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Committee Ara Tahi
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Integrated Catchment Management Update

1. Purpose

To introduce the concept of integrated catchment management (ICM) to Ara Tahi.

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

The concept of ICM has been discussed on an informal basis for a number of years between Councillors, staff, Peter Flynn (Ngati Kahungunu) and outside agencies. Professor Russ Tillman, Head of the Natural Resources Department at Massey University, has offered to be involved in the development of the concept with GW. Currently he has a student, Leila Chrystall, completing a Masters degree compiling a resource inventory of the Ruamahanga River catchment. An informal group of interested parties meet under the auspices of Go Wairarapa to discuss and give input to the Ruamahanga project.

Professor Tillman also has staff assisting with the Papawai Stream restoration project. He is funding the current projects from the university's budget and he hopes in the long term to develop a formal relationship with GW which could include bidding for research monies jointly.

Ian Gunn has recently been appointed to a position to research the implementation of the ICM concept in GW. As indicated at the recent budget meeting his research has been limited. Attached to this report is a chapter from Leila Chrystall's thesis which shows how the concept ICM has developed.

4. Discussion

The best description I have of ICM is from the Murray-Darling basin in Australia.

“ICM is a process through which people can develop a vision, agree on shared values and behaviours, make informed decisions and act together to manage the natural resources of their catchment”

As you probably know this basin has problems of rising salinity and a high demand for limited water. The basin is in crisis and needs to decide with all parties what they want in the future, what are the constraints and how can they achieve their aims by working together. The trigger to implement the ICM process has been these significant resource issues.

Are there significant resource issues in GW? Yes I believe there are. Ara Tahi members may be aware how the resource consent process for the discharge from the Masterton oxidation ponds raised the issue of water quality in the Ruamahanga River catchment. For the first time communities downstream of Masterton voiced their concerns saying we have an interest in the water quality of the Ruamahanga River and what you do at Masterton will effect us downstream. Understanding the dynamics of the Ruamahanga River are poorly understood, e.g. what is the major source of sediment being deposited between the stopbanks in the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme (LWVDS).

The Waikanae River is the major source of water for the Kapiti Coast. There are issues regarding the management of the upper catchment such as pest control and vegetation cover. The river is a link to Kapiti Island, it needs to be crossed to ease transport bottlenecks and with increased urbanisation there are stormwater concerns.

The Porirua Stream includes three local government agencies, WCC, PCC and GW. GW has issues of flooding, PCC wishes to maintain the quality of the harbour. WCC may be about to take some initiatives in the upper portion of the catchment.

I note that John Holmes who recently retired was originally engaged to complete an ICM study of the Hutt River. That project was not completed because it became too big and there was a lack of buy-in to the concept by senior management.

This flags that there are clearly challenges in both introducing the concept and completing it. There is a requirement to undertake research including economic, social and environmental aspects of any project. Reviews of projects completed in Australia stress the importance of the environmental, policy, economic and social/cultural context. No one group must feel that they are being singled out for their practises. Partnerships need to be brokered for the long term which may include funding arrangements.

Perhaps the key challenge is how GW works to achieve integrated management on a regular day to day basis and in specific projects.

5. **Where to from here?**

I need to engage with staff to spread the understanding of the ICM concept and I need to develop an approach to deliver it. Currently I am mulling over some face to face discussions or the possibilities of a questionnaire. Any thoughts from the Committee will be gratefully received.

6. **Communication**

A consultation process will be developed, both internally and externally.

7. **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: