

# Summary of submissions, officer comments and recommendations

## 1. Rates, financial strategy and investments

### 1.1 Summary of submissions

#### 1.1.1 Overall approach

4 submitters commented on the overall financial strategy, giving general support to the strategy and particularly the proposed savings. One submitter requested further project costing data citing best practice in public sector accountability, and urged that greater savings be identified before the Annual Plan is finalised.

#### 1.1.2 Appropriate level of rates

Six submitters commented on an appropriate level of rates. 5 of the 6 specifically supported the financial prudence that allowed for a lower than budgeted level of rates.

- One recommended an increase constrained at a maximum level of Consumer Price Index
- Another recommended increasing the Uniform Annual General Charge percentage to the maximum allowance of 30%.
- One was concerned that GWRC's rating differentials mean businesses are paying more than their fair share relative to other sectors.

More information was requested by multiple submitters, specifically:

- Show percentage rates change by TA area in addition to average regional-wide change
- Expand impact statements to show the impact for rural and urban ratepayers as well as illustrate impacts on farm properties.
- Explain how the rates are determined, how the benefits of each program are deemed to fall on the different categories of ratepayers and how the rates are arrived at.

Some submitters stated a preference for using the Consumer Price Index over the BERL Local Government Price Index as it is more relevant from a ratepayers point of view.

### 1.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

GWRC constantly reviews its projects and their timing to ensure they are delivered cost effectively when needed. More detailed project information is included in the LTP, and provision of the full cost of each project in the LTP will be considered going forward.

Most of GWRC's expenditure is infrastructure oriented, so our costs are more closely aligned with the local government cost index rather than the consumer price index. The BERL Local Government Price Costs Index is a better measure than Consumer Inflation Index (CPI). Consistently running rates at the level of the CPI may likely lead to poorly maintained assets and suboptimal outputs with overall disbenefits to the community, assuming that the BERL Local Government Price Index is greater than the CPI index. GWRC continues to pursue ways to reduce costs.

GWRC constantly reviews its projects and their timing to ensure they are delivered cost effectively when needed. Our rating policies are included in and consulted on during the Long Term Plan. Due to the nature of the work some cities or groups of rate payers pay more and some less than the average increase.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## **2. Regional leadership**

### **2.1 Emergency management**

#### **2.1.1 Summary of submissions**

One submitter suggested inserting 'at least' into the performance measure “% of households with emergency food and water to last *at least* three days”.

#### **2.1.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations**

Agreed. The performance measure should be amended to read "...to last at least three days". This is a minor amendment that does not require a change to the Long Term Plan.

**Officers recommend that the performance measure be amended to ‘at least’ three days.**

### **2.2 Governance**

#### **2.2.1 Summary of submissions**

Six submitters commented on their preferred governance arrangements for the Wellington region. These submissions oppose a unitary council and support existing councils maintaining autonomy citing:

- The need for a region-wide referendum
- Concern that unitary councils may not give the same attention to maintaining expertise, capability and commitment to the care of the region's indigenous biodiversity and ecosystem services, and that fewer specialist staff and funds will be allocated to these functions.
- The existing two-tier model is more likely to result in effective local input and better region-wide decision-making, while stressing that Wellington CBD businesses cross-

subsidising suburban residents and businesses on the fringe of the region must be avoided.

## 2.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

GWRC is currently considering community views on the best local government structure for the Wellington Region, and these will inform their consideration of whether or not to lodge an application for reorganisation with the Local Government Commission. Ultimately it will be the Commission that decides the best model for Wellington. While no longer compulsory, Councillors support a poll on any changes proposed by the Commission. This is expected to happen sometime in 2014.

### **Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14**

## 2.3 Regional climate change strategy

### 2.3.1 Summary of submissions

One submitter commented on the draft Regional Climate Change Strategy, providing comprehensive suggestions for the content and giving a detailed outline of what living in Wellington in 2020 could look like.

### 2.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

In developing a draft Regional Climate Change Strategy Greater Wellington Regional Council is clearly acknowledging the impacts of climate change as 'real' and that there is a pressing need to respond at all levels of government.

The Strategy being developed is based on current best practice and uses guidance material provided by Ministry for the Environment and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Up-to-date data is sourced and collected locally from the CO<sup>2</sup> Clean Air Monitoring Station at Baring Head. We are also interested in the work currently underway to form the IPCC Firth Assessment Report (AR5) which will cover climate change impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. The strategy is intended to be a dynamic document and is expected to be periodically updated to reflect the best science available. GWRC and a number of the territorial authorities in the region are looking to update the GHG emissions inventory for the region. This will form the basis for emission monitoring according to sector, and hopefully will support emission reduction initiatives and targets for the region.

The impacts of climate change are also included in other GWRC planning documents including the Regional Policy Statement, Regional Land Transport Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy and flood protection plans.

There is definitely scope for collaboration at all levels of government, NGOs, community and other organisations in the response to the impacts of climate change. Greater Wellington is open to working with others on pilot projects or programmes that would improve community awareness and demonstrate community leadership.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

2.4 Participation in local decision making

2.4.1 Summary of submissions

One submitter suggested exploring ways to encourage participation in local decision making beyond written submissions. This might include more 'Hot Seat' events by councillors to discuss informally the issues and policies that affect a local group; investigating how schools could teach students more about their democratic responsibilities; and staging 'Get out and VOTE' campaigns targeting age groups to encourage democratic voice.

2.4.2 Officer comment on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

There will be a comprehensive national and local government campaign focused on participation in the 2013 elections. This will include the electoral enrolment update campaign, the opportunity for schools to participate in the "Kids Voting" initiative and the Youth Parliament, as well as local initiatives across the Wellington region encouraging people to stand as candidates for election and to vote.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

2.5 Other regional leadership matters

2.5.1 Summary of submissions

Four submitters commented on GWRC's leadership role and participation in regional strategies. One suggests that there is no evidence that GWRC is a regional leader citing actions during the recent drought and a regional governance meeting that included both Hutt City and Upper Hutt. Two provided support for GWRC's work on the Grow Wellington, Wellington Regional Strategy, Wellington-Wairarapa Cycleway and Great Harbour Way project.

2.5.2 Officer comment on points raised in submissions and recommendations

Many of Greater Wellington Regional Council's activities involve partnerships and other collaborations with the region's TAs and other groups and organisations. The Council works hard to develop shared objectives and implement shared plans. The recent water shortages arising from the exceptionally dry summer is a good example of the affected councils working together to manage the risk of the metropolitan parts of the region having significant water restrictions imposed. Likewise, the Council is pleased to be involved with projects like the Great Harbour Way and the Wellington-Wairarapa Cycleway, and to promote active transport alongside its partner organisations.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

### 3. Public transport

#### 3.1 Provision of information

##### 3.1.1 Summary of submissions

Two submitters requested further information on the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) be publically notified, with one commenting that GWRC did not provide detailed costings within the consultation period, particularly for the Transport Rate.

##### 3.1.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

Information on the new PTOM model is published on the Ministry of Transport's website at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/ptom/>. Aspects of the model are still under development, and it is not possible to isolate the extra costs associated with this model as much of the procurement work is a necessary business-as-usual requirement.

GWRC's Annual Plan process meets statutory requirements as do its responses to information requests under the Local Government Information and Meetings Act 1987.

#### **Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

#### 3.2 Cost of PT Projects

##### 3.2.1 Summary of submissions

Two submitters have concerns about the cost of Public Transport projects, with particular concern for unbalanced investment in rail which they believe is being unfairly subsidised by ratepayers, businesses and other transport users. It is suggested that the contract between GWRC and its rail provider needs to ensure the most efficient and equitable sharing of the costs and benefits between the parties. Also questioned is why the 62 trolley buses need so much more capital investment or that such an investment is worth the benefits outlined for this special mode of transport.

Four submitters provided support for Public Transport projects, with specific comments made on improved efficiency, reliability and service. One request was made for more bus stops with seats for older bus users in Kapiti.

One submitter was disappointed to see bike racks on buses is not part of this year's plan. This would provide a significant improvement in the integration of public and active transport and well suited for the topography of the Wellington region. They also encouraged a pilot of high-quality bike storage facility at a well-suited train station.

##### 3.2.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

GWRC operates a network of public transport services with both rail and bus playing important roles. Both must work effectively for the whole network to function in an integrated manner. Whilst more trips are made on bus, there is a higher number of passenger kilometres travelled on rail than on bus. The operating cost of the rail service has

reduced during the 2012/13 year as reported to Council in May [http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report\\_PDFs/2013\\_174\\_2\\_Attachment.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2013_174_2_Attachment.pdf)

It is pleasing to see the positive responses and support for our public transport services. The investment in rail over the past few years is starting to pay dividends in improved service reliability. Wairarapa train services were reviewed as part of the Wairarapa public transport review and one change that was implemented was to reconfigure the number of carriages on some services to better match passenger demand. Further improvements are to be made mid-2013 when the upgraded SE carriage fleet is introduced on the line. While no additional services are planned the new fleet should deliver improved reliability and more capacity. Our investment in bus stop infrastructure continues and we are about to introduce a new prioritisation tool that will assist in determining where the investment is most needed.

GWRC continues to investigate cycle storage facilities at railway stations. Proposed designs for a new cycle shelter to be located at Wellington Railway Station have now been accepted by KiwiRail. Officers are in the process of submitting an outline plan of works and building concept application. It is expected that the new cycle facility will be open for use by mid to late May. This proposed project will provide space for 20 cycles in a lockable cage and will include solar powered lighting. Existing cycle lockers will be relocated to other stations where demand has been identified.

### **Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## **3.3 Public transport fares**

### **3.3.1 Summary of submissions**

Four submitters commented on fares, with general opposition to a fare increase. One suggested getting the train lines and trains paid for and running dependably before implementing the new fare structure and swipe cards.

Another would like to see train costs reduce or remain static for a reasonable period of time, but given that costs are rising and the train network requires investment they accept the proposal to increase train fares, rather than through a general rates increase.

One submitter cited the lack of information, as per 3.1 above, to indicate that GWRC has yet to consult the public on the PT fare increases assumed in the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.

### **3.3.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations**

GWRC has a long established policy of annually reviewing its public transport fares against its fare recovery targets. The current review ([http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report\\_PDFs/2013\\_40\\_1\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2013_40_1_Report.pdf)) recommended a lower fare increase than had been signalled in the LTP on the grounds that:

- it is the minimum increase that will achieve Council's target fare-box recovery, and therefore takes into account affordability concerns
- it is consistent with Council's preference for small, regular changes to fare levels rather than large infrequent changes.

Information regarding the 2013 fare increase was available on our website, in the media, and was provided in summary form in the draft Annual Plan 2013/14 consultation material, even though we acknowledge that a link referred to in the consultation material did not function as planned during the consultation period.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

3.4 Hutt Service Review

3.4.1 Summary of submissions

Three submitters commented on the Hutt Service Review, with suggestions including an upgrade of the Upper Hutt train station into a combined retail/transport centre; creating more inner city residential properties by building a car park building on the Park 'n Ride site with multi-level apartments above; support for a revitalised Upper Hutt Rail hub; and establishment of an additional service that forms a Public Transport link between Upper Hutt and Porirua with facilities for cyclists.

3.4.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

GWRC continues to work with Upper Hutt City Council on investigations into the potential redevelopment of the Upper Hutt Railway Station. Should the outcome of the investigation indicate that redevelopment is desirable and viable, funding for the redevelopment will be tested against other rail station related investment using the investment prioritisation tool that has been developed for this purpose (see [http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report\\_PDFs/2012\\_344\\_1\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2012_344_1_Report.pdf))

The area wide review of Metlink services in the Hutt Valley has commenced and will be progressed during the 2013/14 financial year. The review will include east-west connections to Porirua.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

3.5 Matangi Trains

3.5.1 Summary of submissions

There were six submissions on the new Matangi trains, with 3 in support of replacing the fleet with new trains as the better long-term solution, and 3 against. One submitter suggested that purchase of more Matangi trains instead of refurbishing the Ganz Mavags is a major investment decision made without adequate transparency or consultation, with another suggesting that the new trains are not reliable.

3.5.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

GWRC appreciates the support for the purchase of additional Matangi trains. We are already starting to see the positive impact from the investment in rail with higher revenue and lower operational costs than budgeted during the current year and patronage holding steady despite the current economic conditions in Wellington. We are looking to further improve the rail service with the purchase of the additional Matangi fleet.

The current number of Matangi trains is insufficient to meet the requirement of the current timetable at peak times, so more trains are still required. Currently the additional requirements are met from the ageing GanzMavag fleet. All of our analysis suggests indicates that it is better to invest in more Matangi trains than to refurbish the GanzMavag units, and the vast majority of respondents to our public survey supported the proposal [http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report\\_PDFs/2012\\_444\\_1\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2012_444_1_Report.pdf)

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

### 3.6 Integrated Electronic Ticketing

#### 3.6.1 Summary of submissions

Three submitters commented on the Integrated Electronic Ticketing project, all supporting the decision to wait for Auckland to resolve their issues first.

#### 3.6.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

The support indicated for a region-wide electronic integrated ticket is consistent with other feedback that the Council has received in the past. We believe that it is prudent to learn what lessons we can from Auckland's experience with its ticketing project, and hope that this information will assist us to make our own ticketing project a success.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## 4. Water supply

### 4.1 Summary of submissions

8 submitters commented on the resilience of water supply with general support for on-site water storage at individual properties (both compulsory or voluntary) and with support for various encouragement or assistance schemes such as inclusion on rates bills. One submission also supported a feasibility study for GWRC providing individual storage tanks. There was general support for greater water conservation education and awareness, noting that significant cost and additional demand can be forestalled if communities were more proactive in conserving water.

7 submitters commented on emergency storage, one in support for additional water storage capability with progress updates, and six with general opposition to damming the Hutt River, the Whakatiki, and to dams in general.

### 4.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

It is in the interests of the community and the environment to reduce water usage in the region. Reducing demand will delay expenditure on additional infrastructure and reduce the environmental impacts of public water supply. Each year Greater Wellington runs a summer water conservation campaign and spends in excess of \$100,000 on conservation and demand reduction activities. The table in Appendix 1 lists GWRC's media activity for



the 2012/13 summer. In addition to this annual campaign we are working with our customers, the four city councils, to develop a joint water management plan which will identify a range of conservation measures that can be applied to raise public awareness and reduce water use. In terms of education, GWRC has produced a teaching resource for schools. 'Turning on the tap' has been used by many schools in the region to teach students where tap water comes from and enable them to make informed choices about how they use it. This resource can be viewed at <http://www.gw.govt.nz/turning-on-the-tap/>. Our website also provided advice on water conservation and restrictions. GWRC encourages the installation of rainwater tanks and information on rainwater tanks is provided on our website <http://www.gw.govt.nz/rainwater-tanks>. The Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) has plans, in the next couple of months, to roll out a 200L rainwater barrel package for the Wellington region. The package is estimated to be around \$100 for a 200 litre rainwater barrel and downpipe diverter.

GWRC plans for the future needs of the region by projecting population growth, forecasting water demand for each city and providing the infrastructure required to maintain the agreed security of supply standard. While we currently provide a sufficient supply of high quality water, population growth will require us to increase our water supply capacity at some time in the future. The timing of the next major source is dependent on population and water demand per person trends. Based on latest modelling results additional storage capacity will be required in about 2020. However, if the current trend of modest population growth and declining demand continues, then the need for additional storage can be delayed saving the community millions of dollars per year. While we will continue to explore alternatives, at this point GWRC's preferred option for additional storage is to build off river lakes at Kaitoke. We are seeking to purchase land at Kaitoke for this purpose and have commenced preliminary planning for up to three lakes at this location.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

**4.3 Summer Water Crisis**

**4.3.1 Summary of submissions**

Two submitters commented on the recent water crisis, both suggesting that a review be carried out of how the drought was handled.

In addition to this, HCC also noted its support for the competent and professional manner in which Capacity Infrastructure Services (Capacity) operated during the recent water crisis, noted that the first advice Capacity received from GRWC on the impending water crisis was on 25 February 2013, and agreed that Councils and the public should have been alerted earlier about the impending water crisis.

**4.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations**

On 18 February, GWRC alerted Capacity infrastructure services (Capacity) and Porirua City Council about preparing to introduce a sprinkler ban, the process for which had been

worked out months beforehand. GWRC discussed the situation with Capacity and said that a sprinkler ban may be needed in a couple of weeks.

This was followed up by an email on 19 February, stating that we needed to raise public awareness about the possibility of restrictions now. This email contained a proposal to publish a pre-agreed joint watering restrictions advertisement (outlining the current restrictions and possibility of extra restrictions) and recommending that the advertisement be placed in the Dominion Post (23 February) and main community newspapers (from Tuesday 26 February to Thursday 28 February). It also contained our draft copy for a media statement warning of the rising prospect of a water shortage, which GWRC released on 21 February.

On 25 February we received advice from Capacity that WCC needed a council resolution before introducing water restrictions and that the earliest this could happen was in 10 days time, on the 7 March. Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua city councils were each ready to introduce a sprinkler ban at that time.

On 26 February Capacity advised that before they would make recommendations to Wellington City Council (WCC) on water restrictions, they needed further confirmation of the water supply situation.

We met with Capacity on 27 February to discuss water availability, demand and weather trends. The WCC resolution was passed on the 7 March and the sprinkler ban was announced on 8 March, to come into effect on Saturday 9 March (WCC had to advertise their resolution before it could be enforced).

A review of the summer water management will be held on May 31. Invited participants are water/infrastructure management staff from Wellington, Porirua, Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils, Capacity, Regional Public Health and WREMO.

#### **Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

##### **4.3.3 Fluoride**

12 submissions were received calling for fluoridation of the bulk water supply to cease. The reasons given to discontinue fluoridation included:

- a lack of scientific consensus that fluoridation is safe
- the health risks outweigh the health benefits
- it is not effective in treating tooth decay
- the legal basis for its use is open to challenge
- it is not used in other countries (particular Europe) and/or other parts of New Zealand
- it is a form of mass medication that negates individual freedom of choice.

#### 4.4 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations

All water sourced for water supply within the Wellington area contains a natural level of fluoride and GWRC, upon advice from the Ministry of Health (MoH), increases the fluoride level to achieve the guideline value set by the Drinking Water Standards of New Zealand.

The Drinking Water Standards have a Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) for fluoride of 1.5 milligrammes (mg) per litre. The MAV is the highest concentration of fluoride in water that is considered not to cause any significant risk to the health of a consumer over 70 year consumption of that water.

The lethal dose for fluoride (LD50) is 933 mg per kilogramme (kg) of body weight. The maximum concentration of fluoride in the water that we supply is 1 mg per litre, therefore a 75 kg person would need to drink almost 70,000 litres to receive a lethal dose.

In 1999 the GWRC considered the issue of fluoridation and made a decision to continue adding fluoride. In June 2012 we sought legal opinion on the lawfulness of adding fluoride to water supplied by GWRC. The resulting advice was that the 1999 decision was lawful and continues to be lawful. The relevant legislation is:

- The Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 – Section 26 of the Act must be interpreted consistently with the Privy Council precedent of Attorney-General ex relatione Lewis & Anor v Lower Hutt City [1965] NZLR 116.
- Local Government Act 2022 – section 309

In response to the 2010 submissions on fluoridation GWRC requested feedback from the MoH regarding their policy and guidelines for the fluoridation of water supplies and the evidential basis for the fluoride levels set in the Drinking Water Standards.

In terms of policy, the MoH ‘strongly recommends water fluoridation as a safe, effective and affordable way to improve and protect oral health across the population. This position is adopted on the basis of a large body of historical and current research that confirms the safety of water fluoridation, within certain parameters.’

In May 2011 and again in August 2012 the MoH, Regional Public Health Service and the Wellington Medical Officer of Health presented to GWRC the views of the MoH and District Health Board regarding recent publicity and current research about the risks and benefits associated with water fluoridation.

It is in light of this information that GWRC, by agreement with the four City Councils, will continue its policy of water fluoridation for the cities of Upper and Lower Hutt (excluding Petone), Wellington and Porirua.

There is a wealth of fluoride information on the MoH website, <http://www.health.govt.nz/search/results/fluoride>. The information available through this website is up to date and deals with the majority of questions relating to the public health aspects of fluoride.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## 5. Environment

### 5.1 General

#### 5.1.1 Summary of submissions

Two submitters commented in support of the review of the Regional Plan, and seven submitters wrote in support of the collaborative Whaitua zone committees. In both instances submitters encouraged council to keep the process moving, and underpinned by strong data and analysis.

Three submitters commented in support of erosion control programmes, as long as effort is made to allow rivers to braid within their parameters and riparian plantings are encouraged vigorously.

Other submission points include:

- request for some specifics on environmental management of the harbours, and particularly the Porirua harbour system
- support for extension of farm advisory services to Mangaterere and Wairarapa Moana
- recommendation for a precautionary approach to the release, control and use of genetically modified organisms within the region.
- support for GWRC funding a contractor to work in the Waikanae River environs.
- greater effort should be put into ensuring environmental protection initiatives are integrated with community initiatives far more than they are at present.
- GWRC should start thinking through how to best respond to any reduction in DOC input to local resource management planning initiatives as well as changes in local government.
- suggestion to develop a regionally integrated planning framework; a standalone report “Nature Central”; commencing with facilitating integration at different levels and geographic areas; and identifying opportunities for better integration of conservation management activities.

#### 5.1.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations

GWRC has appreciated the active participation from many groups and individuals in the on-going review of the Regional Plan. We remain committed to active engagement with interested groups through the process of developing the Plan. It is also completely accepted that provisions in the plan must be underpinned by robust and well developed science and economic analysis.

GWRC appreciates the support for the development of the Whaitua Committees and the collaborative approach to land and water management. We are putting considerable resource into the establishment of these Committees to ensure that they are successful and

can lead to lasting and real outcomes for communities and the environment. The provision of robust scientific and economic information will be fundamental in terms of what is needed to allow these committees to make robust decisions, as well as processes to allow community values to be well understood and established around land and water management issues.

Officers note the support for erosion control plantings within the natural character of rivers. Riparian plantings are actively encouraged to manage stream bank erosion and overland flow of nutrients.

We note your comments on specific information on harbours, and in particular the Porirua Harbour. We will look at ways in which we might be able to expand the information provided in this area in the future.

Thank you for your support for farm advisory services. GWRC believes that the introduction of Land Environment Plans in to the Wairarapa Valley will bring widespread benefits to the environment, and improve on-farm productivity in the medium to long term.

Your concern about the genetically engineered organisms and nanoparticles are noted. GWRC currently has no involvement in this area of technology, however, we do strongly note your comments around the need to exercise a precautionary approach to this type of technology.

As part of its Biodiversity programme working on sites of high biodiversity value in the region, GWRC actively seeks partnerships with the community where appropriate.

The "Nature Central" initiative supported by GWRC, DOC and the two other lower North Island regional councils is currently exploring some of the concepts suggested by the submitter, particularly around the opportunities for integration.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

**5.2 Resource Management**

**5.2.1 Summary of submissions**

Seven submitters provided particular support for investment in Mangaroa peatland to protect it from further degradation, as well as establishing 'areas of ecological importance' for the region and study of Whakatikei wetlands.

Support was provided for the Waikanae River Environmental Strategy

Two submitters recommended prioritisation of on-going stream catchment management, and provision for work beyond flood protection. Specific mention was made of the Hutt River and the main streams of the Porirua catchment.

Further information was requested on the Porirua Harbour Monitoring Programme, and on the Regional Policy Statement Implementation.

Two submitters commented on compliance inspections of effluent to land consents, one in support of thorough compliance monitoring of all farms and one supporting less frequent monitoring based on compliance history.

## 5.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

We note your interest in managing the Mangaroa Peatlands. GWRC shares your interest and has noted the importance of the preservation of wetlands in our Regional Policy Statement. The Mangaroa Peatlands have in fact been identified for inclusion in our Biodiversity Management Area programme due to its representativeness of this type of wetlands. In the near future all landowners within the area will be contacted by GWRC and invited to collaborate on the planning to manage the values of the area.

Officers note that there is a project underway to identify priorities for catchment management actions such as riparian protection and land retirement to reduce sediment inputs into harbour.

The second generation Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region (RPS) was made operative on 24 April 2013 and is available on the GWRC website. The RPS identifies the regionally significant issues around the management of the regions natural and physical resources and sets out what needs to be achieved (objectives) and the way in which the objectives will be achieved (policies and methods).

GWRC officers inspect all dairy farms at least once per year to assess compliance against regional and national guidelines. The compliance schedule for dairy effluent discharges to land that has been altered in the RMCP provides scope for completing additional inspections on winter milkers and consents in the Lake Wairarapa and Mangatarere catchments. These activities present higher risks to the environment and should therefore be monitored up to twice per year. If there is good compliance with these consents (i.e. appropriate effluent storage is in place and the discharge is well managed) then compliance inspections could be reduced to annually. Officers do not believe that inspections less than once per year are appropriate.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## 5.3 Biodiversity Management

### 5.3.1 Summary of submissions

Four submitters commented on biodiversity management, with general support of the Biodiversity Strategy. More detail was requested, in particular the inclusion of project milestones relating to implementation activities, and reporting on the effectiveness of interventions.

One submitter thanked the council for funding provided to Enviroschools, and another noted that trust and respect between farmers, conservation interests, scientists and regulators should be the basis for partnership development to protect biodiversity on private land. Accordingly, GWRC should direct new or existing resources towards providing information, management and planning advice, assistance with funding applications to farmers and other private landowners and to facilitate in the building of cooperative and collaborative partnerships. The submitter would be keen to be part of such an initiative.

### 5.3.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Performance measures are specified in the LTP 2012-22 and are carefully crafted to provide measurement of council's performance for identified key activities. Officers believe that performance measures are at an appropriate level of detail.

The Biodiversity Strategy is published on the GWRC website and provides further detail on the actions. Performance against the Biodiversity Strategy is reported annually to the ELT, and officers note that this report could be made publically available on the GWRC website.

GWRC's Biodiversity Management Area programme works closely with private landowners to protect and manage areas of high biodiversity value across the region. This includes the provision of advice and, in some cases, financial assistance for things like legal protection, fencing and pest control.

### **Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## 5.4 Pest Management Strategy

### 5.4.1 Summary of submissions

Eight submitters commented on pest management, with general support for bovine Tb and possum control programmes. Submitters urge expansion beyond possum control to other animals and plants of concern. One submitter requested more information on sites while another recommends an awareness campaign to raise GWRC's leadership profile in managing ecological and economic pests.

### 5.4.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Support for our pest management programmes is noted. Pest plant and pest animal control is a success story in the Wellington region, and the input and involvement of the community is essential to ensure that this continues. The Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) is the document that guides our control work. The results of our comprehensive pest management programmes are reported annually in the RMPS Operational Plan Report and available from <http://www.gw.govt.nz/document-library-2/category/10>. The RPMS is due for review in 2014, and the submission and public hearing process will be used to guide the development of a new pest management document. The new plan will govern pest management in the Wellington region for the next 10 years.

GWRC will also continue to build on the new Regional Possum Predator Control Programme. This programme will expand into western parts of region, and will maintain pest control in areas of the region that have been declared Bovine Tb free by the Animal Health board (AHB).

As part of GWRC efforts to minimise the impact of pests on our primary production industries, we actively support the National Pest Management Strategy for Bovine Tb. We provide a share of the funding for Tb vector control programmes delivered in our region.

We also work closely with the AHB and DoC to ensure the Bovine Tb and DoC programmes maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## **6. Flood protection and control works**

### **6.1 Summary of submissions**

Submitters were general supportive of the proposed programme of works, with points made specifically supporting the Waikanae River Floodplain Management Plan (FMP), the Pinehavan FMP, and the Hutt River Stopbanks.

One submitter was particularly concerned about the type and level of activities that adversely impact the Hutt River and its ecosystem, stating that the river is a shell of the healthy functioning ecosystem that it once was. The submitter states that the exposed gravel beds of the river are continually being groomed by large earthmovers which has a devastating adverse effect on the invertebrate communities, prevents the proliferation of birdlife through nest destruction and results in an increased establishment of great swathes of weed species.

### **6.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations**

Support of the extensive flood risk reduction programme is noted. The development of FMPs across the region is well under way and Council has committed considerable funds over the next 10 years to the implementation of the outcomes of these plans. The continue support of the community for this programme is appreciated.

The management of the Hutt River is intensive, primarily as a result of the unaffordable consequence of failure of the flood protection systems. Flood damages in the Hutt City area alone are estimated to be in excess of \$1.5Billion in a major flood. Building development is very close to the Hutt River banks and we have little choice but to maintain the river within those narrow banks. That said GWRC has made considerable effort to minimise the effects of flood protection works both in the enhancement of the berms and in how the works are undertaken. The Hutt River has in the order of a million visitors per year meaning it is one of the most heavily used recreation areas in the region. Our work practices are continually changing to reduce their impact and we are committed to further scientific research to ascertain what affect our works have and how we can further reduce the impacts. We are currently preparing resource consent applications for our river management works in the Hutt River and are consulting widely on this application. We will make sure that Upper Hutt Forest and Bird are included in this consultation so that you can ensure your views are taken into account in any decisions made. We have received a number of submissions in support for the provision of an environmental river hand to assist with work in the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers. There were no submissions against this proposal and recommend maintaining this item as provided for in the Long Term Plan.



There were a number of submissions seeking additional flood mitigation information, particularly for the Rangiuru and Mangaone Streams in Otaki, the Mangaroa River in Upper Hutt and the Waipoua River in Masterton. Each of these areas are included in the review of existing FMPs or in new ones proposed to be commenced shortly.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## **7. Parks**

### **7.1 Summary of submissions**

10 submitters commented on parks issues. There is general support for the upgrades to regional parks, and some specific suggestions to investigate additional activities such as Fitness for the Elderly and putting resources into marketing campaigns for the public. One submitter suggested reinstating the Wellington Regional Recreation Initiatives Group with TA's & iwi.

There was also general support for specific initiatives such as the Whitireia Park Management Plan, Korokoro Stream and Speedy's Stream restoration, and the Wellington to Wairarapa cycleway. One group has recommended establishment of a marae precinct in QE Park along with other improvements such as a garden and weaving house.

### **7.2 Officer comments on points raised in submissions and recommendations**

The Parks Network Plan notes a management principle of providing a range of recreation opportunities within the network that cater for varying age, ability and experience. GWRC is interested in working with groups such as Grey Power, exploring options that may enhance values for the elderly.

We would envisage that any developments would be in keeping with the essential character of each park, and note that we believe it is the role of district and city councils to provide equipment that you might find in outdoor fitness circuits or similar.

GWRC works in partnership with other agencies and organisations to provide joint events e.g. Kev the Kiwi, buggy walks as part of the Great Outdoors Summer Events programme, and communicates regularly with other parks agencies, and works with iwi in the region at present. However, a group such as the Wellington Region Recreation Initiatives requires a significant level of resource to coordinate and deliver results, which are not currently available.

It is envisaged that the development of the Rimutaka Summit planned for 2013/14 will include relevant visitor information signage. We will be inviting Upper Hutt City Council to be involved with the detailed planning and implementation of this project.

It is expected that Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation will be finalised by the end of 2013. The Parks Network Plan notes that GWRC is to work with Ngati Toa Rangatira to jointly protect and manage the Wainui urupa, following vesting of the land in Ngati

Haumia. Wainui Pa site is recognised as a heritage site in the park, and we would like to work with Ngati Haumia on its future protection, interpretation and/or development. However, a marae precinct as described is a significant development that is not contemplated in the Parks Network Plan, and is therefore not included in our work programme. With regard to the Weaving House, Kapiti Coast District Council is taking over the management of that building and the relationship with the weaving collective as part of the creation of a "neighbourhood park" at the QEP Tilley Road entrance (as is indicated in the Parks Network Plan).

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## **8. Investments**

### **8.1 General**

#### **8.1.1 Summary of submission points**

Points raised in relation to investments are:

- A question of why Pringle House is now assumed for sale when last year strengthening was being considered?
- A statement that the need for the new Masterton building is debatable.
- A comment that GWRC has a number of assets, including Centreport, which the submitter believes it should consider divesting and reinvesting the proceeds into roads and other infrastructure.

#### **8.1.2 Officer comments on points raised by submitters and recommendations**

GWRC reviews its investments each year to ensure they remain an effective option for the Council's funds.

GWRC has reviewed all its buildings and is waiting with interest the results of the governance review for the region before progressing any building commitments. The Masterton building is on hold pending the outcome of regional amalgamation proposals.

We did not know at the time of approving the Long Term Plan that the cost of upgrading Pringle House would be substantial. Subsequently when accurate cost estimates were received it has proven uneconomic to upgrade. GWRC believes Centreport is a vital asset for the region and that it is in the community's interest to hold this asset long term.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## 8.2 Forestry

### 8.2.1 Summary of submissions

4 submitters commented on forestry. One submitter is in opposition to wildling pines. Three submitters commented on sale of forestry cutting rights – one in support of maintaining full recreational access to forests through the sale process, one querying the income and position of the sale process, and another noting that there is no reference to cutting rights in the draft Annual Plan.

### 8.2.2 Officer comments on points raised in the submissions and recommendations

Genetically modified wildling pines are not planted in GWRC forests. Wildling pines are managed as part of the overall management plan.

Existing recreational access and the harvesting of waste wood will be maintained through the sale of the cutting rights. Income from the sale of the cutting rights will be used to offset debt held by the forests.

The potential sale of cutting rights was outlined in the Long Term Plan and is currently going through a process to determine if a sale will be made.

**Officers recommend no change from the draft Annual Plan 2013/14.**

## Appendix 1

### Response on Resilience

<b>Summer water conservation campaign 2012/13</b>			
		No.	
<b>September</b>			
Press releases	Greater Wellington	1	
<b>October/November 2012</b>			
Radio	30 second ads - Breeze, Newstalk ZB, Classic Hits	346	
	Time Saver Traffic spots - Newstalk, Classic Hits, Coast, ZM, Hauraki, Radio Sport	99	
	Weather/news/sports headliner spots - Classic Hits	180	
Online	Trade Me, Metservice, Stuff	1,500,000	client impressions
	Facebook	1,600	clicks
Print advertisements	Dominion Post	5	
	Community papers	16	
Press releases	Greater Wellington	2	
Newspaper articles	Dominion Post	4	
	Community papers	2	
<b>December</b>			
Radio	30 second ads - More, Edge, Breeze	150	
Print advertisements	Dominion Post	1	
	Community papers (4)	4	
Online	Metservice, Stuff	334,000	client impressions
Newspaper articles	Dominion Post	2	
	Community papers	3	
<b>January/February 2013</b>			
Radio	30 second ads - Breeze, Newstalk ZB, Classic Hits	346	
	Time Saver Traffic spots - Newstalk, Classic Hits, Coast, ZM, Hauraki, Radio Sport	99	
	Weather/news/sports headliner spots - Classic Hits	446	
Online	Trade Me, Metservice, Stuff	2,100,000	client impressions
	Facebook	2,000	clicks
Print advertisements	Dominion Post	4	
	Community papers (4)	16	
Adshels	located in Wellington, Porirua and Lower Hutt	32	panels
Press releases	Greater Wellington	3	
Newspaper articles	Dominion Post	5	
	Community papers	10	

<b>March - 2 April</b>			
Radio	30 second ads - Breeze, Newstalk ZB, Classic Hits (during 16-18 March, 753 of the 1084 ads played on 28 different radio stations)	1084	
	Time Saver Traffic spots - Newstalk, Classic Hits, Coast, ZM, Hauraki, Radio Sport	132	
	Weather/news/sports headliner spots - Classic Hits	525	
Online	Trade Me, MetService, Stuff	687,500	client impressions
	Facebook	2,150	clicks
Print advertisements	Dominion Post	7	
	Community papers (4)	12	
Press releases	Greater Wellington	6	
Daily media advisories - started 19 March 2013	Greater Wellington	15	
Newspaper articles	Dominion Post	33	
	Community papers	16	
	Sunday News/Sunday Star Times	2	