

Report 13.745
Date 7 August 2013
File E/11/01/04

Committee Council
Author Wayne O'Donnell, General Manager, Catchment
Management

Report on the Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 6 August 2013

1. Purpose

To inform the Council about the meeting of the Environmental Wellbeing Committee that took place on 6 August 2013.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Report

3.1 Wairarapa Moana Clean Up Fund – Grant Rates

The Committee discussed the process and allocation of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) funding towards on-farm development works under the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean Up Fund Project (the Project).

The Project aims to improve the water quality being discharged off the neighbouring farmland into the Wairarapa Moana wetland complex. The total funding for the Project is \$2.3 million, with the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) funding 44% of the Project and the balance being met by a partnership of landowners, Department of Conservation (DoC), Ducks Unlimited, Dairy NZ and GWRC.

The Committee agreed that the grant rate system offered landowners a good incentive to contribute land and other resources to the Project. It was acknowledged that utilising funding from other organisations, such as MfE, for the clean-up works was beneficial to ratepayers, as these works would normally be predominantly ratepayer funded. The Committee also acknowledged that the Project was a mutually beneficial partnership agreement between GWRC, DoC, MfE, Dairy NZ and participating landowners, with the

partner agencies providing assistance to landowners and achieving downstream benefits for the Wairarapa Moana wetlands area as a result.

The Committee discussed the four recommended grant funding categories and the criteria in place for ensuring the funding provided by GWRC and the other agencies is well balanced across the categories. The percentage of the rate (grant funding) will be determined by the individual Project Manager. Criteria taken into consideration will include, amongst others, the value of the provided land, the likely financial benefit to the landowner and the benefits to water quality and biodiversity of the area.

The Committee expressed some concern regarding the level of detail around the criteria used to determine the grant rates. Officers agreed to provide the Committee with a case study for each of the four recommended grant rates categories, once the Project is underway.

3.2 General Managers' Report to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee 6 August 2013

The Committee discussed the Friends of the Waikanae River Annual General Meeting. The meeting resulted in the agreement of a moratorium on non-ecosourced native plants being removed from the Waikanae River. GWRC's current policy focusses on the planting of ecosourced natives, but is silent on the removal of other non-local native species. A meeting is to be held with the Friends of the Waikanae River, Kapiti Coast District Council and GWRC representatives to further consider this matter. It was also agreed at the meeting that GWRC would provide the Friends of the Waikanae River with the opportunity to comment on future policies affecting the Waikanae River.

The Committee discussed the gravel extraction volumes for rivers in the greater Wellington region and the associated cost to customers. It was noted that the price of gravel extraction varies across the region due to a range of variables, including management fees and monitoring costs.

The Committee received an update on the River Management Resource Consent project. There has been substantial engagement between GWRC's Flood Protection and Environmental Science departments on the project and the Code of Practice, which has now been agreed upon, is able to be updated as further scientific research is completed. The Code of Practice sits outside the Resource Consent allowing for a more streamlined process, as it removes the need to continuously update the resource consent with each new development.

The Committee discussed pest control and the need for greater publicity around GWRC's achievements in the eradication of pest plants and animals. A Biodiversity/Biosecurity communications plan is currently being formulated.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. Receives the report.*

2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager, Catchment
Management Group

Barbara Donaldson
Chair