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Committee Environmental Wellbeing
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Biodiversity Department Operational Plan 2012 - 2015

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the contents of the Biodiversity Department Operational Plan 2012-15 (the Operational Plan).

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. The information contained in this report is to inform the Committee how the Biodiversity department intends to structure its operations over the next three years from 1 July 2012.

3. Background

In June 2011 Council approved the Greater Wellington Biodiversity Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy provides a framework to guide Greater Wellington's activities to protect and manage indigenous biodiversity in the Wellington region for the ten years ending June 2021. It sets three goals for the organisation:

- Greater Wellington demonstrates leadership in biodiversity management
- High value biodiversity areas are protected
- Regional ecosystem functions are maintained and restored

The Biodiversity Department has a central role to play in implementing the Strategy and this is described in the Operational Plan.

4. Comment

The Operational Plan, which is appended as Attachment 1, explains the Biodiversity department's structure, functions and activities. It describes the nature and scope of the programmes and projects the department intends to undertake over the next three financial years (2012/13 – 2015/16).

The department comprises three complementary teams:

- Strategy and Systems
- Implementation
- Community Projects.

Each of the teams directs their efforts through work programmes. The objectives of each work programme are delivered through discrete projects defined by approved project plans.

5. Next steps

The Operational Plan will be implemented from 1 July 2012. An annual report documenting progress against the Operational Plan will be produced for consideration by the Committee.

6. Communication

The Biodiversity Department Operational Plan is an internal document at this stage. Consultation with key internal stakeholders has taken place during the preparation of the plan and will continue during its implementation. Both the Operational Plan and the Greater Wellington Biodiversity Strategy may be made available online when the new website is up and running with pages dedicated to biodiversity,

A communications plan has been prepared to inform, firstly, care groups, and the wider community about Greater Wellington's new approach to biodiversity across the region.

The key messages in the communications plan are:

- Regional councils need to focus on protecting the most important harbours, rivers, wetlands, forests and coastal areas in its region. This way each region contributes to the country's wider biodiversity network.
- Resources for biodiversity protection and management activities are limited and likely to remain so
- In the past 10 years there have been some great biodiversity wins at a local level with the Take Care programme and many communities have taken responsibility for biodiversity in their area.
- There will still be support for community groups but mainly in the form of advice. Some resources will continue to be provided for groups working on high value sites.

A more comprehensive communication plan is being drafted for a full range Greater Wellington's activities on biodiversity in line with the relevant key actions in the Greater Wellington Biodiversity Strategy.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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