



Report 07.249
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Committee Environment Committee
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Management

Divisional Manager's report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Environment Management Division and about any matters that have arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' reports

The Department Managers' reports, along with the Divisional Accountant's report follow as **Attachment 1**.

3. Scuttling of Hulks

There has been a lot of interest since the last meeting of the Committee around disposal options for a number of 'abandoned' vessels currently moored at various locations within Wellington harbour.

Greater Wellington is in the process of applying for dumping permits from Maritime New Zealand to potentially scuttle these vessels in the Cook Strait 'Explosives Dumping Ground'. There is also a considerable degree of interest from some parties in scrapping these vessels. Greater Wellington has written to all those who have currently expressed a desire to scrap vessels, indicating that they have until 30 June 2007 to prepare a detailed business case around their proposal. Captain Pryce has elaborated on this issue in his manager's report, and will provide further information to the committee at the meeting.

This issue has attracted a good degree of media interest, and while the concept of scrapping or reusing the vessels in some way has merit, there are a number of logistical issues which may prevent this from happening.

4. Hutt City Council Delegations

Work around the pilot trial to delegate certain stormwater functions to the Hutt City Council has progressed well since the issue was last reported to the Committee in February. I am hopeful that by the time of this meeting, we will be very close to formally signing the agreement between ourselves and Hutt City. We will be looking to generate media interest when the transfer takes

effect, and the proposal is also subject to a conference paper which will be presented at the New Zealand Water and Waste conference later this month.

5. **Didymo**

Since the first detection of Didymo in October 2004, Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) has been the lead agency in responding to incursions. While Greater Wellington has worked with BNZ in areas such as water sampling and erecting signage, BNZ is now looking to develop long term partnerships for the ongoing management of Didymo. In short, this means that Regional Councils are being asked to become a 'lead partner', and to provide ongoing assistance with regional programmes, particularly around ongoing surveillance and monitoring of key waterways, and participating in the social marketing campaign focussed on the "*Clean, check, dry*" slogan. While the relationship with BNZ is primarily being managed via the Council's Catchment Management Division, there is a likely impact on the work of the Environment Division if there is an increased or enhanced commitment to ongoing surveillance and monitoring of water quality. While 'seed funding' is likely to be available in the 2007/08 year, BNZ have indicated that there will be not be any ongoing financial assistance past this time.

A full report (Report 07.271) on the issue of Didymo long term management programme was presented to the Rural Services and Wairarapa meeting on 10 May 2007.

6. **Building Act**

Work continues towards trying to achieve the 30 November 2007 deadline for becoming accredited as a Building Consent Authority (BCA), or to have put in place the necessary steps to allow us to transfer our function to another Regional Council. As previously noted, this is an extremely complex task. As a result of acquiring funding from the Department of Building and Housing, a legal opinion on the ability to transfer or contract functions to another Regional Council has been obtained. This indicated that both options are legally possible, assuming that appropriate indemnity is offered to the 'receiving' council, and that appropriate public consultation is entered into.

Environment Waikato remains the most likely Council to enter in to a transfer arrangement, on behalf of most other North Island Regional Councils. A paper on the matter goes to their Council at the end of this month. Depending on the outcome of these deliberations, a paper will be prepared for the Greater Wellington Policy Finance and Strategy Committee in June recommending that Greater Wellington either transfers our BCA functions to Environment Waikato, enters into a contractual arrangement with Environment Waikato, or commits to becoming a fully accredited BCA. Regardless of the final option recommended, all Regional Councils will find it is extremely difficult to meet the 30 November 2007 deadline.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Department Managers' Reports