

**Environmental Reference Group Meeting
14 November 2005
Minutes**

Present:

Councillor Celia Wade-Brown (Chair)
Ralph Chapman
Mike Ennis
Debbie Firestone
Jennie Francke
Rex Gillman
Chris Horne
David Kettell
Tushara Kodikara
Ruth Paul
Ian Shearer
Charity Stuart
Jim Ebenhoh (WCC Strategic Advisor)

Apologies:

Victor Anderlini
Andy Hollings
Ian Hunter
Geoff Skene
Jack Morris (WCC Treaty Relations)
Mike Oates (WCC Parks and Gardens)

Draft Environmental Strategy: an update

Jim and Councillor Wade-Brown provided an update on the draft Environmental Strategy, indicating that Council's Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC) approved the strategy on 26 October as a draft for input into the business planning and budgeting process. Formal public consultation would occur in April and May as part of consultation on the draft Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). Jim will make some minor suggested changes before the draft goes out for consultation, but ERG members are invited to make individual submissions to cover any remaining issues.

Ian S. commented that the discussion of air quality could be strengthened in the draft strategy, and Ralph said he felt that the issue of "green procurement" was underplayed. ERG members also expressed an interest in seeing the measures and indicators for the strategy, and Jim explained that these would be developed later as part of the LTCCP process.

Intractable Waste

The group discussed "intractable waste" before moving on to a discussion of e-waste. Jim shared the information he had received from Council's waste minimisation officer as well as Dave and Tushara. Points raised by the group in relation to intractable waste included:

- Private companies deal with a lot of this kind of waste.
- WCC is looking at licensing people carrying waste in Wellington, to find out more about where hazardous waste comes from and goes to.
- Some improvements have been made in incineration technology; this method of disposal is common throughout Europe. It used to occur in Golden Bay, but there are economies-of-scale issues. Incineration becomes economic when landfill/land costs become too high.

- The quality of incineration is important. Gas is needed to get the temperature high enough. The waste is pelletised in the UK.
- A Resene paint waste trial is going to the Wellington Regional Environmental Agency (WREA) for possible sponsorship, and Dulux may join. This is an example of the competition that product stewardship is meant to trigger.
- Ministry for the Environment needs to promote product stewardship with international companies in the context of free trade.

E-Waste

Mike Ennis gave a short presentation on e-waste. He said the worst components are monitors or televisions with cathode ray tubes that include lead and cadmium, but LCD screens contain mercury. He recommended that Council do a snapshot of e-waste through a 3-4 month audit at the Southern Landfill.

Jennie said that electronic equipment is considered “special waste,” not “hazardous waste” under the Basil Convention.

Jennie also said that the vision for e-waste is product stewardship by producers, which is voluntary at the moment. Fisher & Paykel and Vodafone have begun efforts in this regard. Mike said Hewlett-Packard is also picking up on the issue.

Mike said there needs to be regional co-ordination, and Dave asked whether Greater Wellington has a role. Jennie said the issue needs national attention, and Ralph suggested WCC could take a lead. Councillor Wade-Brown said she would bring it up at the next WREA meeting on 17 February after discussing it with WCC’s waste minimisation officer James Hobson.

Everyone seemed to agree that an audit would be useful to get a better handle on the scale of the problem. Ralph pointed out that the amount of e-waste (or hazardous waste) as a percentage of total waste was not as important as the toxicity of the waste. Jennie said the timing of the waste disposal is irregular, with most probably arising after Christmas. She suggested that WCC offer the public free dumping of e-waste, perhaps after Christmas, to get a sense of the pressure and as a one-off awareness campaign, possibly coupled with a survey. Councillor Wade-Brown said the issue would be paying for this and suggested that it could be a new initiative for the next financial year. Jennie highlighted the potential to apply for funding from MfE’s Sustainable Management Fund (SMF).

Chris mentioned the idea of refundable deposits, and Mike and Ralph said these were common in Europe. Even non-refundable levies could be useful to provide funding for safe disposal.

Roles and responsibilities of various agencies

Jim handed out a chart summarising the environmental roles and responsibilities of various agencies. The group provided feedback, including:

- Add column(s) for climate change, sustainable building and urban development/design/heritage.

- Indicate that Ministry of Health has the primary role for drinking water.
- Highlight the role of the District Plan and the Regional Policy Statement for energy.
- Add roles of a few other agencies, including Ministry of Economic Development (MED) for energy, Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) for waste, and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) for biosecurity and soil issues.
- Add a few high-level non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Expand the public WCC Community Directory to make it more extensive.

Councillor Wade-Brown later suggested adding the role of the Wellington Regional Environmental Agency (WREA) and describing the role of local conservation boards in relation to DoC.

Ruth Paul said no one seems to deal with “fords” on streams when it involves putting concrete in a stream, and that it is much easier to get permission for these fords than for bridges. Jim said he would pass this concern on to WCC’s Policy Planning (District Plan) team. [*note: done*]

Chris asked for a copy of the Quality Partnership Agreement (QPA) between WCC, Greater Wellington, and the local bus companies. [*note: done*]

Other issues

Tushara mentioned WCC’s new Kai-to-Compost kitchen waste recycling programme, and Councillor Wade-Brown summarised it, as well as other inner city recycling issues.

Councillor Wade-Brown asked Jim to send members a link to WCC’s recent report for the Communities for Climate Protection (CCP-NZ) programme. [*note: done*]

Next Meeting

The group confirmed that it would meet on Thursday, 17 November, from 5:30-7:15 pm in Committee Room One at WCC.