works in late summer 2015/16. This work is within the department's capital budget.

The remaining two sites below the KGB are located in the City Centre reach and the design for the whole reach will be developed in 2016. It is proposed to hold these two sites with temporary maintenance works until the design is developed.

(e) Pinehaven Project

Pinehaven FMP recommenced following the completion of the Independent Audit process which delayed the project by 12 months. Two public open days/information sessions were held in September in conjunction with UHCC. Submissions on the proposed FMP finished on 16th October. The submissions will be considered when finalising the FMP and recommended to the subcommittee at its first meeting of 2016. Implementation is underway with:

- Geotechnical and Ecological Investigations, preliminary design and preparation for consenting of the works (this is being led by Wellington Water on behalf of UHCC, supported by GWRC officers);
- House purchases have been completed;
- Involvement in the preparation for a plan change process lead by UHCC with GWRC providing support and hazard mapping information.

An MOU with UHCC on cost sharing is being finalised and arrangements will be made in the 2nd quarter to invoice UHCC for the outstanding cost share contributions. Total budget for 2015/16 is \$500,000. It is unlikely that the total budget will be spent during 2015/16. The expenditure forecast will be reviewed at the end of second quarter.

(f) Otaki Edge Protections

The proposed Otaki Edge protection works are on hold until the Otaki FMP review is completed. The river management practices in the lower reach are being considered through the FMP review process to be completed in 2017. Only urgent bank edge repair works and maintenance of recently completed capital works will be carried out this year.

(g) Jim Cooke Park Stopbank

Staff are currently progressing with the NOR/Consent application and land entry negotiations with the Equestrian Centre and KCDC. NOR/Consent application is taking more time to complete than originally planned because of issues related to the work in the river channel including river crossings. The recent changes to the KCDC district plan (proposed plan) have also resulted in the tree removal becoming a significance activity. It is now expected that the NOR/Consent application will be lodged by the end of October or early November 2015.

(h) Waiohine River Capex

The 2015/16 Annual Plan provides a budget of \$2.9 million for commencing the Waiohine FMP implementation works. The programme for implementing this component of work was set in anticipation of completion of the Waiohine FMP. The FMP is taking more time to complete and it is proposed to defer any construction work until the FMP is complete.

(i) Lower Wairarapa Development Scheme Improvement works

Landowner entry permits for the Whakawhiriwhiri Stream upgrade project have been finalised except for Messrs Hedley and Barton. Construction work in the reach upstream of Pahautea Road and up to Hedley's downstream boundary will commence in early summer subject to weather conditions and approval of the Construction Management Plan as required by the resource consent.

Design work has been completed and tender documents have been sent to selected companies for the Barrage Gates controls system upgrade project. Work is expected to be completed this summer.

The design is being finalised for the Tawaha flood gate upgrade with construction works scheduled for summer.

The total budget for 2015/16 is \$852,000. The expenditure for 2015/16 is very likely to be exceeded because of potential land purchase. A budget of \$4.5 million is included in 2016/17 for this purpose and some of this budget may have to be brought forward.

2.2.2 Operations, Delivery and Planning

(a) Western River Schemes

All works in the western region are running to programme and budget.

Willow and native planting is now complete in all the rivers and staff are continuing to mulch willows in the upper Otaki River.

Asset repairs and clean-up work following recent flood events is close to completion. Gravel extraction has been undertaken in the Porirua CBD reach to lower the bed level. A significant project still to be completed is the extraction of a large amount of gravel deposited under buildings and in culverts across the Korokoro Stream. A resource consent application is being prepared to enable this work to be undertaken.



Porirua Stream Gravel Extraction September 2015

The Otaki River annual walkover was held on the 18th of September and attracted over 190 participants. Once again this proved to be a popular

event and attracted a wide cross section of the Kapiti community including the Friends of the Otaki River, Council representatives, iwi, interest groups and members of the local community.

Watercourse maintenance work is underway in a number of streams throughout the region. Staff continue to monitor the stream mouths, as tide and sea conditions have a big influence on the way they function.

(b) Wairarapa River Schemes

Overall work activities are slightly ahead of programme. The focus for the first quarter has been on the willow planting programme with 15,275 willow poles planted in the river buffers in the ten Wairarapa River schemes.

Gravel extraction management has been ongoing with significant extraction activities occurring in the Waingawa River from the bridges to the Aerodrome, the Waingawa/Ruamahanga confluence and in the Ruamahanga River in the Te Whiti reach.

Channel maintenance work is proceeding including debris clearance, vegetation removal, beach recontouring and consented channel alignment.

The Lake Onoke sea mouth blocked five times in the first quarter. On each occasion GWRC staff controlled the Barrage Gates and managed the lake levels in both Lake Onoke and Lake Wairarapa to facilitate a machine-operated sea mouth opening.

(c) Resource Consent project

The focus of the resource consent project has been on completing the further information requests for the four western river applications. Two of the four reports have been completed this quarter; the final two will be completed early in the 2nd quarter. Refinement of the region-wide Code of Practice and monitoring plan has continued in this quarter and will continue to be a focus for the 2nd quarter.

(d) Asset Management

Progress with Asset Management activities has been steady through the first quarter. Key achievements have been the collation and analysis of asset condition assessments and the preparation of Committee reports. The process has been streamlined. The Asset Management Improvement Plan has been reviewed and additional resources will enable new initiatives to be progressed in the next quarter.

2.2.3 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

(a) Floodplain Management Plan development

Good progress has been made in developing options for the Masterton Urban area and these were to have been consulted on with the public in October. However, Masterton District Council has requested that we

undertake additional hydrology and hydraulic modelling before embarking on further public consultation. A joint Project Team is being organised to progress this work. In the interim, staff will focus on rural option development. Delays to the urban options development will impact on delivery of the FMP project.

Progress has been made on developing a preferred option that is broadly consistent with the Waiohine FMP Advisory Committee's Option 7 while addressing sustainability concerns of GWRC. GWRC's Environment Committee has endorsed officers beginning development of a draft FMP and taking the Preferred Option (Phase 3 Summary Report) to the WFMPAC for approval. Officers have also presented the draft preferred option to both SWDC and CDC for their comments. SWDC is supportive of the preferred option being taken to the draft FMP stage for public consultation. CDC neither supports nor opposes the preferred option, as there are significant impacts on the Carterton side of the river only some of which can be mitigated.

Initial project planning has begun for the Lower Wairarapa Valley FMP which is to start in 2016/17. We have made contact with SWDC about this and intend to involve key stakeholders and our iwi partners in the planning/scoping of the project so that they are involved from an early stage.

Flood Protection will be in attendance at the Clareville (Carterton) A&P show at the end of October to engage with the community on all three FMP projects above.

(b) Investigations

A survey specification for the 5-yearly Otaki River Survey has been issued to consultants to tender on and this will be carried out over the summer.

A project has begun to develop a flood forecasting model for the Hutt River. This trial involves input from Flood Protection, Environmental Science and WREMO staff as well as external consultants.

Work to develop a policy on freeboard in flood mapping has commenced with a discussion document and an internal debate on the key issues to be considered. This is a particular output from comments in the Pinehaven Independent Audit.

Work on a regional-scale assessment of potential flood-prone areas has been completed by a consultant and this information will be disseminated to interested parties. We are now starting a project to make this information freely available on the GW website along with other hazard information.

2.3 Land Management

2.3.1 Metro Forests

(a) Maungakotukutuku Forest

The Maungakotukutuku forest is located in the hills behind Paraparaumu. The forest was part of the cutting rights sale process and covers 180

hectares. Currently these stands are not listed in the five year harvesting plan.

For many years there has been unrestricted public access from Maungakotukutuku Road. The main forest road more or less follows a paper road. In recent years 4WD enthusiasts have used the forest for recreational purposes. Significant damage to tree roots and sediment generation is occurring within the forest and within the bed of the river.

Staff are looking at installing a gate into the forest that would restrict vehicular movement but allow walking and bike access.



4WD activity in Maungakotukutuku Forest

3.2 Akura Conservation Centre

(a) Seedling sales

Total seedling sales over the trading period from June to September 2015 were 200,427.

Twenty percent of the total was retail (39,537), the balance was internal clients such as Land Management, Biodiversity and Flood Protection. Thirty nine percent of the total were native plants (77,748), with 67% of these being eco-sourced (51,764). This level of use of eco-sourced native plants compares very favourably with previous years.

(a) Mangapakeha Nursery

Mangapakeha nursery is a small nursery, covering 16 hectares, located on the Masterton-Castlepoint Road. It has been a productive nursery for the last 25 years but with the recent expansion at Akura is now considered as surplus to requirements.

A recent inspection confirms that the last pole cut will take place next year and the land be prepared for sale. Firm interest has already been received from three neighbours. The proceeds of the sale will be used to repay debt

associated with development that has occurred at Akura over the last three years.

2.3.3 Farms Plans

(a) WRECI Plans

Under a new contract with the Ministry of Primary Industries WRECI Plans will now be part of an expanded programme. Previously they were only available in five highly erodible catchments and selected hotspots, but now new funding is available across the region with a focus on farmed land that has a high erosion risk. This will enable work to be undertaken in catchments that are a specific focus for Council such as Porirua Harbour and the Ruamahanga River catchment.

A new staff member will be appointed to administer the sediment management programme in the Porirua Harbour catchment by the end of November.

(b) Farm Environment Plans

Farm Environment Plans have been operative for five years in the Mangatarere catchment to the west of Carterton. In that time all dairy farms within the catchment have had a plan prepared, along with a small number of sheep and beef properties. In addition four plans have been prepared for dairy farmers on the Kapiti coast.

A new staff member will be appointed to administer the Farm Environment Plan programme in the Ruamahanga River catchment by the end of November. This role will pick up on the work completed over the last three years under the Ministry for the Environment's Fresh Start for Freshwater initiative.

2.4 Biosecurity

2.4.1 Pest animals

(a) Rooks

The Rook survey was completed 29 and 30 September with a total of 11 rookeries found. The forecast spring winds will most likely damage some nests before control can take place.

(b) Rabbits

The regional rabbit population remains relatively low. There continues to be some pockets of high numbers in the Kapiti district where it has been shown that rabbits have a high immunity to the RHD virus.

A rabbit bait station trail has started on private land in Waikanae. Pest animal staff have constructed several designs which will be trailed out, with the aim of creating an effective bait station that can be used in public areas and by landowners using a method of baiting that does not require a Controlled Substance Licence.

(c) Possums

Meetings were held with WCC regarding starting a new possum control area in the south of the Karori Sanctuary, known as the Rural HALO, and how this will link into the Regional Possum and Predator Control Programme.

(d) Feral cats

Night and day inspections have occurred in Chartwell, Wellington, at a site where a member of the public is feeding a cat colony on WCC land. Staff assisted WCC in controlling an unwanted cat colony in Newlands which was formerly part of the SPCA Trap Neuter Release programme.

2.4.2 Pest Plants

(a) Surveillance and Total Control

Annual inspections are underway across the region for perennial nettle, eel grass, moth plant and woolly nightshade. Staff inspected 250 properties on the Kapiti Coast with no new sites found. A number of at risk Wairarapa rivers were surveyed on foot for perennial nettle with no new infestations found.

(b) Containment

Seasonal boneseed survey and control continued at the usual coastal Wairarapa settlements and Queen Elizabeth Park. Our efforts are proving successful with few flowering plants found.

(c) Biocontrol

A number of biocontrol sites are being inspected for spring insect activity for collection and dispersal.

2.4.3 BioWorks

(a) TB Free New Zealand Control Programme

The TBfree NZ programme for 2015/16 consists of:

- Two aerial 1080 possum control projects (14,037 ha)
- Four possum detection and survey projects (11,475 ha)
- One output possum control project (1,770 ha)

One aerial project was completed in September and the other is awaiting suitable weather conditions. The possum detection and survey work has commenced in the Whangaehu Valley.

(b) Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP)

The RPPCP will cover approximately 68,000 hectares during the 2015/16 year. There is approximately 2,900 ha of new initial control areas.

3. Environment Management

3.1 Harbours

3.1.1 Navigation aids

Two Porirua channel marker lights had new batteries fitted, and one had a new light-unit fitted.

Otherwise, all other navigation lights operated satisfactorily.

3.1.2 Beacon Hill

A new temporary 'relieving' staff member completed training in early October, and is therefore available on an 'as-needed' basis for emergency reliefs of rostered staff due to unexpected illness, when other staff are already away on leave.



New large radar scanner fitted at Beacon Hill in August

3.1.3 Marine Oil Spill Response

Due to planned demolition of the shed where oil pollution response equipment (and other items) are currently stored by early 2016, alternative storage has been obtained in Tyers Road, off Ngauranga Gorge and transfer of the bulk of the equipment into the new store is planned to be completed during November 2015. A limited quantity of "first-aid" oil pollution response equipment will be stored at the north end of Aotea Quay, inside the port area.

A regional oil pollution response exercise is organised to be held at Porirua on 28 October.

3.1.4 Other events

On 18 September a severe earthquake in Chile resulted in a tsunami warning being issued for NZ ports.

Interislander's replacement ferry *Kaiarahi* arrived in Wellington on 24 September from Singapore. She is scheduled to enter limited service across Cook Strait on 12 October.



Kaiarahi at Aotea Quay after arrival at Wellington on 24 September



Interislander's old ferry Arahura sailed from Wellington on 3 October, bound for Alang, India, for scrapping.

On 1 October Harbourmaster attended the NZ Safer Forum Boating meeting, chaired by Maritime New Zealand in Wellington.

For several years the hulk of an old fishing vessel, *Southern Prospector*, has been lying derelict in the port. In October 2014 a Resource Consent was obtained by a contractor working with the owner of the vessel to strip the vessel of all pollutants and floatables and scuttle it in deep water in the chartered Cook Strait Explosives Dumping Ground in Cook Strait, in nearly the same position as previous scuttling's in recent times. However, after having completed a large part of the process, in recent months, lack of further funds from the owner has resulted in the contractor ceasing work and withdrawing from the contract. Thus it may be necessary for CentrePort and GWRC to work together to complete disposal of this vessel.



The derelict fishing vessel Southern Prospector in July 2013

CentrePort's 2015-2016 cruise ship season started earlier than planned when *Diamond Princess* arrived from Sydney on 3 October after a severe weather forecast for her intended destinations of Port Chalmers and Akaroa resulted in the cancellation of those port calls, staying two days in Wellington instead.

Exercise "Ruaora" on 13 October was designed to test the multi-agency response to a Mass Evacuation Incident (serious marine casualty to a passenger ferry or cruise ship).



GWRC Harbours participated in the nationwide NZ Safer Boating week (16-23 October) by providing a safety boat for the wharf-jump, and by holding a water-safety display at Queens Wharf thereafter. Various media releases were made to promote interest in this period.

4. Strategy

4.1 Waste Management update: WMMP Joint Committee

The territorial authorities in the Wellington Region jointly prepared and adopted the Wellington Region Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) in 2011. Waste Management and Minimisation Plans are required by

the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, and must be reviewed every five years. The region's territorial authorities are now beginning to review the WMMP.

The region's territorial authorities have re-established the Wellington Regional Waste Management and Minimisation Plan Committee. The Committee has the purpose of overseeing, supporting, monitoring and reporting progress towards achieving the intent of the WMMP.

GWRC's appointee to the Wellington Region Waste Forum, Cr Paul Bruce, has been invited to attend meetings of the Joint Committee.

A WMMP Steering Group composed of senior council officers from the respective territorial authorities has also been re-established, and GWRC will be represented at these meetings.

5. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

5.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report*

Report approved by:

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Report approved by:

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