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Committee Policy, Finance & Strategy Committee
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Greater Wellington Environmental Awards Programme

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of a proposal for an environmental awards programme for Greater Wellington.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

In 2005 Councillors raised the possibility of a Greater Wellington awards scheme as a way to reward and recognise members of the community for their contribution to the care of the environment and the management of our recreational facilities.

Officers from the Environment Management, Catchment Management, and Water Supply, Parks & Forests divisions have investigated this question and developed a framework for a Greater Wellington Regional Environmental Awards scheme. The scheme is outlined in detail in the attachment to this report.

4. Discussion

4.1 Purpose of the awards

The aim of the proposed environmental awards is to publicly *recognise and reward* school groups, volunteers, individuals and organisations working with Greater Wellington to sustain or manage the region's natural resources.

To win an award, an applicant will need to be working with, or have an on-going relationship with, Greater Wellington. This focus has been chosen to ensure that our awards can be differentiated from and do not duplicate other award schemes already in place in the region to which anyone can apply, e.g., the Conservation Awards, Enviroschools Awards.

In developing the proposed awards we have been mindful of the last time Greater Wellington ran environmental awards in the early 1990s. That scheme was open to anyone working to improve the environment and consequently became large and unwieldy. The scheme proposed here is more narrowly focused and should be more workable over the long term.

4.2 Award categories

Under the proposed scheme awards would be made in three areas corresponding in general terms to the people and organisations working with Greater Wellington on environmental sustainability and the management and use of our parks and land network. These categories are:

- Schools, students, and teachers (Sustainable Project Awards and Environmental Leadership Award)
- Community groups, care groups, landowners, advocacy groups, individuals (Partners in Sustainability Award)
- Consent holders (Compliance Award)

The Partners in Sustainability Award would be open to anyone working with us to achieve a more sustainable region and could include advocacy groups, parks management groups, transport related groups, and so on. There would be four awards for schools in total (for junior, middle, and senior classes) and, while there is only one Partnership award, there is provision for merit awards in all three categories to recognise other valuable contributions.

At this stage no award is proposed for businesses working with us to improve their sustainability. The Get Sustainable Challenge, sponsored by us in 2006, is a more than adequate substitute for this.

The Compliance Award, which businesses would be eligible for, is a good way to recognise the contribution consent holders make to the sustainable management of the environment. This group is often overlooked when it comes to receiving recognition from the Council for a job well done.

4.3 Administration and cost

The awards would be judged by a combination of Councillors and external judges, assisted by officers. They would be made annually with a ceremony in November, with the first awards in 2007.

We expect that most of the staff time needed can be met from within existing allocations but some administrative assistance will be needed. We have costed

the exercise at \$18,000, including this assistance, prizes and associated costs eg printing, refreshments etc.

4.4 Promotion and marketing

An awards programme of this nature presents plenty of opportunities to promote Greater Wellington and the work of those receiving awards. The press looks very favourably on the Enviroschools Awards and gives them considerable coverage. Greater Wellington's awards would receive the same kind of coverage, keeping these aspects of Greater Wellington's work in the public eye.

A marketing plan would be prepared and circulated. Experience shows the publicity and approval which the winners of other awards receive is very motivating to them. By publicising the winners in *Elements*, on the Greater Wellington website and in the media, we would give wide recognition to these groups and increase their standing in their communities, leading potentially to a larger number of members.

5. Summary

This awards programme is intended to reward the many groups and individuals working with us and confirm their value and significance. The approval and encouragement given by Councillors to care groups, for example, is highly valued by them and this would be another way of helping this to happen. There is a very strong belief amongst many of those we work with that they are working in partnership with us; the awards would strengthen that belief. Whilst only a few schools or groups would receive awards, the ceremony itself and subsequent publicity would be an effective mechanism to celebrate the efforts of all of these people.

6. Communication

At this stage, no communication of the matters referred to in this report is necessary. Promotion and marketing would occur in accordance with the marketing plan.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee recommends that Council::

- 1. **Receive** the report,*
- 2. **Note** the contents; and*
- 3. **Agree** with the concept in principle and consider the funding implications as part of the Annual Plan 2007/08 review.*

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Attachment 1: Greater Wellington Regional Environmental Awards