
REPORT 3
(1215/52/IM)

PROJECT BRIEF: DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to agree to a project brief for the development of an Environmental Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

Council is guided by a number of policies and plans dealing with the Key Achievement Areas of Natural Environment and Resources/Waste, but it lacks a strategy that explains how these activities relate, or that provides guidance for prioritisation. The Sustainable Development framework approved by Council in 2004 is a useful starting point for sustainability, but a more detailed strategy is required to guide the Natural Environment and Resources/Waste areas.

It is proposed that Council develop an Environmental Strategy to bridge the gap between the highest-level strategic framework and Council's more operational plans and policies. It will have implications for other key Council documents like the District Plan and will tie directly into the Annual Plan and Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). The Environmental Strategy will not rewrite or replace every plan and policy. It will largely be an "umbrella" document that will cite key points from relevant existing documents and will highlight areas where future work is required.

The Strategy will be developed by an internal working group involving a wide range of Council units, guided by senior management and Councillors responsible for the Built and Natural Environments. External consultation will be undertaken by way of the existing Environmental Reference Group and other key stakeholders. The draft Environmental Strategy will dovetail with the community/Council outcomes process to inform the development of the 2006/07 LTCCP.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree to the development of an Environmental Strategy as proposed in this report.*

4. Background

Wellington City Council is engaged in a variety of activities relating to the natural environment and resource management. Council's multiple activities as a funder, provider, facilitator and regulator are described in the Annual Plan and Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). In addition, Council's District Plan deals with environmental effects of all private and public land use activities.

Guidance for the Council activities mentioned above is provided by many separate documents besides the Annual Plan and District Plan. At a relatively operational level are a multitude of Council plans and policies—for example, a Solid Waste Management Plan and a Town Belt Reinstatement Policy, as well as several asset management plans. There are also a few plans and strategies that provide a higher-level framework for a group of Council activities, such as Council's Open Space Strategy ("Capital Spaces.")

At a more overarching level, these activities are guided by the Council's "Creative Wellington – Innovation Capital" vision (CWIC), which includes the relevant key components of "Sense of Place," "Sustainable Growth" and "City Foundations."

More recently, Council adopted a Sustainable Development framework, which provides guidance for incorporating sustainability into all its activities.

5. Discussion

5.1 Objectives

An Environmental Strategy is proposed to bridge the gap between the highest-level strategic framework (the CWIC vision and the Sustainable Development framework) and the more operational plans and policies dealing with the natural environment and resources/waste. The Environmental Strategy will have the following characteristics:

- It will describe how various Council environmental activities, plans and policies contribute to the CWIC vision and the Sustainable Development framework.
- It will put several existing Council plans and policies under one "umbrella" strategy document, with the plans and policies cross-referenced or referred to as appendices.
- It will address the recommendations of the Sustainable Development report by undertaking further work in specific areas.
- It will assist with the review of Council's activities and will provide guidance on prioritising the range of Council's environmental activities.
- It will develop a three-year package of new initiatives and service-level changes to complement and orientate existing activities.
- It will assist with highlighting strategic goals over the medium term in relation to the relevant outcomes that Council is trying to achieve.
- It will incorporate partnerships with City-based and national organisations, and with the community at large.

Water	Environmental water quality (e.g. groundwater, rivers, harbour) *Water conservation/ supply
Transport	*Specific energy-efficiency, climate change, water quality (run-off) or air quality initiatives; plus implications of other transport work
Infusing Sustainability	*Sustainable Living (i.e. household behaviour) and Sustainable Business Council's Environmental Grants *Sustainable Procurement by Council
Regulatory Role	<i>Includes sub-topics mentioned above, as part of the District Plan (e.g. landscape protection) or other regulatory activities (e.g. trade waste bylaws)</i>

5.3 Linkages to Existing Plans and Policies

The Environmental Strategy will not rewrite or replace every plan and policy. It is envisaged primarily as an “umbrella” document that will cite key points from plans and policies, referencing the detailed plans/policies as Appendices. Some plans and policies needing minor or straightforward changes may be revised as part of the approval process for the Environmental Strategy. Plans and policies that require a more significant update, or that need to be developed for the first time, will be addressed through implementation of the Environmental Strategy once it is approved.

The Environmental Strategy will reflect the Sustainable Development principles adopted by Council in 2004, as will other new or revised Strategies (e.g. Transport Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Urban Development Strategy). The Environmental Strategy will address four of the five Priority Action Areas agreed to by Council in adopting the Sustainable Development framework.¹

- Sustainable Energy Solutions
- Sustainable Living Solutions
- Key Support Elements (e.g. sustainable procurement policy, and engagement of the city's education and research institutions)
- Biodiversity

5.4 Timeline

In July 2005, officers will deliver the first part of the Environmental Strategy to Council as part of the strategic direction for the 2006/07 LTCCP. This part of the Environmental Strategy will contain draft outcomes, principles and goals. The full draft Environmental Strategy, including specific activities, proposed new initiatives, and recommended prioritisation tools, will be presented to Council by October 2005.

¹ The other Priority Action Area, Sustainable Transport Solutions, is being addressed through the review of Council's Transport Strategy, the Wellington Regional Strategy, the Regional Land Transport Strategy, and the government transport funding package.

After the draft Strategy is approved by Council, it will be submitted for public consultation as part of the draft LTCCP in early 2006.

Table Two lists the tasks, timeline and key deliverables proposed for the development of the Environmental Strategy.

Table Two: Timeline for Development of Environmental Strategy

DATE	TASK	DELIVERABLE
May 2005	Approval of Project Brief	Approved by SPC
April-May 2005	Informal review and analysis of Council plans/policies and cross-referencing with Environmental Strategy topics, current LTCCP outcomes and activities	Internal memos: showing linkage between topics, plans/policies, outcomes and activities; identifying gaps; and summarising key issues.
By mid-July 2005	Environmental Strategic Framework (principles and goals), consistent with Regional Framework and with possible LTCCP outcomes	Council approval of overall Strategic Framework, including Environmental Strategic Framework
July-September 2005	Contribution to review of Council role and activities in this area Linkage of chosen activities to goals and outcomes	Strategy tree showing linkage between activities, goals and outcomes
By October 2005	Full draft of the Environmental Strategy	Council approval of draft Environmental Strategy (with other key Strategies)
Early 2006	Public consultation as part of draft LTCCP	Final approval of Strategy by Council

5.5 Consultation

Within Council, the development of the Environmental Strategy will be guided by a Project Manager, a Directors' Group, a Council Working Group, and a wider Council Reference Group, working closely with Councillors representing the relevant portfolios.

External consultation will occur through two channels:

- The community outcomes process and the related LTCCP process.
- Specific targeted consultation on environmental issues.

The outcomes and LTCCP process (as described in Report 4, Strategy and Policy Committee, 21 April 2005) will inform the Environmental Strategy and provide a vehicle for public consultation on its elements in the following ways:

- May-June 2005: The identified draft community outcomes will help shape the principles and goals of the Environmental Strategy.

- July 2005: The principles and goals of the draft Environmental Strategy, along with relevant community outcomes, will be sent out for public feedback as part of Council's draft Strategic Direction for the 2006/07 LTCCP (the "Region-City Futures" package).
- August-September 2005: Roles and activities of Council and other key stakeholders will be reviewed to inform the 2006/07 LTCCP.
- March 2006: The draft Environmental Strategy will be included as part of the LTCCP consultation package, following approval by Council in October 2005.

In addition to these processes, targeted consultation on environmental issues will inform the development of a draft Environmental Strategy, especially in August-September 2005. Council's existing Environmental Reference Group will be used for this purpose, although it may need to be expanded to reflect a resource/waste component in addition to its previous natural environment focus. Consultation may also be required with other key stakeholders not on the Environmental Reference Group.

6. Conclusion

It is proposed that Committee agree to develop an Environmental Strategy. An Environmental Strategy will be a valuable link between Council's higher-level strategic documents and the more operational plans and policies guiding specific activities. It will also help to implement the Sustainable Development framework that underpins the Creative Wellington-Innovation Capital vision.

Contact Officer: *Jim Ebenhoh, Senior Strategic Advisor*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

An Environmental Strategy fits with the Sustainability component of Council's Creative Wellington – Innovation Capita vision. It will support and improve the provision of Council activities and the achievement of outcomes in the Natural Environment and Resources/Waste Key Achievement Areas.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

An Environmental Strategy will inform the development of the 2006/07 LTCCP and Annual Plan. No new funding is required to develop the Environmental Strategy, though implementation of the Strategy will have financial implications.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

Environmental concerns are central to Mana Whenua, and the Environmental Strategy will incorporate their perspectives accordingly.

4) Decision-Making

The noting of this Project Brief, as requested, is not a significant decision itself. The Environmental Strategy that results from this Project Brief may require significant decisions in the future.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Extensive consultation has occurred among Council officers in the development of this Project Brief. External consultation is proposed by the Project Brief in the development of an Environmental Strategy.

b) Consultation with Maori

Council's Treaty Relations Team has reviewed this Project Brief and will assist in the development of an Environmental Strategy.

6) Legal Implications

This Project Brief has no legal implications.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The Environmental Strategy as proposed by this Project Brief will improve consistency among existing plans and policies. This Project Brief itself does not change any existing policy.