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Committee Council

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Report on the Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting 10 September 2013

1. Purpose

To inform the Council about the meeting of the Environmental Wellbeing Committee that took place on 10 September 2013.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Report

3.1 Wellington Region – Flood Vulnerability and Climate Change Impacts Scoping Study

The current climate change values used by Greater Wellington Regional Council for hydraulic modelling were last reviewed in 2010. The Scoping Study presented to the Committee by officers recommended that these values be amended to future proof current and planned hydraulic modelling investigations as much as possible. The Committee noted however, that the values to be used for climate change predictions remain estimates only and are likely to change over time as scientific knowledge and techniques develop. The Committee endorsed the following interim Climate Change Design Criteria for flood hazard investigations/design:

- The increase in rainfall intensity to be used for calculation will be 20% by 2100
- The Sea Level Rise to be used for calculation is 0.8m by 2100.

The report compared Greater Wellington Regional Council's current flood hazard information advisory service with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's 'Floodcheck' and while the Wellington region is at a slightly different scale to Queensland, the same principles exist regarding access to information by the community. Information that Flood Protection holds is a valuable tool and may help the community make better decisions through being more aware of risks. The Committee endorsed the development of a strategy to improve accessibility to flood hazard information and advisory service. It was

noted that it would be desirable for the information to be provided free of charge.

3.2 Floodplain Management Plan Implementation: Annual Progress Report to June 2013

The Annual Progress report provided the Committee with an update on the progress made with implementing the floodplain management projects and confirmed that Flood Protection is meeting its targets as set out in the Long Term Plan. The completion of the Boulcott/ Hutt project one year ahead of schedule was a milestone for the department.

3.3 Confirmation of Flood Protection Asset Condition for 2012/13

Officers have been working on the development of the asset condition rating process over the past year with a focus on consistency and recording techniques. Greater consistency of assessment has led to an increase in assets being recorded as requiring maintenance. However, this is a result of the improvements to the assessment methods used rather than a change in physical condition. The Committee noted the resolutions of the various Wairarapa River Management Advisory Committees and the Friends of the Waikanae River and Otaki River regarding the satisfactory maintenance of flood protection assets.

As there have been no significant flood events during the year, there has been no need to draw on the scheme reserves. Further analysis will be undertaken to consider the desirable level of reserve for each scheme.

3.4 Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022: Operational Plan 2013/14

The Operational Plan for 2013/14 is the fifth year of the implementation of the revised Regional Pest Management Strategy. Some of the key focus areas of the Operational Plan include managing regional surveillance and total control species, ensuring containment pests are maintained within current infestation zones, and continuing pest management programmes in Key Native Ecosystems.

Public awareness and education is an important aspect of implementing the Regional Pest Management Strategy and the Committee noted that officers are working closely with the other regional councils in the Lower North Island Partnership to ensure a consistent message around pests.

3.5 Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan – Project Update on Phase 3

The Committee endorsed the project plan for the remaining work to be completed on Phase 3 of the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan. Phase 3 has been underway since May 2012 with the remaining work leading to a recommendation on a preferred option for flood hazard mitigation. As part of the work to be done during this phase, officers will investigate the sustainability of the stopbank locations. It is important that the location of the stopbanks does not limit future flexibility in river management approaches and allows for changes to river behaviour. Officers are working with the community to achieve an outcome that meets expectations but which also fits the necessary criteria for a sustainable asset.

3.6 General Managers' Report

The Committee discussed gravel extraction and particularly noted that demand from external sources is currently insufficient to meet river management objectives in some river systems. In future, there is a potential need for gravel to be extracted solely to meet river works and maintenance requirements.

A weed cutting boat is currently being trialled as an alternative to using excavators to clear aquatic weeds from drainage channels as part of the river and drainage maintenance programme. The trial was successful and the method resulted in reduced environmental impacts in the streams and will likely be extended to other water courses next year.

A report on the restoration options for the Porirua Harbour has been completed and will be sent out to Committee members for their information. The report highlights the opportunities for enhancement of estuarine areas within the harbour. A pest plant control strategy for previous restoration sites in the harbour has also been developed and will be implemented this year.

3.7 Year-end review for the period ending 30 June 2013

The Year-end review provided the Committee with an overview of Greater Wellington Regional Council's activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility. In particular the Committee discussed the Farm Environment Plans scheme which has successfully completed its first year, with roll out in the Mangatarere and Mangaone catchments. Interest is high in both catchments and Farm Environment Plans are also likely to feature in the Porirua Harbour action plan to reduce sediment and phosphates in the harbour.

The Committee noted the importance of the work undertaken by volunteers in the delivery of programmes such as the Key Native Ecosystems. Volunteers are a valuable resource to assist with pest management and there are an increasing number of enthusiastic groups working to service bait stations and traps across the region.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

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

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