

EXTRACT from Confirmed Public Excluded minutes of the Council meeting on Thursday 27 February 2025

Committee Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council
34 Chapel Street, Masterton, at 12.23 pm

Members Present

Councillor Ponter (Chair)
Councillor Staples (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Bassett
Councillor Connelly
Councillor Duthie
Councillor Kirk-Burnnand
Councillor Laban
Councillor Lee
Councillor Nash
Councillor Saw
Councillor Woolf

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2 Potential Land Acquisition – Lower Hutt – Report PE25.55

Jack Mace, Director Delivery and David Boone, Manager Ecosystems and Community spoke to the report.

Moved: Cr Kirk-Burnnand / Cr Lee

That Council:

- 1 Approves Greater Wellington entering into negotiations and agreements for the purchase of Gollans Valley Station up to a maximum capital expenditure of \$8,000,000, or an alternative maximum amount confirmed at the time of making this decision.
- 2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council Chair, to execute Recommendation 1.
- 3 Notes that:

- a. The position of mana whenua, Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, in their support for exploring the acquisition of the land has been at the forefront of this decision. Mana whenua support is noted in the content below under Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori - Implications for Māori, beginning on page 17 of this report.
 - b. If Council approves 1 and 2, then future planning and decisions around land use will be necessary for Council consideration to determine management options. Future uses for the land are contingent upon the views of mana whenua and public consultation.
 - c. Full due diligence of the title and other registered interests has not yet been completed. The delegation relating to recommendation 2 includes the expectation that the Chief Executive will have discretion to decide on any matters arising, or to seek future engagement with Council as deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive.
- 4 Agrees that the operating expenditure for the new land be met from within existing Council budgets while the planning and consultation phases take place.

The motion was **carried**.

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The Public Excluded part of the meeting closed at 1.09pm.

Councillor D Ponter

Chair

Date:

For Decision

POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITION - LOWER HUTT

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To provide a summary of the opportunity, benefits and disbenefits of acquiring Gollans Valley Station, a 1366ha block of private land located between the East Harbour Regional Park Northern Forest and Parangārehu Lakes blocks.
2. To decide whether to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to enter negotiations and necessary agreements to purchase the land.

He tūtohu

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1 Approves Greater Wellington entering into negotiations and agreements for the purchase of Gollans Valley Station up to a maximum capital expenditure of \$8,000,000, or an alternative maximum amount confirmed at the time of making this decision.
- 2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to execute Recommendation 1.
- 3 Notes that
 - a The position of mana whenua, Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, in their support for exploring the acquisition of the land has been at the forefront of this decision. Mana whenua support is noted in the content below under Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori - Implications for Māori, beginning on page 17 of this report.
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matters arising, or to seek future engagement with Council as deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive.

Te aukati atu i te marea

Exclusion of the public

3. Grounds for exclusion of the public under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) are:

The information contained in this report relates to a proposed land purchase upon terms and conditions that are yet to be negotiated and agreed. Having this part of the meeting open to the public would disadvantage Greater Wellington in its negotiations as it would reveal Greater Wellington negotiation strategy (section 7(2)(i) of the Act).

Greater Wellington has not identified any public interest favouring disclosure of this information in public proceedings of the meeting that would override the need to withhold the information.

Te tāhū kōrero/Te horopaki

Background/Context

4. Gollans Valley Station (the property), at 525 Muritai Road Eastbourne is on the market for the first time in around 60 years after changing ownership about 20 years ago in a private sale. Tenders close on 3 April 2025.
5. The property is located between two separate parts of East Harbour Regional Park. Acquisition would enable direct connection of these existing public park areas.
6. The property contains the upper areas of Gollans Stream and wetlands which feed directly into the nationally significant Parangārehu Lakes. Restoration of the lakes is one of the highest priorities for Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika (Taranaki Whānui) who own the lakebeds.

Alignment with relevant Policies and Plans

Toitū Te Whenua Management Plan Directions

7. The Toitū Te Whenua - Parks Network Plan identifies that property acquisition or disposal is a 'Restricted activity' and assessment is required (Rule 49). Public notification is required for proposed land disposal but not for acquisition. Greater Wellington staff have undertaken a 'Restricted activity' assessment in line with the Toitū Te Whenua - Parks Network Plan and have woven that process into this decision paper. In summary, a 'Restricted activity' assessment concluded that this property's location, natural values, opportunities for recreation activities, and the forward-looking opportunities subject to future planning make it one of the highest priorities for land acquisition in the region.
8. Key aspects of Toitū Te Whenua - Parks Network Plan (the Plan) that have been reflected in this decision report include:
 - Plan Policy 51P outlines general criteria for consideration of land to be acquired for inclusion in regional parks.

- Plan Action A53 which supports investigation of opportunities for strategic acquisitions to the park network. The Plan does not identify particular parcels of private land for acquisition but recognises the value of adjoining land.
- Plan Action A261 identifies that we will ‘Consider additions, agreements or other mechanisms to create ongoing ecological and recreation connections between the three parts of East Harbour Park’.

Alignment with Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Plan (WIP)

9. The Whaitua Committee agreed that the following actions would help shift a range of water quality attributes (National Objective Framework (NOF) attributes) in the Parangārehu lakes including E.coli, MCI, sediment, nitrogen and phosphorous.
 - Stock exclusion for wetlands, Gollan’s Stream and 1m wide tributaries
 - Seepage wetlands to be assessed for stock exclusion
 - Erosion risks to be managed with a focus on stream-bank sources (reducing sediment and phosphorous sources).

The Committee considered that, with private ownership, this could be achieved in a generation (25 years). With public ownership, this is likely to be achieved more quickly.

Te tātaritanga Analysis

Location

10. Gollans Valley Station is a 1366-hectare property located at 525 Muritai Road Eastbourne - Legal description is LOT 2 DP 369053 RT 280816.



Environmental Opportunities and Risks

11. The acquisition of the property presents many opportunities to protect and enhance the natural value of the catchment and restore important ecological connectivity between the Northern Forest and Parangārehu Lakes sections of East Harbour Regional Park.
12. Environmental risks are present with the inverse, or potential cost associated with managing opportunities. Of significant note is a contaminated land site that is a closed landfill managed by Hutt City Council.
13. More information about known environmental opportunities and risks is provided in Attachment 1.

Closed Landfill Site - Significant Environmental Risk

14. A significant environmental risk is noted below, with further details contained in Attachment 1.
15. The land contains a closed Hutt City Council landfill. There is an existing legal agreement (license to occupy) in place between the current owners and Hutt City Council (HCC) which enables HCC to undertake their responsibilities with managing the closed landfill site and assigns the liability with the site to HCC. Initial advice from our legal team suggests that this agreement would likely need to be renegotiated with any new owner because the agreement would not automatically transfer to a new owner.
16. The ongoing liability and management responsibility for the landfill site would need to be renegotiated with the Hutt City Council. Confirming future obligations of the owner and HCC will likely become a condition of the offer during purchase negotiations.

Land use options for future decision making

17. Should purchase be successful there are a range of options for consideration for its use. This includes, but is not limited to the following options, which are discussed in more detail throughout this section:
 - Option A: Land banking – future options are generally described below
 - Option B: Incorporation into the wider Greater Wellington Parks Network
 - Option C: Future infrastructure opportunities
18. It is expected that any future use planning would be undertaken in partnership with mana whenua leading to the fulfilment of their aspirations for their land and the lakes, and to co-govern, co-manage, and/or potentially take more of a leadership role in the management of the property.

Option A: Land banking

19. Land banking generally creates future opportunities that would otherwise not be possible, or could be extremely difficult without owning the land. Land banking could include creation of future revenue opportunities and/or environmental

protection and restoration through forestry, emissions trading, land use change or legal protection.

20. With public interest in private funding already being expressed, land banking could buy time for enabling community “crowd sourced” funding for locally driven developments.
21. Mana whenua ownership or fulfillment of their aspirations in a range of options could be advantaged in the future with land banking.
22. Options are essentially limitless for future decision makers and could involve disposal of part or all of the land asset at a future date depending on future opportunities and affordability.

Option B: Incorporation into the wider Greater Wellington Parks Network

Planning

23. The land could be initially held and managed under the Local Government Act which allows a range of activities, including grazing, until detailed assessments for possible classification in collaboration with mana whenua and under the Reserves Act are completed. For example, the wetland areas and mature and younger bushland areas may be appropriate to classify as Scenic Reserve, and the open valley floor could remain as LGA land or classified as Recreation Reserve in future.
24. After detailed assessment co-led with mana whenua, appropriate Reserves Act classifications can be Gazetted e.g. Recreation, Historic, Scenic Reserve, Scientific, Local Purpose or other classification.
25. Reserves Act management plan processes including public consultation can be used to add the parcel to the umbrella of East Harbour Regional Park e.g. as a Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network chapter or variation of existing chapters.
26. In the Hutt City Council’s (HCC) operative District Plan, Gollans Valley Station is currently zoned General Rural, this is proposed to continue in the proposed district plan (as at February 2025). This provides for many rural-adjacent activities as permitted activities. The District Plan identifies a number of Significant Natural Resources within the property and several Significant Archaeological Resources along the escarpment.
27. The record of title is recorded as “limited as to parcels”, which generally means that the survey information available at the time the title was first created was insufficient; and hence the title area and dimensions are not guaranteed. There is nothing stopping the property/title being sold as is and nothing compelling the new owner to have the land re-surveyed. There is risk that, if the block was to be re-surveyed, the boundaries may vary from that shown on the current DP Plan, but given the title is large and there don’t appear to be significant improvements or features close to the boundaries, this risk is considered low.

Park and Land Management Operations

28. It is likely there would need to be some form of grazing for weed/fire management in the short term, particularly while planning activities are undertaken and the scale and method of restoration is planned.

29. The main property access road is suitable for two-wheeled drive vehicles with no upgrade costs required other than basic maintenance over time.
30. Assets include two houses and a cabin in the open grazed valley area, and a small basic hut close to the boundary near Butterfly Creek of East Harbour Regional Park. All these facilities could be adaptively reused for public park purposes in a similar manner to other structures in existing parks, e.g. booked accommodation. The valley floor offers many possible campground sites. Further details about the property's existing assets are contained in Attachment 1.
31. To establish park facilities for general public access would require capital expenditure of ~\$1m which could be implemented over time and does not need to be implemented at first purchase if a "permitted access" approach was taken initially.
32. The property has the potential to hold a significant campground but would require investment in toilet blocks (x3), vehicle access, security, signage and track establishment. A campground on site can be expected to deliver revenue of approximately \$60,000-100,000 per year.

Recreation Experience Values and Opportunities

33. The property would offer recreation opportunities for a wide range of user experiences. The property has outstanding scenic and natural values, large areas of native bush, high value wetlands and an extensive network of tracks which could readily become public trails.
34. Recreation operations that could result from future, collaborative planning process co-led alongside mana whenua and involving public consultation could involve:
 - Multi-use opportunities, i.e. walking, mountain biking, horse riding
 - Gates, directional signs and orientation map boards
 - Risk assessment and management of buildings etc and identification of open and closed public access areas.
 - Basic car park facilities (gravel area), to avoid pressure on HCC parking areas at Burdens Gate.
 - Existing track vegetation clearance to create connections or circuit routes to existing East Harbour Park tracks.

Option (c) - Future Infrastructure Opportunities

35. The location and nature of the land lends itself to potential use for public and community infrastructure. This could include (but is not limited to) the following examples.

Wastewater Treatment

36. The long-term viability of Hutt Valley's wastewater treatment plant at its current Seaview location is under question due to sea-level rise, storm surge and coastal inundation. Climate change modelling suggests the Seaview area is at significant risk within three to five decades. To date, alternative options to relocate the treatment plant have not been identified.

37. In the 1990's, Gollans Valley was considered as a location for wastewater treatment before Seaview was decided as the preferred location. It is understood that the primary barrier to the Gollans Valley option was that it would have required piping to Fitzroy Bay rather than using the existing main outfall pipe to Pencarrow. The additional cost of a new pipe was likely to have been prohibitive. Now, as the main outfall pipe is degraded to such an extent that a replacement is required (estimated cost \$700M), a new treatment plant in Gollans Valley may be more feasible.
38. Utilising part of the property for wastewater treatment is purely hypothetical at this stage. There is a need for options planning and design work involved in any serious exploration of this opportunity. Wastewater treatment up gradient of the Parangārehu lakes is very likely to be undesirable, particularly by mana whenua.

Renewable Energy Generation

39. There is potential to investigate the feasibility of a windfarm on site. If feasible a wind farm lease could potentially deliver an additional \$100-200k per year.

Telecommunications assets

40. Spark and Vodafone have leases in place with current owners for cell towers on the property.

Plant Nursery

41. The property would provide opportunities for relocation of the Mainland Island restoration Operation (MIRO) nursery which had been providing plants to Greater Wellington for restoration of the Parangārehu lakes. The nursery had to close recently due to pest plants present at its site posing a biosecurity risk.

Nga kōwhiringa

Present decision-making options

42. Two options, "do nothing/no purchase" and "pursue purchase" are compared in Table 1 below. The drafted recommendation for Council to approve the pursuit of purchasing the property is Option 2 below and will enable future decision to be made around options noted in Options A, B and C above.

Table 1: Options analysis

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks and risks	Unknowns
<p>Option 1 No purchase - Do Nothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids acquisition cost • Avoids ongoing land management cost. • No prioritisation required for Greater Wellington to balance resources across this property and existing work programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational damage - the community has long expressed an interest in Greater Wellington acquiring this land. • Decline in water quality in the Parangārehu Lakes with continued sediment and nutrient loading into lake from farming practises in the upper catchments. • Pest incursions into park areas - goats will continue to impact the regeneration of native vegetation. Egeria is likely to continue reinvading Parangārehu - Lake Kohangatera. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low commitment to prioritising future work on the land as we will seek to work with the new landowner to support managing natural values via existing programmes of work. • Could create opportunities for Greater Wellington to consider partial purchase of subdivided parcels in the future if negotiations with the new landowner allowed, e.g. the lower wetland areas and the mature beech forest on the eastern hills may be of interest to future owner to sell. • Purchase opportunity arising again is impossible to predict • Future land use change under private ownership.

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks and risks	Unknowns
<p>Option 2</p> <p>Pursue property purchase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for mana whenua partnership to thrive from the onset of acquiring the land. E.g. potential partnering opportunities with mana whenua to co-design decision making and future planning and co-deliver future management and restoration. • Potential for other public agencies to utilise the land. • Reputational benefits with community support for the land purchase to enable the protection of the natural values, and enhanced amenity and recreational opportunities. • Improvements in water quality in the Parangārehu Lakes. • Cost effective management of pest species (including goats and Egeria). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation pressure on existing staff and operational resources to adequately manage the restoration of the natural values and enable public access. • Management of the historic landfill site will need to be agreed with HCC prior to purchase and a new lease agreement would be recommended. • Purchase will increase public interest in access, however consultation is required if desired approach is to incorporate into the parks network before this could occur. In addition, the teams working in parks will need to assess priorities across the network before investment in park infrastructure can happen at this site and opening to the public would not be immediate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to offset some of the acquisition cost by subdividing and selling. Subject to future planning, mana whenua partnership and community consultation if this land is considered part of the parks network. • Provides the community with time to generate private funding for future development potential of public land. • Costs associated with pasture/fire management and the ability to retain livestock grazing on site. • Opportunities and challenges regarding future infrastructure opportunities need to be explored in more depth

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks and risks	Unknowns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could allow for enhancement of restoration efforts in the catchment to better protect forests, wetlands and lakes. • May enable new opportunities to create habitats to introduce species of conservation concern (e.g. bittern, fernbird and kiwi). • Could enable greater scope to meet our greenhouse emissions reduction targets. • Could provide enhanced recreational opportunities include creating linkages between the Northern Forest with the Parangārehu Lakes. • Opportunity to strengthen partnership-led outcomes for landfill management through Greater Wellington, mana whenua and HCC's future management of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public scrutiny and potential discontent over the acquisition cost and ongoing costs. 	

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks and risks	Unknowns
	landfill site. to effectively manage the landfill site.		

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PROACTIVE RELEASE

Ngā hua ahumoni
Financial implications

Rateable Value (RV)

43. The rateable value (RV) of the property at 1 September 2022 is \$7,430,000 of which \$6,620,000 is land value and \$810,000 is improvements. There are no QV or other current market value estimates available. Greater Wellington’s property consultants have advised that they expect the RV will set the uppermost limit of current market value and that a current independent valuation (along with legal due diligence) will be essential to any serious consideration of purchase.

Expenditure

Capex

44. \$8,000,000 has been hypothetically used as the upper limit of acquisition cost.

Opex

45. Ongoing annual expenditure would be about \$600,000 per annum for the short-term, until the next Long Term Planning cycle in 2027, to maintain facilities to a minimum standard that would not enable immediate public access. This would include:

- \$500,000 debt servicing (estimated for an \$8M loan), and
- Opex of \$100,000 for property rates and basic building and road maintenance.

Offsetting additional opex costs until 2027/28 or longer

46. Until a decision is made on what future use(s) of the land would be, further operating costs and revenue are difficult to predict. However, it is reasonable to expect that some further provision will need to be made in a future long-term plan, with the amount dependent on what decisions are made for use and classification of the land.
47. If purchase of the property is successful, the land will be managed by a Greater Wellington team for a period of time until future planning and decision making can occur. Table 2 below assumes the Environment Group, Delivery function will manage the land in the interim, however, this does not imply that the future use of a park is predetermined. Table 2 outlines opex funding sources to offset, in the next two to three years, the additional \$600,000 per annum noted above.

Table 2: Opex funding source analysis

Item description	Risk/Implications/Unknowns	Opex funding amount (per annum)
Reprioritise opex from existing Parks maintenance budget.	Limited to maintenance activities in existing parks that would result in minimal impact on service delivery. E.g. mowing contracts, road/track	\$200,000

	maintenance in lesser used park areas.	
Utilise a portion of funds from the Parks Forestry Reserve.	The Forest Reserve is used to fund opex management cost of the metro and Wairarapa forestry assets with the externally held Forestry Right. There are ample funds in the reserve to draw down the amount suggested for two to three years.	\$200,000
Revenue generation from new public bookable accommodation at Baring Head and Belmont Parks.	The potential for additional public bookable accommodation exists. \$80k per annum is the estimate based on two existing bookable units.	\$80,000 - \$120,000
Increase camping fees at existing campgrounds across the parks network.	Current camping fees are generally low in comparison to DOC. Additional revenue estimates vary depending on the size of fee increases.	\$20,000 - \$40,000
Grazing license	The current grazing license generates around \$50,000 of revenue per annum, however, some changes to existing stock management and exclusion from waterways are likely needed to ensure good management practice to a high standard. Future revenue potential is conservatively estimated.	\$0-\$30,000
Telecommunications leases	Spark and Vodafone have leases in place with current owners for cell towers on the property for combined revenue of \$48,000 per annum. Spark is currently renegotiating the terms of the lease. Vodafone's lease is in place until 2028. Some uncertainty in transfer of leases to new owners needs to	\$40,000 - \$60,000

		be investigated in due diligence process.	
HCC landfill lease		<p>Due diligence investigation is needed to determine transfer of existing license to new owners. The current license commenced in 2002, was extended in 2021 with a 15-year term to 2036 with an ability to extend for three further terms of 5 years each.</p> <p>Current license fee is \$7,000 per annum, reviewed two yearly via CPI index adjustment.</p> <p>Future license fees estimated with variance given overall public interests involved.</p>	\$0-\$10,000
Emissions Scheme	Trading	<p>47.3 hectares of land is currently registered into the ETS. Revenue generation varies depending on carbon price in the ETS and the variable sequestration of regenerating vegetation over time.</p> <p>Low-end estimate of ETS revenue is around \$13,000, but it is uncertain whether the revenue would sensibly sit in parks budget or Climate Change/Strategy budget, hence the \$0 low end noted.</p>	\$0 - \$40,000
Future club use license fees		Unpredictable what the park and staff management capacity could accommodate.	\$0 - \$25,000
Total available opex			\$540,000 - \$725,000

48. As shown in Table 2, the low estimate of available opex funding to offset the required \$600,000 leaves a shortfall of about \$60,000, whereas the high estimate leaves a surplus of \$125,000. If there is a deficit then this can be absorbed into wider Environment Group budgets in the short-term through further re-prioritisation.
49. If Council approves acquisition negotiations, settlement timing will be negotiated. Purchase may be able to be negotiated within financial year 2025/26. If purchase is

required within 2024/25, the Finance team can make necessary changes for the 24/25 Annual Report. Further costs beyond purchase and installation of security is not foreseen for 2024/25. If purchased, operational activities for the property will be included with the Annual Plan process for 2026/27 to enable a minimal expenses operational programme until further planning can be completed.

Potential benefits of acquisition

50. Acquiring the land creates a rare opportunity in the Greater Wellington region where source to sea catchment restoration would be achievable on public land.
51. It is difficult to monetise many of the benefits relating to environmental management that would be enabled or increased by acquisition of the property. There is potential to improve operational effectiveness around stock management, pest plant and animal control, fire risk management, protection of wetlands etc. The points below would be benefited from acquisition of the property:
 - Pest plant control with migrating incursions from the property into Parangārehu lakes and Northern Forest park areas. The Northern Forest contains ecological weeds such as climbing asparagus, Japanese honeysuckle, old man's beard and banana passion fruit which can alter forest structure and composition, affecting the diversity by smothering native vegetation and preventing regeneration. These ecological weeds are likely to be unchecked in the forest remnants on the Gollans Valley Station. Egeria and Yellow flag iris controlled by Greater Wellington within the Parangārehu lakes area but may be reinvading from the farm property.
 - Recent studies show submerged aquatic native vegetation has retracted to shallower depths. There is concern that pulses of sediment from the farmland in the upper catchment may be shading plants in the deeper parts of the lake. Stronger good management practice on the farmed areas of the catchment could improve lake water quality.
 - Pest animal control - Greater Wellington has undertaken some control work on goats and deer in the Parangārehu Lakes block but there are regular incursions of goats from the Gollans Valley Station Property. In the Northern Forest section of East Harbour Park, there is currently no southern boundary fence in many places. Stock occasionally enters the Butterfly creek area and travels up the tracks into the park causing environmental damage. Due to the potential high cost to install a new boundary fence the parks team have not committed to this work yet. Rationalisation of grazed areas on the Gollans valley block would allow staff to resolve this issue.
52. Asset maintenance within the Northern Forest section of East Harbour Park (Butterfly Creek area) is a challenge due to access being only via the walking track network or helicopter. The existing toilet at Butterfly Creek requires replacement and maintenance of the septic system is expensive due to remoteness. This purchase would enable better access into the area through existing farm tracks and would be a benefit to multiple Greater Wellington teams.

Private Funding

53. There has been long-standing community interest in Greater Wellington acquiring this land. The purchase has been raised at the Eastbourne Community Board and by the Eastbourne community several times. There is potential to seek co-funding from philanthropists who have an interest in having the property's high natural values restored.
54. Officers have already had conversations with potential private partners that have expressed interest in assisting with acquisition and/or operational costs. We are unable to rely on any private contributions with the consideration of acquisition as the details of a funding agreement will not likely be possible to confirm prior to tender deadline, i.e. whether a private funding contribution would be conditional to use, certain activities being undertaken in a future park or a "no strings" donation. However, with private funding interested partners having proactively connected with Greater Wellington staff, and their community and environmentally minded interests being made clear, subject to partnership discussions with mana whenua, it is a realistic possibility to attract significant funding for this opportunity and future park development endeavours.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori Implications for Māori

Taranaki Whānui Support

55. Taranaki Whānui has expressed support for Greater Wellington's exploration of acquiring the property with the view that biodiversity uplift in the whaitua/region can be achieved through continual parcels of land that contribute to improve ecological outcomes while reducing farming impacts, and in this case, for the surrounding waterways and feeders to the Parangārehu Lakes.
56. Additional to the priorities outlined above, further exploration will be undertaken to support partnership outcomes that include:
 - Partnering to agree shared aspirations, potential uses (including for public benefit and donor or investor involvement) and long-term outcomes for the whenua.
 - Joint objectives of the co-management agreement at Parangārehu lakes and the actions identified in Te Mahere Wai.¹ Key recommendations in Te Mahere Wai that could be advanced through the purchase of the property include: recommendation 89 - Pest management is addressed to accelerate the improvement and restoration of the lakes; and recommendation 90 - Stock exclusion from waterways is prioritised in the area, and Greater Wellington will provide support to affected landowners in its implementation.
 - Opportunity to co-govern the land from conception and, subject to future planning alongside Greater Wellington, there may be opportunities to

¹ [Greater Wellington — Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao](#) - A Mana Whenua whaitua implementation plan to return mana to our freshwater bodies.

support whānau, hapū, iwi reconnection to the whenua, and/or for Māori businesses in terms of concessionaire activities on the land.

- Investigate the return of the two remaining sections of lakebed, currently on private land, to Taranaki Whānui.

57. Mana whenua continue to express their medium-term objective for the whole of the catchment to support the entire life cycle of mahinga kai species. To achieve this, the short-term objective is for iwi and hapū to “have access to and make decisions about how the roto (lake), awa (river) and repo (wetlands) are managed ki uta ki tai (from the lower to the upper reaches) as a living organic system with each part connected to the other parts” (Te Mahere Wai p. 139).

Cultural Redress and Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika

58. Mana whenua describe the Parangārehu lakes as the “jewels in the crown” of Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Te Mahere Wai p. 135), being Taonga Nui a Kiwa to Taranaki Whānui. The lakes (not including the northern sections which are on Gollans Valley Station) were returned to mana whenua as part of Treaty settlement redress, in recognition of Crown breaches including the compulsory acquisition and endowment of their lands for public purposes. The surrounding land is co-managed by Greater Wellington and Taranaki Whānui (the Rōpū Tiaki).

59. The area is considered by mana whenua to be in a “state of uncertainty and risk due to the complexity surrounding the management of the lakes” (Te Mahere Wai p. 135). Specific concern has been raised around the management of Gollan’s Stream (being the primary kuinga (source) of wai entering Lake Kōhangaterā) and the repo (wetlands) adjoining the lakes.

60. The acquisition of this land would enable and potentially accelerate the ability to achieve Greater Wellington and many mana whenua shared objectives and support Greater Wellington delivery on mana whenua aspirations that have been well communicated.

Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi Consideration of climate change

Contribution towards Climate Change Resilience

61. Direction provided by the climate change chapter² in the Regional Policy Statement (refer chapter 3.1A of the Proposed Change 1 and Variation 1 to the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region - October 2024) includes the following that is relevant to this potential acquisition and opportunities arising:

- opportunities for carbon sequestration, natural hazard mitigation (e.g. fire risk management), erosion prevention and sediment inputs (e.g. farming activities);
- protecting wetlands;

² <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Plans-policies-by-laws/RPS/241004-Decision-Docs/Decision-version-of-Proposed-Change-1-and-Variation-1-provisions.pdf>

- restoring the biodiversity and ecosystems of the land to build resilience to climate impacts such as erosion, fire and storms.

Contribution towards Greater Wellington's goal³ to be carbon neutral by 2030

62. This potential acquisition could present opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the long term through environmental protection and restoration. However, in the shorter term, the purchase may result in the inclusion of emissions from grazing activities on the land into the Council's own inventory. This will have some impact on total emissions and the ease with which we can achieve our targets. It is likely that a period of grazing will be required to manage weed growth. Mowing is a lower emissions method, but only if the cut material is not sold as animal feed.

Climate change risk

63. Regarding the Council's exposure to climate impacts, this land is subject to the same types of climate risk as the East Harbour Regional Park and so its acquisition would not materially change the current and future risk ratings.

Ngā tikanga whakatau

Decision-making process

64. The matters requiring decision in this report were considered by officers against the decision-making requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2001.

Te hiranga

Significance

65. Timing of strategic land acquisition opportunities cannot always be planned in an open market. Potential acquisition of Gollans Valley Station was identified for Council consideration in early 2025 and as a result has not been included in any planning for 2025/26 to date.

Requirement to consult with our communities regarding purchase

66. Section 95(2A) of the Local Government Act 2002 requires Greater Wellington to consult on an Annual Plan and/or undertake an LTP Amendment if there are any Significant or Material differences from the corresponding year of the LTP (in this case year two of the 2024-34 LTP).

67. Officers undertook an evaluation in line with Greater Wellington's Significance and Engagement Policy⁴ and determined that the proposed purchase of the land is of 'medium' significance. Considerations include that although there is an interest in obtaining this land to add it to the parks network there are a number of options which could be considered for the land use in future and, as such, the purchase of the land itself does not, at this stage, meet the definition of a Strategic Asset.

³ <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/climate-change/what-we-are-doing/>

⁴ <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/>

68. Officers recommend that Greater Wellington is not required to consult at this stage on the purchase of the land but is required to 'inform and engage' with the community about the proposal. Subject to Council direction to enter into negotiations, the 2025/26 Annual Plan 'inform and engage' materials will be updated to include a sentence noting that Greater Wellington will investigate the acquisition of land at Gollans Valley Station.

Requirement to consult with our communities regarding land use

69. Full consultation about what is done with the land in the future is however required, should the preferred option be to incorporate it into the parks network.

Long Term Plan amendments

70. Future LTP amendment requirements will depend on decisions regarding land use and the degree of variation from activities described in the LTP.

Te whakatūtakitaki

Engagement

71. Officers undertook an assessment of this proposal against Greater Wellington's Significance and Engagement Policy and have determined that the proposed purchase of the land is of 'medium' significance.

As such, Greater Wellington is not required to consult on the purchase of the land but is required to 'inform and engage' with the community about the proposal.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

72. Option 1 – no purchase. Council would only seek to establish relationships with the new owners to support Greater Wellington and mana whenua goals and aspirations around environmental improvements.
73. Option 2 – pursue purchase, would involve the next steps noted below:
- This Council decision will authorise the Chief Executive to confirm purchase agreement if they are satisfied that the terms and conditions negotiated represent a fair and reasonable outcome for Greater Wellington.
 - Engage property consultants to assist with comprehensive due diligence.
 - Place offer by tender close on 3 April 2025 and await negotiations with the vendor.
 - Minimal operational expenditure approach and likely permitted access only from 2025/25 to 2026/27
 - Assuming purchase is successful and once the Land is under Greater Wellington ownership, commence the process with mana whenua to define next steps.

Ngā āpitihanga
Attachment

Number	Title
1	POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITION - LOWER HUTT. Additional Analysis Details

Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatories

Writers	David Boone, Manager, Ecosystems & Community Tania Parata, Director Mana Whenua Partnerships, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri Verity Smith, Principal Advisor Māori, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri Jack Mace, Director Delivery, Environment Group Tyler Dunkel, Manager - Corporate Planning & Reporting Christina Underhill, Advisor - Corporate Planning & Reporting
Approvers	Nigel Corry, Chief Executive

PUBLIC EXCLUDED
PROACTIVE RELEASE

He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga
Summary of considerations

Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference

The Council Committee has the role to oversee the development and review of Councils' 'Environmental initiatives' such as a land purchase. Given the likely costs of the land purchase the Committee is required to refer the matter to Councils for its decision on whether to proceed with an offer.

Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies

Te Whāriki and Māori outcomes objectives in LTP.

The purchase aligns with the Rōpū taiao strategic outcomes "Safeguarding and restoring ecosystems and Natural environments across our Rohe" and fostering connection to Nature, recreation and safe harbour navigation".

The purchase also contributes to Toitū Te Whenua, Te Mahere Wai and Te Whanganui-a-Tara WIP objectives.

The Long Term Plan for Greater Wellington 2024-2034 outlines the Council's intentions to take a catchment based approach in caring of te taiao. The purchasing of this property would enable Greater Wellington to protect a whole catchment with highly valued forests, wetlands and lakes.

Internal consultation

Representatives within the organisation from the Environment and Corporate Services Groups were consulted including team members from Knowledge and Insights, Environment Regulation, Parks, Finance, Legal, Climate Change.

Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.

Risks of each option are set out in Table 1 above.

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Additional Analysis Details

Environmental values

Most of the Gollans Valley Station property is within the Parangārehu Lakes water catchment and contains two main waterways that flow through forest and farmland into wetlands and the Parangārehu Lakes before meeting the south coast. These two waterways are:

- Gollans Stream – the headwaters of this sub-catchment begin in the Northern Forest are of East Harbour Regional Park. The catchment is dominated by indigenous beech forest. Gollans Stream then meanders through farmland on Gollans Valley Station before flowing through the Kohangatera Wetlands into Lake Kohangatera.
- Cameron’s Creek – this smaller catchment originates in indigenous beech forest and regenerating scrub and then flows through farmland and wetlands into Lake Kohangapiripiri.

The non-farmed are of the property, about 1170 hectares, consist of regenerating forest currently dominated by gorse and broom, some large areas of early-succession indigenous forest, and areas of mature indigenous forest dominated by beech trees or podocarp species.

Pest plants and pest animals are a threat to regenerating forest.

Gollans Stream is recognised as providing habitat for threatened and at-risk freshwater fish species and for having six or more migratory fish species present identified in schedule F1 of the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington region. Freshwater fish records for the Gollans Stream catchment include nationally and regionally declining species such as piharau / lamprey (*Geotria australis*), tuna / longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) and giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*).

The Gollans Station property contains extensive wetlands from seepage wetlands extending down deep gulley heads and into swamps scattered across the valley floor. The property includes two large swamps with high ecological values; the Kohangapiripiri Wetland north (9.7ha) and Kohangatera Wetland north/Gollans Wetland (26ha) which extend into the Regional Park and connects to Lake Kohangapiripiri and Lake Kohangatera respectively. These wetlands are known to support regionally Threatened wetland bird species including matuku-hūrepo / Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) and pūweto / spotless crake (*Porzana tabuensis*).

The aquatic plant communities in the Parangārehu lakes are recognised as regionally Outstanding in the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (NRP) and

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collectively these lakes are one of few remaining examples nationally of shallow, coastal lakes with largely intact and unmodified indigenous aquatic plant communities.

Over the last thirteen years NIWA has been monitoring the condition of the aquatic plant communities in the Parangārehu lakes using the LakeSPI (Submerged Plant Index) biomonitoring method. In the most recent survey (2023), NIWA raised concerns that the submerged aquatic native vegetation had retracted to shallower depths. The authors were concerned that pulses of sediment from the farmland in the upper catchment may be shading plants in the deeper parts of the lake. The LakeSPI (2023) report recommended seeking opportunities to minimise the export of sediment from the Golland Stream catchment entering the Gollans wetland and Lake Kohangatera.

The Parangārehu Lakes support healthy native freshwater fish communities, with high indigenous dominance. The only introduced fish species is brown trout / taraute (*Salmo trutta*), in Lake Kohangatera. With Lake Kohangapiripiri having no records of non-native fish species. Lake Kohangatera had the highest number of tuna / longfin eels of 13 lakes surveyed across the region. The Lake also recorded good numbers of paraki / smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*) and inanaga (*Galaxias maculatus*) and was the only lake sampled with giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*) indicating that the lake fish community and its habitat are in some of the best condition of the region's lakes. The native freshwater fish community in Lake Kohangapiripiri is less diverse, likely due to challenges around fish passage at the lake mouth.

The key threats to the freshwater and wetland values in the Parangārehu Lakes catchment:

- The presence of the exotic invasive aquatic weeds, Canadian pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*) and egeria (*Egeria densa*) that can form dense growths that block light and smother the submerged native plant communities in Lake Kohangatera and associated Gollans Wetland. These species are not currently a problem in Lake Kohangapiripiri but this is a potential risk. Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), another aquatic pest plant that forms extensive, dense clumps, excluding native species, is invading the margins and wetlands at Lake Kohangatera.
- Sediment and nutrient runoff from the catchments above the two lakes, especially in the Gollans Stream catchment, are likely impacting on the water quality and plant communities in the lakes.

Greater Wellington has been actively monitoring and controlling the egeria in Lake Kohangatera and Gollans wetland within the regional park as and when required over the last 10 years. Egeria is also known to be in the Gollans Wetland on the Gollans Valley Station property and is likely to be a source of reinvasion to the wetland and Lake Kohangatera on Parks' land if not appropriately controlled. Yellow flag iris is also being controlled by Greater Wellington within the Park but may be reinvading from the farm property.

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Forest Ecosystems

Most of the hillsides on the property consist of pasture or regenerating scrub dominated by gorse and broom. However, there are some large pockets of early- to late-successional forest and in the north-eastern side of the property, large areas of mature indigenous forest dominated by beech trees or podocarp species.

The key threats to the forest ecosystems on the Gollans Valley Station present include:

- Feral goats are preventing the natural regeneration of indigenous forest and shrubland in the Gollans Valley Station property (especially along the coastal escarpment) and the Parangārehu Lakes area of the regional park. Greater Wellington is undertaking some control work on the goats in the Parangārehu Lakes block but there are regular incursions of goats from the Gollans Valley Station Property.
- Deer have long been a concern in the Northern Forest and have been subject to periodic control by Greater Wellington. Deer are likely moving through Gollans Valley Station into the Northern Forest.
- The Northern Forest contains ecological weeds such as climbing asparagus, Japanese honeysuckle, old man's beard and banana passion fruit which can alter forest structure and composition, affecting the diversity by smothering native vegetation and preventing regeneration. These ecological weeds are likely to be unchecked in the forest remnants on the Gollans Valley Station.

Environmental Opportunities

The restoration of continuous indigenous forest across East Harbour to the Parangārehu lakes could provide an opportunity to introduce kiwi to the Park. The recent expansion and successful breeding of northern brown kiwi into the nearby Wainuiomata Mainland Island indicates that this could be feasible with an expanded, well-managed forest area in East Harbour Regional Park.

Overtime, the expansion of old growth indigenous forest across the Gollans Valley Station property could also help encourage kākārīki/red-crowned parakeets (Regionally Threatened) from Matiu-Somes Island to establish viable breeding populations in East Harbour Regional Park.

Pest animal control throughout the catchment could be better managed across contiguous park lands including a more cost-effective control programme for goats, deer and pest plants including *Egeria* – leading to better habitat for bird life and existing populations of the regionally At Risk northern spotted skink (*Oligosoma kokowai*) lizard population.

Improvement to wetland protection and restoration mahi throughout the catchment increasing opportunity to re-establish populations of regionally threatened wetland birds, matuku-hūrepo/Australasian bittern and pūweto/spotless crane.

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The revegetation of erosion prone hillsides and stream banks on the land would reduce the sediment effects on the regionally outstanding wetlands and nationally significant Parangārehu Lakes.

Changing land use with de-stocking and cessation of fertiliser use which would help improve water quality in Parangārehu Lakes.

Environmental Risks

The Gollans Valley Station requires environmental restoration to stabilise hillsides, stream banks, forests and wetlands to GWRC management standards.

Sufficient provision needs to be made for the control of pest plants and animals.

There are extensive wetlands on the property that would require delineation and appropriate management and protection including stock exclusion if grazing were to be considered as part of activities undertaken on the property.

Lake water quality and ecology may continue to decline given established pest species and previous/current land use practices. However, direct access to this land provides the best opportunity for management interventions.

Landfill Considerations

Consent Rule 82 applies under the NRP-Discharges from closed landfills. The Natural Resources Plan (NRP) Rule relates to discharges from contaminated land. The purpose of this rule is to manage and mitigate the discharges from contaminated sites where the discharge may pose a risk to human health and/or the environment. Closed landfills are being investigated by the Greater Wellington Environmental Regulation team at present. If the Eastbourne landfill is considered to not be permitted, then additional remediation works maybe required to reduce or minimise any discharge from the site. The responsibility for this site likely to rest with Hutt City Council and/or any new landowner owner.

Enquires have been made with HCC staff who have indicated that there is an ongoing “duty of care” commitment by HCC to provide ongoing management of the closed landfill site. Of note, HCC have undertaken some recent independent environmental engineering assessment of the site which indicated that further remedial works of the landfill in needed in particular the improving the landfill capping, stormwater and leachate management. Currently the landfill has a very shallow cap which is enabling leachate generation which is potentially discharging to the environment with the ultimate receiving environments being the Gollans Valley Stream, Kohangatera Wetlands and ultimately to Lake Kohangatera. Further assessment is needed to determine the current effects on the these receiving environments from the landfill and what remediation actions are needed to negate adverse effects.

The landfill site may be eligible for the Central Government Contaminated Site Remediation fund, but this would need to be investigated further. However, HCC staff have expressed a preference to working with Greater Wellington as a potential landowner

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compared to private entity as it may be possible to achieve better environment outcomes in partnership approach between the two local government agencies. For example, a new engineered cap is likely to be needed for the landfill and sourcing suitable capping material may open up opportunities as there is currently a shortage of clean fill facilities located in close proximity to urban areas in the Hutt and Central Wellington area but this would need to be further invested with HCC.

Recreation Experience Values and Opportunities

The station has a 'park like' feel. It's very scenic and peaceful. There are large areas of older growth native bush on the eastern hills and areas of earlier growth bush with gorse acting as a nursery species on the western slopes. There are stunning harbour views to the west and Gollans Valley wetland views to the south. Drone footage from the real estate advertisement is linked at the bottom of this page in the footnote¹.

Acquisition of Gollans Valley Station offers the unique opportunity to connect two separate areas of East Harbour Regional Park, offer new recreation opportunities and enhance existing activities. It will create a combined park area offering a diversity of landscape experiences ranging from mature forest to open valley, wetlands and lakes and highly scenic harbour views. This combined park area has the potential to become a key attraction for the people of the region and other visitors.

The Station has a good network of farm access tracks used by LUV/Side by Side type vehicles. Condition varies but recent maintenance work has been done to clear vegetation and repair some tracks. Station tracks could be shared by walkers, runners, bike riders and horse riders, or dedicated tracks identified through planning processes.

Key new recreation opportunities were apparent at initial site visit:

- Track connections from East Harbour's key attraction, Butterfly Creek (minor new track required), including the potential for more accessible access via the station and/or creating a loop to the Burdans Gate road end.
- Track connections to Parangārehu Lakes and Pencarrow lighthouse (via existing Station and park tracks)
- Many new circuit track routes via existing Station tracks and Northern Forest, Lakes Tracks and Pencarrow Coast Road
- Horse riding opportunities (which are currently limited to Baring Head/Orua-poani)
- Hunting for deer, pigs, goats (via permit extending the existing Northern Forest and Lakes public permit process and biosecurity and volunteer programme work)

¹ [Real estate advert drone footage - Gollans Valley Station](#)

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- Campground in the valley floor area. Potential camping sites at the area the Station currently calls 'the campsite' near the small hut and Butterfly Creek.
- Bookable overnight stays in the two houses (1x 4 bedrooms, 1 x 3), the bach with sleepout and the basic backcountry hut. Greater Wellington's existing Accommodation Service Standard can be used to assess changes required to bring to standard, along with asset management processes.
- The Shearing Shed could be adaptively reused for plant nursery or farming demonstration activities in a similar manner to Battle Hill park
- Photography, guided nature tours, night sky viewing events
- Potential concessionaire and recreation club activities explored through parks plan consultation and/or expression of interest processes.

It offers many possible concession or recreation club opportunities which could be explored through management plan and or/ expression of interest processes. Like the past acquisition of Baring Head, open days could be hosted to invite visits and ideas for consideration.

The existing park trail network in the adjoining areas of East Harbour Regional park can be easily connected with existing Gollans Valley Station farm tracks, e.g. Wainuiomata hill to Pencarrow coast then a return along the Eastbourne coast and Tupua horo nuku to create a 40km (approximate) loop walk, walks of this length that are relatively flat are limited in the area.

- Overnight stay opportunities that could be run by concessionaires or our iwi partners. This includes a potential Camping site and adaptive reuse of existing accommodations on the site.
- Opportunities for uses that are not possible in the other two Park areas due to the narrow tracks and desire to protect existing forest, for example horse trekking and mountain biking. There is pressure in the Northern Forest currently with staff carrying out enforcement to manage illicit mountain biking tracks that have been damaging to the existing beech forest.
- The wetlands at the Parangārehu lakes have proved to be unsuitable for boardwalks due to the movement of the piles put into the lakebed and build-up of vegetation behind the boardwalk. The boardwalks have been removed and there is currently no ability to install loop tracks around the Parangārehu lakes, this purchase would enable loop tracks to be re-instated in the area.

Existing assets – Property Improvements

Please see the Real Estate Agents property report at: [NZR Property Report - 525 Muritai Road, Pencarrow Head.pdf](#), referring to pages 31-49 for property improvements.