

Report 2017.194
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Committee Environment
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Climate Change Strategy Implementation Plan progress

1. Purpose

To provide the committee with an overview of progress on the implementation of the GWRC Climate Change Strategy.

2. Background

The Council adopted the GWRC Climate Change Strategy (the Strategy) and Implementation Plan in October 2015. The Strategy is designed to align and coordinate climate change actions across GWRC's responsibilities and operations, acting as a guide for climate resilience activities and providing clear strategic direction on GWRC's intentions and priorities in this respect.

The Implementation Plan contains a list of performance measures, and a table of actions designed to achieve the strategic objectives and policies set out in the Strategy.

This report provides a summary of progress against the performance measures and the actions, enabling the Committee to ascertain how GWRC is progressing towards achieving the objectives, policies and vision of the Strategy.

3. Summary of progress

The three overarching objectives set out in the Strategy are:

Objective one - Mitigation

Greater Wellington will act to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across all its areas of influence, including its own operations, helping to create the conditions for a smart, innovative, low-carbon regional economy.

Objective two - Adaptation

Risks from climate change related impacts are managed and resilience is increased through consistent adaptation planning and actions based on best scientific information.

Objective three – Awareness

Community awareness of climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions increases and organisations and individuals know what they can do to improve the long term resilience and sustainability of the region.

3.1 Policies and actions

The policies designed to give effect to the objectives are set out in **Attachment 1** to this report along with the actions designed to achieve them. Commentary is provided against each action. Additional actions that emerged during the time since the Strategy was adopted are also listed.

Notable progress relating to the mitigation focused policies include GWRC's corporate emissions¹ reducing by 3.8% between 2014/15 and 2015/16; and the work that has been done to promote electric vehicles and integrate them into GWRC's operations.

Electric vehicles produce at least 80% less greenhouse gas emissions than a vehicle with an internal combustion engine (ICE). Emissions from fleet vehicles make up 41% of GWRC's corporate emissions. In 2016 GWRC changed its corporate vehicle purchasing policy to prioritise the purchase of electric vehicles, meaning ICE vehicles are now only purchased when no suitable electric option exists.

GWRC's approach to the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) bus procurement process was the first in New Zealand to incentivise operators to provide low emission bus fleets and the consequent contract with Transit includes the phase in of 32 electric buses from July 2018.

Initiatives promoting active travel and ride sharing are having a proven effect with GWRC programmes achieving significant reach across the region. For example, the Aotearoa Bike Challenge saw 1,916 participants from 198 workplaces cycle a total of 285,719 kms during February 2017, saving an estimated 57 tonnes of CO₂.

GWRC's role in enabling forests in the region to draw CO₂ down from the atmosphere (carbon sequestration) is significant. Possum control and Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) programmes help maintain the carbon sequestration capacity of forests located within the 129,000 ha under GWRC control (the KNE programme encompasses 48,000 ha of mostly forest ecosystems and regional possum control covers over 81,000 ha of the region). Trees planted through biodiversity and parks programmes along with erosion control initiatives have resulted in thousands of new trees being planted each year.

The organisation has developed a Climate Change Consideration Process, which requires all new initiatives and all Council and Committee decisions to

¹ Corporate emissions include the GWRC vehicle fleet, electricity used to power the offices, depots and infrastructure, waste, staff commutes and work-related travel. The corporate emissions inventory is currently being updated and results for 2016/17 will be available in September 2017.

include a climate change assessment. This ensures that GWRC has a consistent, organisation wide system in place that enables officers to assess the emissions associated with an activity and to consider how the changing climate could affect GWRC's functions and services in the future.

Futureproofing for the impacts of climate change requires robust information about the anticipated changes, enabling GWRC to manage uncertainty while preparing for inevitable change.

Officers have commissioned requisite information (e.g. the 2017 NIWA Climate change and variability report), applied projections to specific projects (e.g. Riverlink – Hutt River) and established region-wide initiatives to enable other Councils and stakeholders to utilise this information and prepare accordingly (eg. Natural Hazards Management Strategy).

More detail is provided in the commentary for individual actions in **Attachment 1**.

3.2 Performance measures

When the strategy was adopted in 2015, the Implementation Plan included a number of performance measures. These are provided in **Attachment 2** to this report along with commentary about progress that has been made against them. In some instances, officers have found that the performance measure was not the best fit for purpose and this is noted along with suggestions for a better metric going forward. In other instances, the relevant data has not been updated since 2015, and so reporting performance against such measures is not possible at the current time. In some cases it is not possible to demonstrate a trend as the actions that have been taken are not quantifiable from year to year - appropriate commentary is provided for such situations.

4. Communication

No communications activities are required as a result of this report.

5. Consideration of Climate Change

No decision is being sought in this report.

The matter/s addressed in this report have been considered by officers in accordance with the process set out in the GWRC Climate Change Consideration Guide. Because this report addresses the actions of the GWRC Climate Change Strategy directly, climate change assessments are not required.

6. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

6.1 Engagement

Since the Strategy was adopted, a webpage on the GWRC website has been kept up to date with information about GWRC's climate change related activities (www.gw.govt.nz/climatechange). This report will be linked to from that page.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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Attachment 1: Climate Change Strategy Actions – summary of progress to date

Attachment 2: Climate Change Strategy Performance Measures – summary of progress to date