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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee
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Energy Wise Council: Signing Ceremony

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the Energy Wise Councils Partnership, and to outline arrangements for the Greater Wellington Regional Council to sign up to the Partnership.

2. Background

The Energy Wise Councils Partnership is a co-operative activity between territorial authorities, regional councils and central government (through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, EECA). Greater Wellington has been a member of the parallel programme, Energy Wise Companies, since 1999.

The aim of both programmes is to improve energy efficiency and conservation. There is also a focus on enhancing renewable energy supply and use, in line with sustainable management.

A distinction that might be made between the two programmes is that the Councils Partnership extends the efficiency and energy conservation target beyond the organisation itself to the district or regional communities that the Councils serve.

There are currently some 15 Councils in the Partnership, including Auckland Regional Council, Environment Waikato and Environment Canterbury. Membership recognises the importance of taking an holistic approach to the sustainable management of energy, transport, air quality, water supply, waste and urban form. These are all policy areas in which Greater Wellington has responsibilities.

Attachment 1 sets out more information about what is involved with, and the benefits of, membership of the Partnership.

3. Comment

There is no fee to join the Energy Wise Councils Partnership, and signing the Memorandum of Understanding does not commit GW to stringent rules and regulations. The principles outlined in the Memorandum are not tied to legislation and make good sense. Compliance with the Memorandum would not be onerous, although it could require more explicit consideration and recording of energy performance in the Annual Plan.

Joining the Partnership would be of real benefit to GW. In particular, it would:

- Provide a clear demonstration that the Council supports sustainability,
- Give access to EECA funding (interest free loans), expertise (technical) and information;
- Provide opportunities for partnership projects and information exchange with other participants; and
- Demonstrate that the Council will walk-the-talk on energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy.

Given the initiatives GW is taking on sustainable energy development (wind farm research), its role in climate change management and the implementation of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy, together with current pressures on energy supply, it is timely and appropriate for GW to join the Partnership. Energy is also one of Council's Take 10 elements, and the Partnership principles are consistent with the approach, success measures and targets of our proposed LTCCP.

Officers have therefore negotiated with EECA for Greater Wellington to become a member of the Partnership.

4. Signing up ceremony

Officers are working with government officials so that the Minister of Energy, the Hon Pete Hodgson, can participate in a signing ceremony. If the Minister is not available, the Chief Executive of EECA will attend and can officiate in the signing ceremony.

The signing ceremony will be brief and is likely to take place in the Council Chambers. The details of the signing ceremony have not yet been confirmed. All councillors will be invited.

5. Communications

Notice of the signing ceremony will be sent to regional media by way of a press release and an invitation to attend the event. Good media coverage offers possibilities for all participants to give timely messages about energy use and sustainability.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *receive the report; and*
2. *note its contents.*

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