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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Divisional Managers' Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress and any matters that have arisen since the Committee's previous meeting held on 20 June 2007.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Departmental Managers' reports are attached.

4. Divisional matters

4.1 Catchment Management – Geoff Dick

Staff

The Pest Animals section of Biosecurity continues to experience significant staff turnover. Laurent van Ham now has a position with the School of Biological Science, Victoria University; Kim Broad has accepted the position of Senior Environmental Ranger with GW Parks; and Carl McMillan is returning to full time study at university. It is difficult to source replacement staff with the skills and qualifications required.

About 20 fixed term BioWorks staff were let go in late June and early July as their contracts expired. This is a normal seasonal process as we move into the wet winter/lambing period which limits the work that can be undertaken. It also coincided with the completion of a number of contracts.

Graeme Campbell has not yet been able to fill the vacancy left following the resignation of Phil Purves. Recruitment processes so far have not found a suitably experienced and qualified candidate.

Year completed

2006/07 year end reporting is well underway, with the Division's management report due to be presented to the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer by the end of July. A summary of the report will be provided to the Committee following the management review.

The year was a challenging one for the new Division, but the Division responded well and some good work was completed over the past year. The Division had to cope with the management restructure, and the July 2006 floods. Follow up work from this flood event included \$1.2 million of repair work and the development of the hill country advisory committee concept. Challenging projects in the year included developing the integrated catchment management concept for Greater Wellington, finalising the new Kopuaranga River scheme, progressing the review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy, and progressing the LWVDS rating review.

The year also included some good work to advance a number of western flood protection capital projects including the Waiwhetu flood plan, the Chrystalls Extended stopbank in Otaki, and the Whirinaki Crescent stopbank in Upper Hutt. The Flood Protection team also completed a full revaluation of flood protection land and assets (Wairarapa and western).

In the latter part of the year much work has gone into the major Mangaroa/Kaitoke Bovine Tb control operation in Upper Hutt. The operation is progressing well. Considerable effort has also gone into the review of BioWorks and the transitional management arrangements. BioWorks staff have responded positively to the review and remain focussed on the jobs at hand.

The Bovine Tb Vector control annual report in the order paper is also the first in a number of year end reports that will be provided to the Committee. Reports still to come include the flood protection scheme asset maintenance report and the RPMS operations report.

Communications – Catriona Robertson

Since the last Committee meeting in June key communications activities for the division have continued to focus on ongoing communications planning, implementation and media work for the Mangaroa/Kaitoke, Akatarawa Forest and Otaki winter possum control operations.

Further update media releases have been sent out for each operation. A closed meeting, chaired by Mayor Guppy, took place at Upper Hutt City Council on Thursday 19 July with 10 Mangaroa/Kaitoke to address some issues they had re 1080 and water. Pre-feed aerial work is scheduled to begin late July and it is anticipated all aerial work will be complete by mid-August, weather dependent.

Communications activities also focussed on the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute's NETS seminar last week – briefing notes for Cr Laidlaw and involvement in a media workshop.

The priorities to progress over the next few weeks are the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy and the next edition of Rural Services Newsletter due for publication in August.

4.2 Environment Management – Nigel Corry

Regional Policy Statement update

Staff, along with Councillors Turver and Baber, met with Councillors from every city and district council over the last 6 weeks to present an overview of the draft provisions found in the new regional policy statement (RPS).

We have received 11 submissions on the draft provisions to date, with submissions from most Territorial Authorities (TA's) expected within the next week. We will provide a summary of feedback for all Councillors and appointed members once all submissions have been received.

While feedback to date from TA staff and Councillors has been favourable, the current round of consultation has been the first time in which all the draft provisions have been seen as one collective document. Largely as a result of this, it is interesting to note that we are now receiving some guarded comment in relation to the perceived level of direction that the RPS is imposing on TA's. This is obviously an issue that we will continue to work though with those who have this concern.

Building Act Implementation

At their meeting of 28 June 2007, Council agreed to initiate the Special Consultative Procedure around the proposal to transfer certain functions contained in the Building Act 2004 to another regional council. In the case of Greater Wellington, it is likely that we will seek to transfer these functions to Environment Waikato, who has now formally resolved to seek full accreditation and accept transfers. Most North Island councils will be seeking to transfer powers to Environment Waikato. Environment Canterbury and Otago Regional Council have also formally resolved to become fully accredited, and they will likely service all South Island regional councils, and potentially the Chatham Islands as well.

We are now working through the process of determining the finer points of any proposed transfer agreement, including issues of liability, accepting that a final decision cannot be made until the results of the public consultation process have been deliberated on.

Resource Management Charging Policy

The Resource Management Charging Policy (2007) was formally adopted by Council, also at their meeting of 28 June, following a period of public

consultation. You are aware that we did not receive any submissions as a result of consultation. The new charges contained in the policy came into effect as of 1 July 2007.

4.3 Water Supply, Parks & Forests – Murray Kennedy

Reserve Forests

Tauanui logging

A June harvest of 1,687 tonnes is a pleasing result and is slightly more than the 1,622 tonnes harvested in May.

Crossing the Tauanui River remains a challenge and it is hoped the forest roading engineer can produce a design for an economic solution.

Wind energy

As reported at the last Committee meeting, tenders for the Stoney Creek wind farm development closed on 11 June. A tender evaluation and negotiations have taken much longer than expected but should be concluded in time for the next meeting of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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Attachments 1, 2, 3: