

Report 04.105
Date 26 February 2004
File LM/03/05/01

Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy
Author Rob Forlong, Divisional Manager, Landcare

Landcare Division: Proposed Business Plan 2004-2013

1. Purpose

To seek approval of the Landcare Division's Proposed Business Plan 2004-2013, including any amendments approved by the Committee.

2. Introduction

The Landcare Division's Proposed Business Plan covers our two functional areas: Parks and Forests and Flood Protection.

Landcare has readily adopted Greater Wellington's challenge to enhance quality for life by contributing towards creating a sustainable region. The Council has adopted ten key areas where it wishes to focus the work of the next ten years (Take 10 Quality for Life). The Landcare Division is a key contributor towards achieving the Council's Take Ten Goals. The Division's main contributions are through:

- Biodiversity (e.g. maintaining enhancing biodiversity on GWRC land)
- Water (e.g. protection and monitoring of the Council's key water collection areas)
- Land (e.g. river erosion protection and mitigation)
- Recreation and Parks (e.g. regional park visitor programmes and providing visitor facilities such as toilets and tracks)
- Safety / Hazards (e.g. flood protection structures and works, flood warning).

3. Overview

The 2004-2013 Landcare departmental operating plans are “refreshed” versions of those provided as part of the 2003 LTCCP process. As part of the process we have made some minor adjustments as well as some programme changes as better information allows us to refine our plans. These programme changes are noted under the functional area overviews.

The base position for the 2004/05 financial year is that there is a small increase in funds required from what was predicted in 2003. This increase is solely due to the addition of the renewable energy project. Nevertheless, the Division has made additional savings which partly offset the costs of the renewable energy project. In summary, the regional rate requirement is as follows:

	Proposed 2004/05 business plan (\$000)	Projected budget (2003 LTCCP) (\$000)	Difference (+000)
2004/05	13,151	13,088	+ 63
2005/06	13,760	13,752	+ 8

4. Functional area overviews

4.1 Parks and Forests 2004/05

Parks and Forests have absorbed inflationary cost increases by reducing the scope of a number of projects. Essentially, we have made a number of reductions in order to come within the fiscal envelope. The effect of these reductions is likely to be a slightly reduced service level in the affected programmes. Overall, we believe that provided we adhere to the work programmes, we will be able to deliver the outputs detailed in the Operating Plan.

The Parks and Forests capital works programme has been slightly adjusted. The adjustments take the form of substituting projects so there is no resulting financial effect.

One project (Pakuratahi swing bridge) has been deleted and replaced with another (Belmont entranceway development). The swing bridge is no longer required. This has enabled us to add the Belmont entranceway development to the capital works programme. The ACTS Institute has departed from the Dry Creek and removed some of their infrastructure. The entranceway redevelopment project will allow us to reconfigure that entrance to make it more user-friendly.

The timing of two projects has been swapped around. As part of the Super Key Native Ecosystem (Super KNE) Project we had planned to put in infrastructure at Wainuiomata Recreation Area in 2004/05 to cope with the expected increase in visitors. However, in refining the Super KNE project plan we have determined that the infrastructure will not be required, for a few years. Consequently, the project has been postponed until 2006/07. The postponement of the project has allowed us to improve the Mackays Crossing entrance of Queen Elizabeth Park by building a ranger's office and associated entranceway redevelopment.

Finally, we have added two years of funding for the renewable energy project to the Parks and Forests budget. In 2003 the Council commenced a project to investigate renewable energy sources on land it owns or manages. At that time only one years budget was provided. As the project is continuing \$141,000 has been added to the Parks and Forests budget for 2004/05 and a further \$100,000 set aside for 2005/06.

4.2 Parks and Forests 2005 onwards

The picture for 2005 onwards is dominated by the addition of two new parks to our network. In 2005/06 we are programmed to take control and management of Whitireia Park and in 2007/08 a regional park based around the Wairarapa Wetlands is planned.

4.3 Flood Protection 2004/05

The 2004/05 budget has been relatively straightforward for Flood Protection with cost increases partially offset by reductions (mainly in debt servicing costs and increased property rentals). However, the Flood Protection Department has also been forced to find savings by reducing some work programmes.

As with previous years we have recommended some adjustments to construction schedules through the Operating Plan update process. These adjustments involve bringing forward some design work associated with the Ava to Ewen project. They are minor and have no financial effect. At this stage the projected completion dates remain the same but, as with all major capital works, we expect to make further adjustments next year.

Unfortunately, we are not yet in a position to make a full assessment of what, if any, effect there will be from the February 2004 floods. That matter will be reported to the Council as the information becomes available.

4.4 Flood Protection 2005 onwards

Looking forward the key challenge for flood protection will be to maintain the momentum of our capital works programme. The flood protection capital works programme is ambitious and represents the largest undertaken in the region for many years. Over the next three years we will be spending approximately \$11.7 million dollars on flood protection structures and works. The capital works programme is stretching our capacity and we need to continuously monitor the situation closely to ensure that it remains on track.

5. **Changes to the proposed business plan recommended by officers**

Officers are not recommending any changes to the proposed business plan.

6. **Communication**

Any communications opportunities will be dealt with as part of the overall communication of the Annual Plan.

7. **Recommendations**

That the Committee recommend to Council that it:

- (1) ***Receive** the report and note the contents.*
- (2) ***Note** that the Landcare Division Proposed Business Plan includes proposed Operating Plans for the:*
 - *Parks and Forests Department*
 - *Flood Protection Department.*
- (3) ***Approve** the Landcare Division Proposed Business Plan (including any amendments approved by the Committee) for inclusion in the Council's proposed 2004-2005 Annual Plan.*

Report prepared by:

Rob Forlong
Divisional Manager, Landcare