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Committee Environment Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 10 May 2017

1. Purpose

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

2. Catchment Management

2.1 Biosecurity

- 2.1.1 The Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) review team have developed a detailed project plan and worked with our internal engagement experts to develop an engagement plan. Workshops and meetings with iwi groups, stakeholders and community groups are scheduled during May. The RPMP Discussion Document will also be released to the public following these meetings.
- 2.1.2 GWRC pest animal management experts have prepared a rat and mustelid eradication plan for Miramar peninsula as a contribution to the Predator Free Wellington project.
- 2.1.3 Due to the cold wet spring weather plant germination and development has been delayed this season and as a consequence, planned inspections and control work on a number of Total Control species are behind schedule.



Aerial spraying Boneseed on the Whitiareia coastal escarpment

- 2.1.4 Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP)
Possum control covering 67,600 ha (out of 74,000 ha planned for this year) have been completed to date.

2.2 Land Management

2.2.1 Riparian programme – managing stock access to waterways

The Riparian Programme supports landowners to achieve water quality and biodiversity outcomes through the management of stock access to waterways. Part of this programme is to work with landowners to identify waterways and sites that meet the definitions for Category 1 (sites of significance) under the proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP).

Landowners with Category 1 waterways or sites have received a letter setting out the requirements to manage stock access and offering assistance and advice to achieve compliance with the pNRP provisions by July 2018. Staff are currently contacting these landowners and arranging site inspections. There are 251 category 1 sites identified in the pNRP. 182 of these sites have been classed as complex and as such have been prioritised for site inspections.



Pahaoa River mouth - Category 1 site

The project is a working example of collaboration and coordination across multiple Environment and Catchment Management Departments. It is using a behavioural change approach, developed using a stages of change model to monitor landowner progress towards the understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of these sites and acceptance of stock being excluded. The table below details the progress in assessing sites along with the recorded stages of change for landowner behaviour.

Complex Sites Project Progress	
Number of Sites	182
Initial Site Assessments completed	62
Landowners who have been contacted	65
Still to be contacted	55
Behavioural change monitoring - Stages of change (sample size = 77)	
No	9%
Yeah...but	22%
Ok	13%
Action	13%
Maintenance	1%
No Stock	42%



Pahaoa coast and estuary – Category 1 site

2.2.2 Kourarau Integrated Catchment Plan – a working example of community collaboration

The Kourarau Integrated Catchment Plan started with a couple of proposed Natural Resources Plan pre-hearing submitter meetings, at which attendees expressed a desire to look beyond the site at what could be done to improve the quality of the water entering the Kourarau dam. This eventuated in further discussions to improve the values within the entire catchment, as well as the wetland site which had significance for mana whenua. This has led to collaboration between landowners, Iwi, Fish and Game, OSNZ, Trust House, Gladstone School and local fishermen.

So far the group have organised a planting day with the school, the removal of some willows and a 4WD/walk through the catchment for all the landowners to see how the practises they carry out on their land connects to the significant site. Looking forward they would like to achieve stock exclusion from the entirety of the Kourarau stream with talk of development of a multi property water reticulation system to help achieve this.



Kourarau Stream, Wetland and Reservoir– Category 1 site

2.2.3 Farm Environment Plans (FEPs)

To date in 2016/17 ten new FEPs have been completed, predominantly in the Wairarapa Moana catchment, bringing the total FEPs in the region to fifty eight.

\$134,000 has been spent so far through the contestable fund with an estimated spend of \$531,000 by the end of June. The funding has been split across a variety of land uses with projects being predominantly focused on riparian or effluent management issues.

2.2.4 Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI)

A relatively wet summer that has carried over into autumn has raised optimism from farmers reflected in the strong orders being received.

Approximately 6,000 poplar and willow poles are planned to be planted on erodible land by the end of June this year along with 67 ha of woodlots and 136.5 ha of native reversion. Staff recently had a workshop with MPI forestry advisors to help increase the uptake in their Afforestation Grant Scheme (AGS). Government funding along with an increased interest in manuka plantings for honey, has seen farmers considering alternative land uses for their steepest and least productive land.

2.2.5 Freshwater Improvement Fund

The Freshwater Improvement Fund (FIF) was approved as part of the Government's Clean Water document released in February 2017. \$100 million has been approved for the next ten years, with \$24 million available for projects that will start in 2017/18 and be funded for a maximum period of five years. The minimum request for funding is \$200,000 and the FIF will cover a maximum of 50% of the total project costs.

The focus is on water bodies in vulnerable catchment that are showing signs of stress but have not yet reached a “tipping point” where it becomes more expensive and more difficult to restore these water bodies to good health.

The project must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Achieve demonstrable co-benefits such as – improved water quality or quantity, increased biodiversity, habitat protection, soil conservation
- Increase iwi/hapu, community, local government or industry capability and capacity
- Establish or enhance collaborative management of fresh water
- Increase the application of mātauranga Māori
- Include an applied research component.

GWRC are supporting two bids in the first round including further development of DairyNZ's Riparian Planner currently being used to support the Riparian Programme and the regional stock exclusion regulations.

The second project is to provide 'proof of concept' for a nation-wide environmental verification system grounded in catchment-science (focussing on good management practice) for all farmers to improve their environmental performance, which will create a value chain for verified products, initially focussing on the red meat sector. The Mangatarere catchment east of Carterton will be used for this two year project.

2.3 Flood Protection Implementation

2.3.1 Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

The first draft of the Hutt River Environmental Strategy review has been received. The document has been re-titled as the Hutt River Environmental Strategy Action Plan. This is recommended to improve the focus on achieving outcomes in a prioritised and strategic manner. This approach is strengthened through the inclusion of identified projects including indicative timeframes to complete these projects.

Stakeholder engagement will commence in July, and consideration is being given to delay community engagement until summer to capture a greater number of those who will benefit from the strategy review.

2.3.2 RiverLink Project

Preliminary design is complete and technical reports including rough order costs are currently being reviewed. Work is in progress to capture and report the project, including costs and benefits, to councillors. This is taking a council level outcomes focus to ensure that recognition is given to project components that deliver on council outcomes outside of those that were within the initial confined project scope.

A very successful series of open days were held at which over 200 people provided input and comment on the preliminary design. This comment is being compiled and will be used to inform the work to complete the preliminary design.

2.3.3 Port Road Erosion protection

Hutt City Council is continuing design works for the temporary Port Road erosion protection issue raised by local businesses. GWRC reviewed these

designs and identified design shortcomings. This has been related back to the design engineers and HCC. A design review is underway.

2.3.1 Waikanae FMP Implementation

Jim Cook Park stopbank upgrade works commenced in January but have been plagued by a consistently wet summer period meaning that work has proceeded in a stop-start manner. Significant cost savings were initially made through design reviews enabled by good ground conditions. However, these savings are now likely to be lost due to time delays.

2.3.2 Otaki FMP Implementation

Work is continuing with landowners to finalise entry agreements that will allow components of the OFMP in the Waitohi area to be undertaken. A meeting was held with Nga Hapu o Otaki to consider how to progress this work and an initial discussion has been held with the Chair of the Otaki Porirua Trust Board about how to proceed as they are a major land owner in the area.

2.4 Operations, Delivery and Planning

2.4.1 Western Operations

Flood damage repairs from the 2nd February 2017 flood event are ongoing. We are currently sourcing rock rip rap from suppliers to implement repairs. The availability of rock, contract machinery and the weather have all contributed to delays with this work.

A major realignment of the Otaki River mouth has been completed. This has helped to reduce water levels in adjacent streams by 500mm and will reduce the risk of flooding to local properties.



Otaki River mouth realignment

2.4.2 Wairarapa Operations

The Lake Onoke mouth was successfully opened in late March prior to significant flood event early in April. This opening was made more difficult by the limited functionality of the Barrage Gates due to painting and associated scaffolding work. In contrast to a typical cut involving a one day digger operation this cut involved 30 hours of bulldozer time to develop the opening.



Lake Onoke Mouth Opening, 29-31 March 2017

Flooding in early April resulted in some Kopuaranga River landowners, upstream of the existing scheme, seeking additional support from GWRC. Expansion of this scheme is being considered as part of the Te Kāuru FMP. In the interim staff will contact the landowners upstream of the scheme to assess the level of support for possible scheme expansion.

2.4.3 Asset Management and Operations Planning

A Comprehensive Safety Review has been received for the George Blundell Barrage Gates. The review provides a good road map for prioritising future management of this important asset. A work programme will be developed to ensure recommendations are actioned.

Infrastructural asset condition assessments continue to be the focus for asset management activities. Field inspections are substantially complete and attention now shifts to data analysis and reporting, and making better use of this information to inform work programmes. Work on the asset revaluation continues and we have received the independent valuation reports for land, property, plant and equipment assets. Work continues on preparing the 2017 Asset Management Plan to support annual and long term planning.

2.4.4 River management resource consents

The four resource consent application for the western river schemes were notified on 4 February 2017. The submission period for these applications was extended to 1 May 2017 following requests from various agencies for more time. There has been ongoing discussions with iwi representatives and various stakeholders to assist them to understand the applications. A number of members of the community, who received formal notices of the applications, have also contacted Council staff. We anticipate discussions with submitters continuing after the submission period closes and before requesting a formal hearing.

2.5 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

2.5.1 Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) Development

A draft independent audit report on the Waiohine flood mapping has been received. This has not revealed any major issues in the work done to date but has recommended that more work be done to confirm the flood maps are fit for purpose and as robust as possible. A separate report has been prepared for this meeting on the Audit.

The initial draft of the Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga FMP (TKURFMP) is being revised in response to comments received from the TKURFMP Subcommittee, District Councils and other stakeholders. The next draft will be presented back to the Subcommittee later this year. Progress is now being made on the Waipoua River flood modelling incorporating the agreed hydrology and updating the model.

2.5.2 Investigations and Strategy

The Otaki FMP review is being discussed with Nga Hapu o Ōtaki (NHoO) to confirm the full scope. A number of elements are of interest to NHoO and we intend to carry out the review in a way that gives expression to the Catchment Management Agreement that we have with NHoO.

A new Gravel Strategy is nearing completion. This will direct our approaches to measuring, analysing, reporting and managing issues of aggradation and degradation in our Region's rivers.

We've developed a trial system for providing our flood hazard mapping online and tested it internally. Further development and testing is progressing with support from ICT and Comms. This will be reported to the June Environment Committee meeting.

Upper Hutt City Council has publicly notified its flood hazard plan changes for Mangaroa and Pinehaven. GWRC officers have assisted with public open days.

3. Biodiversity

3.1 Biodiversity Management

3.1.1 Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) programme

- Increased numbers of stoats have been caught in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island (part of the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo KNE site) as result of intensified trapping effort in this important area. Trapping has

been increased in response to high levels of rat predation following several ‘mast’ events, which increase tree seed resources and can cause a spike in rodent populations. Catches included a trophy size stoat which weighed in at 450g, with an approximate length of 45cm. The average weight of a stoat is only 324g.



Figure 2. Trophy sized stoat caught at Wainuiomata Mainland Island

3.2 Biodiversity Advice and Advocacy

3.2.1 Biodiversity Advice

- Staff coordinated and lodged a GWRC submission on the Department of Conservation’s draft *Wellington Conservation Management Strategy* (the CMS). The submission has identified opportunities for GWRC to work more closely with DOC, especially in areas where DOC land adjoins regional parks. The suggested changes covered areas including biodiversity management, pest management, recreational use and collaborative restoration projects. The submission also included suggestions to make the CMS more consistent with regional plan provisions and highlighted areas where existing collaborative relationships can be recognised
- Biodiversity staff wrote and collated feedback from regional council officers around New Zealand on the draft national biodiversity offsetting guidance. Feedback emphasised the need for guidance that is accessible to the range of anticipated end users, which will include consent officers and planners.

3.2.2 Collaborative Restoration: Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

- A new set of webpages has been developed under the culture and heritage section of the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands website. The content was reproduced from material from an exhibition entitled *Wairarapa Moana*:

Stories about a lake and its people which was produced by Aratoi, Wairarapa Museum of Art and History in partnership with Wairarapa Moana Trust

- A timetable of this winter's community planting events has been prepared. The community restoration groups will host planting events in May, June and July at the sites of their respective restoration projects including Ōnoke Spit, Ōkorewa Lagoon (Lake Ōnoke), Wairio wetlands, Lake Domain and Featherston. The planting events are posted on the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands website and are promoted via email contact lists, the GWRC Community Engagement department and the respective restoration groups' social media forums

3.2.3 Biodiversity Advocacy

- Biodiversity staff are coordinating this year's Restoration Day, which will take place on May 21st at Whitireia Community Polytech in Porirua. This annual event celebrates community restoration efforts around the region, and the theme for this year is *Next Generation Restoration*. The keynote speaker has been confirmed as Sam Judd, the CEO of Sustainable Coastlines. Sam will speak on the importance of motivating the next generation to get involved in conservation and environmental work. Restoration Day will have five workshop topics and four fieldtrip options for attendees to choose from.

4. Environment Management

4.1 Harbours

- Harbour Ranger Grant Nalder was been appointed to succeed Mike Pryce as Manager Harbours/Regional Harbourmaster from 20 May, after Mike Pryce retires. A replacement Harbour Ranger is being sought.
- On 27 March a tug and barge arrived at Wellington with the first of numerous loads of rock from Tarakohe for use in the Transmission Gully project. Further loads will arrive until about January 2018.
- GWRC Harbours participated and co-located (with Maritime New Zealand) in a recreational boating safety awareness and information display stand at a Boat Show at Seaview Marina between 6 and 9 April 2017.
- KiwiRail held a major ship-fire exercise on board their ferry *Kaiarahi* at Wellington on 10 April (Wahine Anniversary), in which GWRC Harbours participated.
- GWRC Harbours had input into a National Tsunami Working Group meeting with Civil Defence on 11 April, where recent events featured.
- Several meetings have been held with the various parties involved with exploratory-drilling into the seabed aquifer in Wellington Harbour off Kau Bay. This is part of resilience-planning for post-major-earthquake events to help ensure an adequate supply of drinking-water to Wellington. The initial bores to be drilled will position a drilling barge in close proximity

to recommended shipping tracks in the vicinity, and will require careful navigational management.

- Whilst CentrePort contractors have been repairing the Southern Seawall with large rocks, a harbour boom has been in place to minimise floating debris, with the boom repositioned on various occasions. This repair work was completed and the harbour boom was removed and recovered on 1 May.

4.2 Environmental Regulation

4.2.1 Lower Hutt Water Supply

Joint work between GWRC, Wellington Water, Hutt City Council and Regional Public Health continues. As you will be aware from the update delivered to Council on 4 May, a variety of work streams are progressing across GWRC and WWL primarily. We will be available to provide a verbal update to the Committee on this work programme, and more specifically work sitting with GWRC.

4.2.2 T and T Landfill

Considerable compliance scrutiny continues to be applied to the T and T (construction and demolition) Landfill - following the November 2016 discharge event which impacted Owhiro Stream. Actions on site to date in 2017 include the redesign and plant-out of the treatment wetland, and commencing construction on the stream diversion system. We also served three infringement notices on the site in late March. In addition, community engagement revolved around a community information day (held in late March), and developing and maintaining a dedicated T and T public webpage.

We are now investigating a second discharge event on 10 April. Sample results and analysis indicate high levels of contaminants which will have affected aquatic life in Owhiro Stream. We are very disappointed in these results, and while our investigation continues, our work with the site operators to confirm works to fix the discharge problem has intensified. At this stage, a package of clean water diversion and damming work to capture Stream flow above the filling site.

Engagement with media continues on several lines of their enquiry, and also with the wider community primarily through our dedicated webpage in the first instance.



4.2.3 Transmission Gully

The Transmission Gully Project now enters its final three years prior to the programmed completion date of April 2020. The joint organisations' Steering Group has been reformed with a smaller senior management membership, and

a refocused work package around directing the resolution of regulatory issues still impacting the project delivery and environmental outcomes. Council Chief Executives and Project Delivery Board have been brought in more closely to this work to ensure both a clearer understanding of issues and strong mandate to fixing them through all participating organisations.

Key issues include the slow pace of some approvals work, delivery of works monitoring and reporting information, some aspects of site construction performance, and alignment of compliance expectations.



4.2.4 Dairy shed effluent storage requirements

We have been working with the dairy sector over several years to implement requirements for storing effluent (deferred irrigation) during periods when soils are at field capacity. We are finding consent applications are not meeting the mark generally around adequate storage requirements, suggesting our work with the sector needs to shift to help the messages be received and more readily accepted.

4.2.5 Resource Legislation Amendment Act (RLAA)

The RLAA was passed into law in April, and the consenting elements will come into force on 18 October 2017. The most significant aspect of the changes centres on amendments to Part 2 of the Resource Management Act, which will likely have an important influence on decision making and case law to come - both of which will shape how we manage natural and physical resources into the future. Specific provision changes for Policy development are very substantial, whilst the changes for regional consenting appear to be relatively limited (mainly around minor consent waivers). We will work to understand the changes before briefing Council further and developing a work programme to ensure we are ready to implement the new changes.

4.2.6 Wastewater treatment plant consent implementation

Territorial Authorities (TAs) across the region are facing considerable investment requirements in upgrading operations, discharge regimes and treatment quality over the next twenty years. The various wastewater plants serving our urban population, are at different stages in this overall transition. Arguably the greatest challenges are being experienced by the Wairarapa plants as TAs move away from solely discharging to water toward mixed land and water discharge regimes. The consented requirements around reduced discharges to water in particular are at times not being met, often highlighting the difficulty of the transition faced by these Councils as well as some instances of genuine poor performance

4.3 Environmental Science

4.3.1 Our Fresh Water 2017

The Ministry for the Environment and Statistics New Zealand have just released their 2017 update on national freshwater quality and quantity. It focuses on three themes – water quality; water quantity and flows; and ecosystems, habitats and species. The purpose is to report on the state of our environment, the pressures that affect the state, and how this state influences aspects of the environment and our well-being. Some of the general findings are:

- Water quality at sites where the upstream land cover is mainly urban and pastoral tends to be poorer than where native land cover is dominant.
- Urban and pastoral sites have higher nutrient and *E.coli* concentrations, and lower visual clarity and macroinvertebrate community index scores.
- Nitrate leaching from agricultural soils has increased.
- Urban run-off and modification of water bodies are degrading water quality.
- Nitrate-nitrogen concentrations are worsening at more monitored river sites than improving.
- Dissolved reactive phosphorus concentrations were improving at more monitored sites than worsening.
- *E.coli* concentrations affect our ability to swim in some rivers.
- More than half the water allocated (or consented) by councils is for irrigation, but we do not know how much is actually used.
- Of the native species reported on, around three-quarters of fish, one-third of invertebrates, and one-third of plants are threatened with, or at risk of extinction.
- Fine sediment deposited on riverbeds is estimated to have increased, but we don't know the national extent or impact this is having.
- Wetland extent has greatly reduced and losses continue.
- Cultural health is rated moderate at most tested freshwater sites.

The full report can be found here:

http://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Environmental%20reporting/our-fresh-water-2017_1.pdf

4.3.2 Investigation into E.coli contamination in the Waiwhetu aquifer

Environmental Science's Senior Hydrogeology scientist is working closely with Earth In Mind Ltd (specialist hydrogeology consultants who are experts on the Hutt Aquifer System) to undertake hydrogeological modelling for the Hutt Aquifer System, specifically for the Waiwhetu Aquifer.

The initial modelling work is designed to assist in identifying the source areas that are, or could potentially be, contributing water to the Waterloo Bore field and are therefore a potential source for contamination. This will allow us to provide other stakeholders (Wellington Water, HCC, and Regional Public Health) with a map of the areas of highest risk that can be used to help focus further investigations on specific potential contaminant sources or pathways. At the same time as this modelling work is happening, our Groundwater Quality scientist is collating water quality data from Wellington Water and GWRC databases for analysis. This will support a desktop analysis that may provide information on the type of the source of contamination based on changes in other water chemistry that may have been happening at the same time. These preliminary investigations are expected to take between one and two weeks to complete and then will likely lead into more detailed investigations in collaboration with Wellington Water.

4.3.3 Predator-free project on Miramar

A citizen science project undertaken as part of the Predator-Free Wellington project attracted television coverage. Rodents and other pests were monitored at 281 sites across the Miramar Peninsula. A number of volunteers took part, including members of Conservation Volunteers NZ, the Wellington Orienteering Club and Wellington Airport officers.

4.3.4 Community-based monitoring of urban streams

A number of meetings have been held to discuss community-based monitoring of urban streams, including the Owhiro, Kaiwharawhara and Waiwhetu streams. This included participation in the Owhiro Stream information day held on 25 March at Owhiro School to discuss the pollution and industrial impacts on the stream and what has been done to improve the situation.

4.3.5 The Marine Cultural Health Indicators project

This reached a milestone with the convening of a wananga at Takapuwahia Marae on 8 April. The purpose of the wananga was to record mātauranga o Ngati Toa and understand how they traditionally measured or assessed the health of the marine environment, and how these indicators might be incorporated into our monitoring and reporting in the future.

4.3.6 Contaminated land top 10 sites – Te Mome Stream and Miramar gasworks

Te Mome Stream and Miramar gasworks are both listed on the Ministry for the Environment's top ten contaminated sites in New Zealand.

Te Mome Stream has had a long history of industrial contaminants being discharged into it, especially from commercial battery manufacture and recycling operations. Heavy metals, such as lead and antimony, have been left in the sediments of the stream. Investigations have been undertaken across the affected area since 2004. GWRC conducted an investigation of the water and sediments in Te Mome Stream in **2005**. This concluded that there is significant contamination of lead and antimony in stream sediments which increased with depth (indicative of the historical inputs). A follow up investigation by Sinclair Knight Merz (2006) commissioned by GWRC conducted additional testing to provide a better understanding of the mobility of the contaminants into the water column. This report concluded that the metals in the water column did not pose a risk to ecosystem health. In addition, the salt water tidal inundations mitigate any potential toxicity. The stream is in effect a dead arm of Te Awakairangi/ Hutt River and is used mainly to transport storm water. There are no recreational activities in the stream, such as shellfish gathering or contact recreation, so the exposure to humans is considered to be low.

The Miramar gasworks operated from 1912 to 1972. The chemicals used at gas-works can be toxic to human health and take a long time to break down. This was recognised when the site was de-commissioned and site is now sealed by an asphalt cover and concrete, and is currently used for industrial businesses. The science department are currently reviewing historical information about the site. GWRC will work with Wellington City Council and the Ministry for the Environment to use the outcome of this review to help determine whether or not any further investigations are required, this would be to provide an indication of what kind, if any, remedial work may be necessary.

4.3.7 Evaluating the effectiveness of the pNRP

A collaborative project has been undertaken which brings together catchment management, environment group and mana whenua to develop a range of measures and evaluation tools to monitor the effectiveness of the pNRP policies and track the implementation process. We have used a tool called “Power of Co” to enable us to work more effectively together – this tool enables more collaborative behaviours amongst participants to enable better solutions to complex dilemmas. At this stage we have identified that a range of indicators across the four well-beings – environment, social, economic and cultural will be required to see if our policies on the ground are achieving the objectives of the plan. The first priority is to derive a set of measures and evaluation tools for looking at the plan’s freshwater quality objectives.

4.4 Environmental Policy

4.4.1 Submission on the Government’s Clean Water proposals

GWRC’s submission on the Clean Water discussion document has been submitted following discussions with you at both the Environment Committee and full Council.

The submission was strengthened to reflect the potential clash between the requirements in the Minister’s letter and our ongoing Whaitua process.

4.4.2 Resource Legislation Amendment Act

The Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017 (RLAA) obtained Royal Assent on 18 April 2017 and represents the Government's second phase of reform of the Resource Management Act (RMA). It contains around 40 amendments and makes significant changes to five different Acts, consequently amending several others. This is the most comprehensive package of reforms to the RMA since its inception 26 years ago.

The Government has stated that these changes aim to deliver substantive improvements to the resource management system to support more effective environmental management and drive capacity for development and economic growth. In particular the amendments aim to provide stronger national direction, a more responsive planning process, a streamlined resource consent process and better alignment with other legislation.

A good short overview of the changes can be found on MfE's website: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/overview-changes-resource-legislation-amendment-act.pdf>

Of particular interest to GWRC are:

- The elevation of natural hazards to a matter of national importance
- Introducing new pathways in the Schedule 1 process: a streamlined path and a path designed specifically for collaborative processes (such as our Whaitua process)
- New functions to ensure that there is sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet expected demand (which links directly to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity)
- Introduction of new planning standards (previously called the national planning template)
- Enabling electronic public notification (for example for plan changes and notified consents).

4.4.3 Proposed Natural Resources Plan Hearings

The next step in the pNRP process is the public hearing stage. The hearings have been split into six streams, each dealing with different proposed Plan topics. The first of these hearing streams commences in Masterton on the 22 May 2017. Each hearing stream will be heard in three locations around the region; after Masterton (Sports Wairarapa or the Choice Room) we will have hearings in Wellington (at the Westpac Stadium) and then on the Kāpiti Coast (at Coastlands).

Hearing streams 1-5 will all be starting in Masterton with the presentation of the staff section 42A officers reports on the first day. Thereafter submitters and their experts and legal Counsel will present their submissions and evidence to the Hearing Panel. This will continue in Wellington and then Kāpiti over the following weeks.

The hearings are expected to run until early 2018 with a decision version of the plan expected by 31 July 2018.

The Hearing Panel is chaired by Mr Mark St. Clair (independent planning commissioner), Ms Liz Burge (member of Te Upoko Taiao and independent planning commissioner) and Mr David McMahon (independent planning commissioner).

4.5 Parks

4.5.1 Parks network

The Greater Wellington Great Outdoors (GWGO) 2017 summer events programme had a total of 8952 people take part. The momentum of the programme was at times stalled by a very wet summer, with a record number of event cancellations (6). On the flip side when we did run our events, 96% of surveyed participants had an excellent (75%) or above average (21%) experience. Of the people surveyed 49% were new visitors to that park and 98% would visit again.

Despite lower event attendances we reaped much greater benefit through wider online connections with the programme. For the first time we used the Eventbrite online booking system, with a generally good result. GWGO launched with a video designed to be shared via Facebook and other social media. This video did exceptionally well since its publication at the start of December, achieving nearly 95,000 views.

While the Battle Hill Farm Day was the main GWGO crowd-puller, the Nature Discovery Treasure Hunt attracted 450 on the day, twice the number from 2016. However attendance dropped away somewhat from February which could be attributed to the weather not improving as hoped.

Camping across the network is starting to drop off, with the season extended by ongoing tourist numbers. Interestingly Dry Creek camping numbers are on a par with Battle Hill, coming from almost nothing two years ago and all driven by the budget camping market.

Progress continues on development of the Regional Trails Framework, with publication of a first draft and review and comment from all partners. A second draft is expected in May, which will then be circulated to all stakeholders for comment. All agencies are briefing their executive leadership teams and preparing for presentations to the Chief Executive and Mayoral Forums later in 2017.

GWRC remains a lead agency in the Rimutaka Cycle Trail (RCT) collaboration, recently working with Hutt City Council on an update presentation to the NZ Cycle Trail Board. So far the RCT has featured in Lonely Planet Top 10 new global experiences and has secured two Maintaining Great Rides grants of \$415,000.



From Petone to Orongorongo via the Rimutaka Cycle Trail

4.5.2 Akatarawa Forest

Redevelopment work at the Maungakotukutuku carpark has been completed. This involved tidying up the road and water tables, resurfacing the carpark with gravel, securing the surrounds with heavy bollards (the previous fences were being regularly pulled out) and installing housing for the new electronic gate lock system.



Upgraded Akatarawa Forest entrance carpark at Maungakotukutuku

4.5.3 Belmont Regional Park

The Old Coach Road route from Normandale to Belmont Road is now fully fenced, providing year round recreational access through the farmed area for the first time. Other fencing work has enabled us to retire Turbys Gorge and around 20ha in the upper Speedys Stream catchment. Seven stock water dams have been built to date, with another five to come next summer. Site preparation in the Speedys Stream catchment is underway with contract planting of 20,000 trees to take place from mid-May.

Flood stability repairs to the historic Woollen Mills Dam in the Korokoro Valley are scheduled for April/May. Fish passage improvements will be completed at the same time. The work has been publicised through signage, on GWRC social media and via “Neighbourly” in the local community.

4.5.4 East Harbour Regional Park

The pre-feed stage of the 1080 possum control operation took place in the last week of April, with the actual drop planned to occur after 8 May. The later timing, while unavoidable, will mean a slower than ideal carcass breakdown and a longer period of greater vigilance for dog owners. On the brighter side it has minimised the impact on recreational hunting during the “roar” period.

4.5.5 Pakuratahi Forest

Major improvements have been completed on culverts underpinning the historic Rimutaka Rail trail, addressing scouring and, in some cases, the risk of collapse. Following heavy rain during April, a large slip almost completely obscured the entrance to the Summit tunnel on the Kaitoke side. This was cleared within a day by contractors; despite less than ideal weather they needed to manage the work with cyclists continuing to climb over debris and pass through the site.

With the increasing popularity of Tunnel Gully, we are investigating options to improve the reliability of the water supply to the toilets. The current setup is vulnerable to tree falls, and until recently, no backup capacity in case of disruption. We also need to anticipate future improvements to our current “long drop” facility in the upper picnic area.



From left: Slip obscures Summit Tunnel; Tunnel Gully water supply pipeline

4.5.6 Queen Elizabeth Park

Construction works continue at the Queen Elizabeth Park Visitor Hub while an associated project is underway to “activate” the building and ensure GWRC delivers an appropriately distinctive statement to the region on opening day in November. The facility is being developed to support relationship building with the community, as an event hub and a corporate meeting space for GWRC and external agencies. We will encourage those wishing to run birthday parties and other celebrations to use our other parks where the facilities are less vulnerable to wear and tear.

Preparations are well underway for the upcoming planting season, which starts on 21 June with Arbor Day. Around 12,000 trees will be planted by community and corporate volunteers alongside Te Ara o Whareroa and the northern and dune wetlands. All plants have been grown on in the nursery by our volunteer Restoration Group, which has become a very valuable partner in our environmental programme.

This year our low-cost restoration programme also moves into its implementation phase, with contractors to plant around 7,000 smaller grade species in the park.

5. Climate Change

5.1 Consideration of climate change in Council and Committee papers

The GWRC Climate Change Strategy sets out the Council’s commitment to taking a proactive approach to managing the risks associated with a changing climate, to reducing the emissions associated with its activities, and to contributing to the enhanced resilience of the region by considering climate change in its decision making processes.

To this end, a process for considering climate change in the development of all new initiatives, and in all relevant council and committee papers has been implemented.¹

The requirement is designed to ensure that the consideration of climate change becomes an integral part of all of GWRCs work.

Consideration of Climate Change is required in all Council and Committee papers expect for GWRC Committees that are mandated by statute with governance arrangements that include external agencies (e.g. the Regional Transport Committee). Committees of this type are encouraged to consider climate change across all papers, but are exempt from the absolute requirement. Climate change considerations are not required in General Manager's reports to committees.

Climate change will also be considered as part of the development of the 2018 Long Term Plan.

The consideration of climate change requirement applies to both:

- The effect Council's activities have on the climate (i.e. the greenhouse gas emissions generated or removed from the atmosphere as a result of a Council project) and the actions taken to address those emissions (commonly referred to as Climate Change Mitigation).
- How a changing climate could impact Council's functions and services in the future (e.g. through sea level rise or an increase in extreme weather events), and the actions taken to address or avoid those impacts (commonly referred to as Climate Change Adaptation).

6. Responses to public participation – 22 March 2017

- Hamish Carnachan and Peter Wilson from the Wellington Fish and Game Council gave a presentation about their experience, as a statutory body, in dealing with the Whaitua process that has been running in Wairarapa.

Response from GWRC: Officers noted the feedback from Fish and Game and have indicated an openness to ongoing discussions with Fish and Game around the Whaitua process.

- Peter Fraser gave a presentation on Water Wairarapa

Response from GWRC: Officers are currently preparing advice on the issues raised by Mr Fraser which will form part of the pending Council workshops around Water Wairarapa.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

¹ This action is consistent with Policy 2.1 in the GWRC Climate Change Strategy "Consider the effects of climate change as an integral part of planning and decision-making".

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Nigel Corry
General Manager,
Environment Management

Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager,
Catchment Management

Luke Troy
General Manager,
Strategy