



**Report**                    **06.622**  
**Date**                      9 October 2006  
**File**                        ENV/13/07/01

**Committee**            **Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee**  
**Author**                 **Paul Denton Policy Advisor**

## **Draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan**

### **1. Purpose**

To seek Council's approval for the draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan for consultation. The Plan is enclosed (Attachment 1).

### **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. Context**

Greater Wellington's biodiversity programmes are guided by a series of action plans. Our riparian management strategy was adopted in 2002, and the Wetland Action Plan was adopted in 2003. Consultation is occurring on the Draft Indigenous Forests Action Plan is underway at the present time.

The purpose of the action plans is to set out in one document the overall vision and objectives for the particular biodiversity area to describe the component projects and indicate future possible directions. The plans allow the public, councillors and staff to understand what we are trying to achieve and can be used to assess the worth of new projects by referencing the overall vision and goals.

It is important to note that these plans are subservient to any statutory documents such as park management plans for specific areas or regional and district plans prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The biodiversity programmes are delivered cross-divisionally with budgetary responsibility and overall accountability for component projects remaining with the relevant divisions. Three divisions will implement the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan – the Environment Management Division, Catchment Management Division and the Forests, Parks and Water Division.

## 4. Background

Coastal and marine areas have many values including habitats for native and coastal species, biodiversity that contributes to recreation and tourism and places that are of high cultural significance to iwi.

Coastal ecosystems are vulnerable to a range of threats that include coastal residential development, grazing and pest animals, pest plants, vehicle access, and poor water quality in estuaries because of nutrient enrichment upstream. Modification of the coast means that a considerable proportion of some ecosystem types has been lost. For example, nation-wide less than 10% of our original coastal sand dunes remain close to their original condition.

In 2000, partly in response to the NZ Biodiversity Strategy, the Council increased its investment in halting the decline in regional biodiversity because it recognised the need to halt the continued loss of remnant areas, species, and ecosystem complexity, and to work towards restoring the region's ecological balance. Dunes, estuaries and coastal escarpments are ecosystem types that were identified as needing action in the Wellington region. The programmes that have been developed in response to these needs are described in the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Plan has been prepared by the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Group, comprising officers from across Greater Wellington, and is supported by the divisions involved.

## 5. What does the Plan cover?

The Plan covers the following:

- It describes why the Council needs to improve coastal and marine biodiversity in the region. Greater Wellington's statutory responsibilities for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in coastal areas is a key reason for working in this area.
- It demonstrates that Greater Wellington is taking a strategic and integrated approach to protecting and better managing valued coastal and marine areas in the region.
- It provides a strategic context against which expansions to existing programmes, or the formulation of new programmes, can be assessed.

The success or otherwise of the Plan can only be determined by a monitoring framework. Work will be needed to develop robust criteria to assess changes in a range of regional coastal ecosystem types.

## 6. Budgetary Implications

All work programmes covered by the draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan are currently funded and no 'new money' is required. Where justified, increases in funding levels for some component projects of the programme may be sought through the LTCCP process.

## 7. What happens next?

The draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan will now be discussed with Iwi, Territorial Authorities, Department of Conservation, Interest Groups and Landowners in the region.

A final Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan will be presented to Council before 30 June 2007.

## 8. Communication

Copies of the draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan will be distributed to interested parties and access provided from the Council's website.

## 9. Recommendations

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

1. **Receive** the report;
2. **Note** the content; and
3. **Adopt** the Draft Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Action Plan

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

**Paul Denton**  
Policy Advisor  
Environmental Policy

**Murray McLea**  
Acting Manager  
Environmental Policy

**Nigel Corry**  
Divisional Manager  
Environment

**Attachment 1:** Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Action Plan, Draft for Consultation