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Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
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Sustainable Business update

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on recent developments in business sustainability in the region, including funding for waste minimisation and recycling at the Westpac Stadium.

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

Councillors will be aware that the national EnviroSMART cleaner production and business sustainability programme, which we are supporting in this region, will not be continuing beyond August 2009. Although successful in the Wellington region (22 businesses are involved), it was not taken up strongly elsewhere and the current tranche of businesses will be the last. Consequently, we have been working for some time to develop a new programme that would replace EnviroSMART and enable Greater Wellington to play a leadership role in business sustainability in the region. Early work on this was reported to the Committee in April, at which time officers were asked to develop a consolidated regional business sustainability programme, funding for which could come from partners and/or private sector sponsorship.

4. E-Mission

The Wellington region has particular needs when it comes to business sustainability. With the impending arrival of emissions trading and the dominance of the public sector in the local economy, our businesses want help with two things: reducing their carbon footprint and recognised verification of their green credentials so they can comply with increasingly strict central

government procurement policies. As government agencies have moved towards carbon neutrality, they have begun demanding the same of their suppliers. Neither Envirosmart, nor the Sustainable Business Challenge which is also supported by Greater Wellington, meet both of these particular requirements.

Working with a number of other parties, we have developed a programme which will meet these expectations and which we expect will find favour with businesses (there are currently around 30 businesses which have expressed an interest in the programme). At present, the programme goes under the working title of *E-Mission*.

E-Mission will enable businesses to reduce their carbon emissions by an agreed amount by working to change three key aspects of their operations – waste (both within the production process and at the end), energy, and transport. By working in other areas to improve their overall sustainability, they will also qualify for Enviro-Mark Gold Accreditation, which is a recognised standard. The programme will take only a year to complete (rather than the two years currently needed for Envirosmart) making it more manageable and achievable for businesses, as well as cheaper. For us, it effectively doubles the number of businesses we can work with.

E-Mission will be delivered in partnership with a number of agencies. The Ministry of Economic Development is a key partner. It sees E-Mission as a pilot for a possible future model of business sustainability that could be implemented across New Zealand and is making a significant funding contribution. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) is making an equally significant contribution, funding the energy component of the programme. Wellington, Hutt, and Porirua cities are contributing by supporting the businesses involved from their areas. Landcare Research will be providing the Enviromark audits and licenses at a reduced rate. Weltec will act as consultant delivering the programme. Participating businesses will pay approximately half of the cost of undertaking the programme.

However, Greater Wellington will lead and manage the programme and will play a significant role in its carbon reduction, waste, transport, marketing, and communications aspects. There will be staff costs to deliver the programme but these are within existing budgets. Approximately 35% of our staff costs will be recouped from participating businesses.

With the 22 businesses about to “graduate” from Envirosmart, and 20 to 30 businesses commencing E-Mission, there will be a ready-made regional network of green businesses which, if the programme continues into future years, will quickly increase. The programme and the network will provide Greater Wellington with the ability to make a real and visible difference to business sustainability in the region. There will be excellent opportunities for contributing partners to promote their interest in and goals for business sustainability.

At the present stage of development, we are yet to explore the possibility of E-Mission being supported by other relevant bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce and Grow Wellington, however, this will occur. Not only does business sustainability produce good environmental outcomes, the more sustainable businesses that can be developed, the more the region can position itself as a truly sustainable region. Most of the businesses that move in this direction, address not only their environmental impacts, but also take steps to be more socially responsible as well. We have also been discussing E-Mission with the other territorial authorities in the region to attempt to get their buy-in so that the programme has regional application. Most of the programme is “ready to go” and it is intended that it commence in October and run until October/November 2009.

Although only for one year, to be a success and to build a useful network, E-Mission needs to be ongoing. With some additional components, E-Mission will be an attractive product on which to seek private sector sponsorship. We are still developing the complete package but it is likely to encompass a dedicated fund that businesses could use to make process improvements or enhance their sustainability, as well as an advisory service. Although fully funded by an external sponsor, all of this would be co-branded and clearly identifiable as a Greater Wellington initiative

5. Recycling at the stadium

In April we were asked by the Westpac Trust Stadium to investigate opportunities to improve the environmental sustainability of the stadium. In June we made an application to the Ministry for the Environment for funding under the *Recycling in Public Places Initiative* for a waste minimisation and recycling scheme at the Stadium. This application was successful, with \$75,000 being granted.

At present the stadium sends over 300 tonnes of waste to landfill annually. The aim is to reduce this by 40% in the first year. At this level, recycling will be self-funding well beyond 2010. The intention is to manufacture 72 recycling stations of varying sizes to provide recycling for people attending events in the stadium bowl (the corporate areas already have a recycling arrangement), plus mobile stations for the concrete apron leading to the entrance gates. The mobile stations will also be able to be relocated to other events around the region, thereby supporting the event recycling undertaken by city and district councils. A programme to promote recycling by the users of the stadium will also be needed.

6. Communication

As the initiatives discussed in this paper are still in development, there is no need for them to be communicated to the public at this stage.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report; and***
2. ***Notes the contents.***

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