

Report 09.464
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Committee Regional Sustainability
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Communities for Climate Protection Programme

1. Purpose

This report updates the Committee about the Communities for Climate Protection – NZ programme and proposes Council’s withdrawal from it.

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

3.1.1 Council’s participation in CCP-NZ

Greater Wellington (GW) signed up to the Communities for Climate Protection programme (CCP-NZ) in 2006 and achieved Milestone 1 (development of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory) in July 2007. Milestones 2 and 3 entail the establishment of emissions reduction goals and an action plan to achieve these goals.

The CCP programme is split into two sectors – corporate and community. In April 2008 Council approved emissions reduction goals for the corporate sector (i.e. for the carbon emissions the organisation is responsible for directly in carrying out its functions) and a plan for achieving those goals was adopted in December 2008.

The Committee approved the adoption of a new regional greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and a new base year of 2006/07 for monitoring community emissions reduction progress at its meeting of 25 February 2009. Setting reduction goals for the community sector is still in progress and is a collaborative exercise with the territorial authorities.

3.1.2 Administration of the CCP programme in New Zealand

CCP-NZ is a programme offered by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Oceania. ICLEI Oceania has its headquarters in Melbourne, Australia,

and was contracted by the NZ government through the Ministry for the Environment to deliver the CCP programme in NZ. Wellington City Council provided a rent subsidy for their office. During the 2008/09 financial year, both WCC and MfE indicated that their funding would be discontinued from the beginning of the 2009/10 year.

4. Discussion

4.1.1 ICLEI/CCP-NZ response to funding withdrawal

As a result of the funding withdrawals by WCC and MfE, support was canvassed among local authorities for a self-supporting model to run the office in NZ via annual membership fees graduated according to population size and membership category. These fees ranged from a minimum of \$1000 annually to \$12,500. Previously, the participation fee was a relatively small one-off payment at point of entry to the programme. Informal conversation between officers of various councils indicated that the proposal was not widely supported, largely because it was unclear from the councils' perspective what value was being added for the additional fees being sought.

Very rapidly following the circulation of that initial proposal, a new proposal arrived from the CEO of ICLEI Oceania indicating that CCP-NZ would, in future, be run from their Melbourne office with technical assistance available on a fee for service basis from one of the previous CCP-NZ employees. They encouraged councils to join ICLEI itself for an annual fee ranging from US\$600 to US\$1750.

Essentially, CCP-NZ has folded and there seems little point in continuing to participate in it.

4.1.2 Alternatives to CCP-NZ

It is accepted that local government must continue to work with its communities to respond to climate change and informal discussions have taken place amongst some regional councils as to how to manage this. There is support for a coordinated approach and a mechanism to replace the CCP-NZ programme. A number of issues are recognised as drivers for such a mechanism:

- Cross-jurisdictional issues – climate change is no respecter of local authority boundaries
- The development of a single voice to influence central government
- The need for standard measurement tools and risk assessment methodologies which don't require too much effort from local government (especially small TLAs)
- The need for common interpretations of legislation and regulation to prevent being played off against each other

A replacement mechanism could potentially be funded by the monies which would otherwise have been applied to CCP-NZ fees. There are several possible models for such a mechanism:

- A stand alone body with independent funding from councils and its own structures. This would have the advantage of all funding being applied directly to climate change and the focus being undiluted.
- A body set up through LGNZ. This has the advantage of existing administrative support and structures.
- A body set up through the existing climate sub-committee of LGNZ's Regional Affairs Committee as a hybrid of the first two options.

4.1.3 Benefits of a local government climate change response mechanism

One of the major gaps in the CCP-NZ programme has been the lack of focus on adaptation to climate change. Setting up a local government mechanism would provide an opportunity to rectify this which would be particularly relevant for regional councils as adaptation actions will fall squarely into their existing core business activities – coastal management, flood protection, soil management, emergency management and so on.

If set up well, such a body could reduce the current considerable duplication of effort and ensure support of smaller councils (which may be some of the worst affected by costly flooding, and coastal and high-country erosion). The resultant strengthening of inter-regional networks would contribute to improving the resilience of the whole country.

Such a local government-managed mechanism would provide an opportunity to greatly leverage the influence of local government with central government on climate change – the power of the single voice. In discussions at officer level between councils a view is forming that exercising such influence may well be among the most effective actions local government can undertake. The scale of some of the responses required may prove to be too costly for local authorities to undertake. Central government contributions will be necessary to develop nationally consistent assessment methodologies and to implement those actions with national implications.

The development of simple online tools based on the IPCC emissions analysis model but designed for the New Zealand situation for inventory and re-measurement could be undertaken. Such tools could be based on a couple of good models already developed by New Zealand councils which would ensure consistency of *how* local government measures its emissions as well as *what* it measures, in turn allowing better benchmarking both nationally and internationally.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Approves withdrawal of Greater Wellington Regional Council from the CCP-NZ programme.*
4. *Authorises the Chair and CEO to pursue the development of a local government alternative to the CCP-NZ programme and report back to the Committee.*

Fran Wilde
Chair