

**Environmental Reference Group Meeting
16 April 2007
Tangi-te-Keo Room, Wellington City Council
Minutes (revised May 2007)**

Present:

Councillor Celia Wade-Brown (Chair)
Ralph Chapman
Mike Ennis
Liz Hibbs
Chris Horne
Ian Hunter
Tushara Kodikara
Ian Shearer

WCC Officers:

Baz Kaufman (Planning, Performance and Research)
Mike Mendonça (CitiOperations)
Kevin Robertson (Capacity)
Ken Bowater (Policy)
Jim Ebenhoh (Strategy)

Other Guests:

Mayor Kerry Prendergast

Apologies:

Debbie Firestone
Jennie Francke
Dave Kettell
Fiona McNamara (Youth Council)
Ruth Paul
Stephen Sargent
Charity Stuart
Murray McLea (GWRC)
Wendy Walker (WCC Treaty Relations)

2007/08 Draft Annual Plan

Mayor Prendergast introduced the Draft Annual Plan. She said that the focus of the Annual Plan consultation is on changes to the long-term plan (2006/16 LTCCP). In the environmental area, changes include additional tracks funding. Environmental activities, including sewer and water services, account for 35% of the Council's budget.

Baz Kaufman handed out copies of the Plan and said that submission forms are available online, in the upcoming Absolutely Positively Wellington newsletter, at libraries and service centres. Submissions close 18 May 2007.

Comments from the group included:

- Support for investigation of bus priority lanes, with suggestions for requiring other drivers to let buses pull out and for bus drivers to let cyclists ride safely in the bus lanes.
- Concern that more stormwater mitigation will be needed to cope with climate change.
- Concern about urban sprawl effects of recent rural subdivision applications.

Information-Sharing and Announcements

Members shared the following information:

- FreeCycle, a domestic version of the Waste Exchange that is like a free TradeMe, is now available, via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Wellingtonfreecycle>.
- There is an all-day meeting at the National Library Auditorium on 25 May to discuss the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s three Working Group reports.
- Wellington Civic Trust is having a seminar on the Northern Gateway area on Saturday 21 April, from 8:30-5:30pm, for \$40, at Rutherford House on Victoria University's Pipitea Campus. The Trust is also having its AGM on 13 May at Turnbull House, and former Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Morgan Williams will be the speaker.
- Tushara hosted a student environmental conference over Easter, with students from around New Zealand. He is organising an environmental week for the first week in August, on behalf of VuWSA and GECKO (Victoria's student environmental association).
- The Botanical Society is having a field trip to Johnny's Bush and a private QE2-covenanted bush section on Saturday 5 May.
- Greater Wellington has a restoration day on Saturday 12 May.
- Berhampore Nursery has an Open Day on Saturday 19 May.

Chris mentioned his concern with the choice of commissioners on recent resource consent hearing panels, such as the one dealing with AdShel bus shelters. He said that instead of using a former WCC Councillor as a commissioner, a more independent commissioner should have been found, such as one from the South Island. Ian Hunter also expressed his concern about this. Councillor Wade-Brown said she would look into inviting Councillor Gill along to a future meeting to discuss the process of selecting hearing commissioners.

Solid Waste Management Plan

Mike Mendonça summarised the principles and action areas of the 2003 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). He said that some of the principles (such as "zero waste") and action areas from the SWMP have proven difficult or problematic in practice, so the Plan is being revisited.

Mike summarised the makeup of waste arriving at the Southern Landfill and described paper and putrescibles as the "low-hanging fruit" in terms of their contribution to landfill waste and their ability to be economically recycled. Mike pointed out that it is important to look at the energy requirements and emissions of recycling processes, which currently often involve transport to foreign recycling plants. The best use for biosolids and conversion of waste-to-energy are being investigated, and the central government's legislative proposals for a waste levy and extended producer responsibility are being followed closely.

Mike presented a draft set of new principles for the SWMP as follows:

- Achieve a rate of waste diversion away from the landfill that best meets the needs of the City.
- Actively promote, encourage and advocate waste prevention and reduction.

- Take a ‘polluter pays’ approach to funding where the producer and the disposer takes financial responsibility for waste.
- Take a leadership role in embracing a regional approach on solid waste issues.
- Change behaviour through the use of economic instruments.
- Keep abreast of international industry trends and practices in waste management in order that they can be embraced in Wellington as appropriate.

Mike said the new Solid Waste Management Plan, once completed, would involve a formal consultation process, and he invited feedback on these draft principles (through Jim).

Moa Point and Carey’s Gully Resource Consents

Kevin Robertson from Capacity (Wellington and Hutt City’s water services company) gave a presentation on the current resource consent applications for the continued use of the Moa Point sewage treatment plant and the Carey’s Gully sludge dewatering plant.

Kevin pointed out that Moa Point is fully compliant with the conditions of its current resource consents, but that bypass discharges still occur on rare occasions due to extreme wet weather, and that these are likely to increase in frequency. He presented various options for reducing these overflows, including the cost and impacts of each.

He invited comment on the draft Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) by 30 April, highlighted that recommendations for the resource consent application would be presented to Council’s Strategy and Policy Committee on 7 June, and said that submissions on the consent application would be welcome after it is publicly notified some time after July 2007.

Kevin also briefly summarised the upcoming resource consent application for the Carey’s Gully sludge dewatering plant, with the primary issue being odour control. Submissions are welcome once the application is notified some time after May 2007.

Kevin’s detailed PowerPoint presentation can be obtained on request from Jim.

Dave Kettell, who has a special interest in the Moa Point and Carey’s Gully sludge plant, was not able to attend this meeting but has reviewed the WCC and Capacity papers. His comments are that the issues seem to have been covered, but much depends on the mitigation options which are proposed.

Council’s Response to Climate Change

Ken Bowater presented a two-page summary of ideas around the Council’s response to climate change. The first page is background and preliminary thoughts, as well as discussion questions, while the second page is a draft table summarising the framework for action in the short, medium, and long terms.

Ken asked the group to provide comments to Jim by the end of the week in response to the following two questions:

- What should our short, medium and long term targets be for greenhouse gas emissions, for the Council and the community?
- What opportunities can you see, and what concerns do you hold, again for the Council and the community?

Ian Hunter pointed out the importance of responding to the impacts of climate change and his concern that some of the Council's potential actions to reduce emissions would be costly and in advance of necessary central government direction. The rest of the group generally agreed that some response would be necessary to the impacts of climate change that are unavoidable, but felt that Wellington should also do its part to reduce emissions to the extent possible. Several members expressed support for ambitious aspirational targets for cutting emissions.

Next Meeting

As the meeting ran late and several attendees had departed, a decision on the date for the next meeting was deferred. Councillor Wade-Brown suggested that possible topics could include water conservation and draft Sustainable Building Guidelines.