



Report 08.145
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Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
Author Chris Laidlaw Committee Chair

Regional energy strategy

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's formal support for the preparation of a regional energy strategy,

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

At its last meeting on 12 February the Committee received a paper on renewable energy in the Wellington region. The paper, prepared by Bruce Geden, Special Projects Coordinator, outlined the current national policy situation with regard to renewable energy and provided an overview of renewable energy resource potential in the Greater Wellington region.

The Committee agreed that further work should be undertaken in this area with a view to the production of a renewable energy strategy for the region and it was agreed that we should work alongside other relevant agencies toward this end.

It was noted that the potential included wind energy, solar thermal hot water systems, wave energy, small-scale hydro plants and the production of ethanol as an energy source.

4. Comment

Clearly, several of these options will require further research before actual potential is known and the collaborative work noted above will pursue this. In the case of wind energy however, we are now equipped with a comprehensive map which illustrates the zones around the region in which wind energy initiatives will be viable from technical, (wind speed) point of view. This is a

valuable step forward because it effectively serves to demonstrate where wind farming can and cannot take place.

Consideration of specific windfarm projects will however still require detailed investigations as to the suitability of any site against legal, physical, ecological and cultural constraints, including landscape and amenity issues. There are other issues that also need to be carefully considered such as the appropriate size of wind turbines and the number and spacing of turbines in any particular project.

The process of consenting specific projects involves local authorities. City and district councils have the primary role in regulating windfarm development via land use controls while Greater Wellington plays a regulatory role through the resource consent process and permitted activity rules that address environmental impacts, particularly in relation to earthworks, sediment control and impact on water bodies.

Given that our objective is to develop a regional strategy it is important that Greater Wellington works in close collaboration with the city and district councils in the region throughout the process. It is proposed therefore that the committee chair undertake a round of consultations with each territorial local authority with a view to outlining the overall renewable energy objectives and the progress made thus far in identifying wind energy potential in particular.

Following this, a draft regional strategy will be prepared for public consultation with a view to finalising it before the end of this year.

5. Communication

It would be appropriate that, if approved by Council, the community be informed about the proposed energy strategy by way of a press release.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.
3. ***Approves*** the Committee Chair to undertake a round of consultations with city and district councils in the region about a regional energy strategy.
4. ***Recommends*** that Council approves the preparation of a regional energy strategy.

Report prepared by:

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