

Report 12.202  
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Committee Council  
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## **Report on Environmental Wellbeing Committee 30 May 2012**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Council of the Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting of 30 May 2012.

### **2. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

### **3. Public participation**

#### **3.1 Paul Hughes – Selling plantation forestry cutting rights**

Mr Hughes spoke to the Committee in support of Greater Wellington selling forestry cutting rights and the need to protect biodiversity and freshwater ecosystems in plantation forestry areas. Mr Hughes outlined some of the environmental and economic problems associated with plantation forests and considered there to be an opportunity for Greater Wellington to promote good land management and riparian practices.

### **4. Reports**

#### **4.1 MAF restructuring and potential impacts on Greater Wellington biosecurity functions**

The MAF restructuring will impact on the ability of Greater Wellington to deliver pest management and biosecurity functions. The size of the team responsible for biosecurity within the new Ministry for Primary Industries has been reduced, resulting in a loss of biosecurity resource. This is likely to have some negative impact on the ability to deliver national biosecurity functions. However, a proposed change to the Biosecurity Act 1993 should improve pest management across the region and assist with boundary problems as DOC and LINZ will have to meet the requirements of Regional Pest Management Plans (RPMPs). The extent of commitment to the Plans will be influenced by Crown budget limitations. The Committee noted a future opportunity to work more closely with Horizons and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council in developing consistent RPMPs.

## **4.2 Biodiversity Department Operational Plan 2012 - 2015**

The Committee commended the successful establishment of the Biodiversity Department and noted the importance of its responsibility to implement the key actions in the Greater Wellington Biodiversity Strategy. The Operational Plan outlines the Biodiversity Department's functions and describes the programmes and projects the department intends to undertake over the next three financial years. The Biodiversity Implementation team will focus on managing high value biodiversity areas across the region. Most of their work will focus on pest control activities.

In future, Care Group programmes will be aligned with high value biodiversity sites. Some Care Groups have another two to three years of funding allocated for their existing projects and this will be honoured. Officers will provide Councillors with a list of the current Care Groups with detail about the funding arrangements for their projects.

The Committee expressed a keenness to visit some high value biodiversity sites. Officers will schedule a site visit plan for the Chair's consideration.

The Operational Plan is an internal document at this stage and will be implemented from 1 July 2012. Officers agreed to provide a presentation of the Operational Plan to Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee, following implementation.

## **4.3 General Managers' report**

The Regional Sector Group has recently established a Land and Water New Zealand website ([www.landandwater.co.nz](http://www.landandwater.co.nz)), which will be a helpful resource for regional councils and the public.

Progress on the Akura Nursery expansion has been delayed due to water issues. Negotiations are taking place to access enough water from adjoining properties to start the phase one planting programme.

The Committee was informed that a new care group of farmers in South Wairarapa have purchased a supply of dung beetles to be released over 2,400 ha. Beetles are currently being mass reared at Landcare Research Ltd facilities near Christchurch. GW will assist with monitoring the environmental effects of the beetles

Greater Wellington received \$20,000 from the Enhanced Access Fund to build a walkway to the eastern side of Lake Wairarapa south of the Oporua Floodway.

The Chair thanked Councillor McPhee for attending the six Catchment Scheme meetings that have been held over the last month.

The Committee asked about how Greater Wellington accounts for carbon credits, and asked that Murray Kennedy, General Manager, Development, email this information to Committee members.

**5. Recommendations**

*That the Council:*

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

Report prepared by:



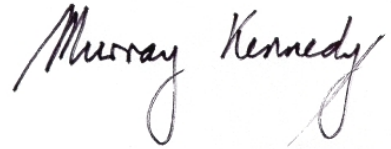
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