

# Marlborough District Council

**Minutes of a Meeting of the ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chambers, District Council Administration Building, Seymour Street, Blenheim on MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2009 commencing at 1.30 pm.**

## **Present**

Councillors J Bunting (Chairman), F D Maher (Deputy), A D Barker, G S Barsanti, C R Bowers, E I Davidson and G Taylor.

## **In Attendance**

Mayor A T Sowman, Clrs J L Andrews, W O Brice and T R Harrison, and Messrs F Pauwels (Manager, Environmental Policy Department), P Hawes (Environmental Policy Team Leader) and Mike Porter (Democratic Services Co-ordinator).

## **Apology**

**Clrs Barsanti/Davidson:**

**That the apology for absence from Clr G A Hope be received and sustained.**

## **Carried**

## **E.08/09.447      *Water*      **An Alternative Model of Water Allocation** *E225-W03-05***

Members were advised of a project that is to be undertaken to support the review of the water allocation provisions of the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement and both resource management plans. The current framework of water allocation in the Proposed Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan and Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan was outlined in the report to the Committee.

The Council is aware through meter readings, particularly in the Southern Valleys, that the rate of actual take is less than the paper allocation. The rate of take can be as low as 40 percent of the paper allocation given the variability of soil types across Marlborough and the weather experienced during each irrigation season.

Mr John Bright of Aqualinc Research Limited was at the meeting to present the concept of the alternative allocation regime to the Committee. He advised that Aqualinc Research Limited has developed an alternative model of water allocation to the conventional first-in-first-served method. This is based on providing clear water access entitlements to users, creating incentives for efficiency improvements and minimising the process costs incurred in transferring water. Mr Bright considered this method of water allocation to be well suited for application to water resources that are fully allocated on paper, but within which actual water use is a proportion of the paper allocation.

Staff advised that as most water resources in Marlborough are at or are approaching full allocation, it is proposed to investigate the feasibility of applying this model through the review of the Council's resource management framework. It is proposed to apply the model to three fully allocated water resources to establish the feasibility of the model in Marlborough conditions. The three water resources selected are the Awatere River catchment (a surface water resource), the Southern Valleys Aquifers (a groundwater resource) and the Doctors creek catchment (a surface water resource with strong connections to groundwater).

**Clrs Davidson/Barsanti:**

**That the information be received.**

## **Carried**

**E.08/09.448**      **Council**                      **Funding Economic Development Projects**  
*E225-B07*

A mechanism to access external funding grants for selected infrastructure projects and strategic level economic development initiatives was put forward for the Committee's consideration.

Members were advised that Central Government has signalled a willingness to assist economic growth through fast-tracking infrastructure, education and health projects. The amount signalled for this is \$1.8bn and could be extended. This program is expected to have a maximum two year window of opportunity for councils. Government Departments have been instructed to reduce their funding grants and therefore Council has to be prepared to move quickly and with high quality supporting information to be successful in obtaining funding. The Government Departments that could be accessed were outlined in the order paper.

Staff advised that an immediate opportunity existed to focus on external funding sources for economic development projects including infrastructure and business growth. This would require a supporting economic development plan and a formal governance structure.

Members considered that Council was in a prime position to help the various sectors by linking specific projects and activities from an eventual economic development plan back into its Long Term Council Community Plan, Regional Policy Statement and resource management plan documents. This would help the objective of ensuring that activities are keenly focused on specific outcomes with measurable progress indicators. Possibilities could include advocacy at central government level, facilitation, capital investment, operational support and regulatory change.

**Clrs Barker/Taylor:**

**That the Chair of the Assets and Services Committee be appointed to the Economic Development Advisory Board.**

**Carried**

**Clrs Davidson/Taylor:**

- 1. That an Economic Development Advisory Board be established comprising the Mayor, the Chair of the Community and Financial Planning Committee and the Chair of the Assets and Services Committee plus up to four private sector representatives.**
- 2. That Terms of Reference be developed for the Advisory Board and suggesting a limit of six members.**
- 3. That Council's Chief Executive and Manager of Strategic Planning be ex-officio members of the Board.**
- 4. That the first task of the Advisory Board be to identify appropriate infrastructure projects and progress funding applications to central government. The second task is to work with the key sector groups to develop a draft Economic Development Strategy with clear growth objectives and timelines by September 2009 to underpin funding applications to government departments.**

**Carried**

**E.08/09.449**      *Planning*                      **Blenheim Urban Growth Plan**      *E225-B07*

Members were aware that Council has in process, or is expecting, several proposals for development and expansion of the wider Blenheim urban area. The report included with the order paper brought to the attention of the Committee the necessity to programme in the development of a Blenheim Urban Growth Plan to be completed by December 2009. Staff advised that Budget provisions for the 2009/2010 financial year have been made for development of such a Growth Plan.

It was noted that a Traffic and Parking Studies had recently been completed for the district.

Members were aware that the Regional Policy Statement is currently under review and the resource management plans are scheduled for review in 2010. It was considered that a large element that is missing at present is a high quality, well-considered Blenheim Urban Growth Plan that takes into account current growth needs and future growth projections.

The Committee considered that a Blenheim Urban Growth Plan, once given effect through the resource management plans, would deliver a significantly higher level of 'certainty' for developers and engineers. Such a Plan should enable more efficient use of current land including for mixed use and medium density housing as opposed to expansion of the urban area per se.

**Clrs Davidson/Taylor:**

**That a Blenheim Urban Growth Project be undertaken in July 2009 with a target of having draft proposals completed by December 2009.**

**Carried**

**E.08/09.450      *Planning*      **Review of Fee Schedule for Resource Management Documents**      *W045-13***

Members were advised that with the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan being republished and becoming operative it was necessary to review and update the fee schedule in respect of resource management documents. Once the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan is operative the transitional plans would no longer have effect and the Code of Practice for Subdivision and Development was now an electronic document only and it was proposed to remove these documents from the fee schedule.

A revised fee schedule was put forward for the Committee's consideration.

**Clrs Barsanti/Davidson:**

**That the proposed Fees Schedule for Resource Management Documents set out below be notified for consultative purposes as required by Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.**

<b>Resource Management Act Plans</b>	<b>Charge \$</b>
<b>Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan - Set of Three</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan - Volume One</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan - Volume Two</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan - Volume Three</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan - Set of Three</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan - Volume One</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan - Volume Two</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan - Volume Three</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

Resource Management Act Plans	Charge \$
Resource Management Plans - Volume 4	\$30
Regional Policy Statement	\$20.00
Subscription Service - WARMP & MSRMP	\$112.50
CD - Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan - Volumes One, Two and Three	\$20.00
CD - Proposed Wairau / Awatere Resource Management Plan - Volumes One and Two	\$20.00

**Carried**

**E.08/09.451      *Planning*      Worker Accommodation in Urban Areas**

*W045-14-468*

A report prepared for members' information provided an update on work planned to help address issues raised by the community regarding worker and family accommodation (family flats) and the background to these issues was outlined in report included with the order paper.

At its last meeting on 10 November 2008, the Committee considered two reports on the issue of worker accommodation in urban areas and decided among other matters, to "...collect data on the nature, extent and effect of worker accommodation in Marlborough and the occupancy of houses used to provide accommodation...". Staff now advised that a number of projects were underway to quantify and investigate options regarding worker accommodation and family flats, the findings of which would be reported back to the Committee once completed.

Over the 2009 pruning season collection of data on worker accommodation is to occur and this core data, once collected, will be used to clarify the issues and used in the formulation of solutions.

Staff advised that in the interim, especially with the pruning season three months away, that Council intends to work with Public Health Services, the wine industry and the Department of Labour in developing a Code of Accommodation Standards. The intention is that the Code will ensure that all compliance organisations will then have a consistent method of determining whether "overcrowding" is occurring. Staff would also investigate ways in which the Plans' provisions can be clarified to provide for dependant relative housing. The findings of the investigation will be reported through to the Committee once complete.

The Code of Accommodation Standards and the findings of the investigation for dependant relative housing will be reported through to the Committee and the Environment Committee for approval.

**Clrs Taylor/Barker:**

- 1. That the information be received**
- 2. That the Wellbeing Works proposal "Seasonal Worker Accommodation Brief", including the option of developing a Code of Accommodation Standards, be endorsed and actioned as soon as possible.**

**Carried**

**E.08/09.452**

*Planning*

**Marlborough Regional Policy Statement  
Review - Formation of Focus Group**

*R425-02*

The Committee had previously endorsed the use of “focus groups” to consider and provide feedback on draft Marlborough Regional Policy Statement (Marlborough Regional Policy Statement) provisions and staff now sought to formalise the structure of the focus groups to be used to assist the review process.

Mr Hawes advised that the greatest flexibility for change to RPS provisions existed prior to notification of a proposed RPS. Once notified, only those provisions submitted on can be changed, and then only within the scope of those submissions. By using key stakeholders in each of the focus groups, who have experience dealing with the resource management issues to be addressed by the RPS, the intention is to identify and resolve any substantive issues prior to notification of a proposed RPS. This will have the effect of minimising the number and size of submissions received on the proposed RPS and will speed up the First Schedule process.

Members were advised that it was proposed to establish 10 RPS review focus groups to assist with the process of developing a new Marlborough RPS. These would be a mixture of existing groups and newly created resource based groups.

Appendix 1 included with the order paper set out the various focus groups.

**Clrs Barsanti/Davidson:**

- 1. That the Committee endorse the 10 RPS focus groups set out in the Appendix.**
- 2. That the proposed members of each of the new focus groups be approached to establish their willingness to participate in the RPS review process.**

**Carried**

**E.08/09.453**

*Planning*

**Resource Management (Simplifying and  
Streamlining) Amendment Bill** *L225-R01*

The Committee noted that the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill has had its first reading and to establish a process for approving a Council submission to the Bill. It was further noted that the incoming National Government pledged to introduce legislation into the House to amend the Resource Management Act within 100 days. The intent of the reform was to streamline and simplify the Resource Management Act processes in order to reduce costs and time delays involved with plan preparation and consenting processes.

The Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill (the Bill) was introduced to the House by the Hon Dr Nick Smith on 19 February 2009. It has now had its first reading and has been referred to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. The Bill focuses on 8 key issues as follows: removing frivolous, vexatious and anti-competitive objections; streamlining processes for projects of national significance; creating an Environmental Protection Authority; improving plan development and plan change processes; improving resource consent processes; streamlining decision making; improving workability and compliance; and improving national instruments. The explanatory note to the Bill was appended to the Order Paper.

Staff members are now analysing the effect of the reform package. It is expected that many of the changes will be beneficial and will assist the Council in exercising its planning and consenting functions. If there are changes that have the opposite effect or changes that have unintended implications, then it would be appropriate for the Council to make a submission on the Bill. The Local Government and Environment Select Committee has now called for submissions and submission period closes on 3 April 2009. The Select Committee will hear submissions from 19 June 2009. The submission period does not coincide with the next Committee meeting or the next meeting of the Environment Committee. For this reason, it is recommended

that the approval of any Council submission to the Bill be delegated to the Chair of the Environmental Policy Committee and/or the Chair of the Environment Committee.

**Clrs Barsanti/Maher:**

**That the Council delegate to the Chair of the Environmental Policy Committee and/or the Chair of the Environment Committee the approval of a Council submission to the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill.**

**Carried**

**E.08/09.454      *Council*      **Information Package**      -**

**Clrs Barsanti/Bunting:**

**That the Environmental Policy Information Package dated 9 March 2009 be received and noted.**

**Carried**

The meeting was advised that the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan was made operative today, with both staff and elected members sharing their experiences of the last 12 years since the initial drafting of the Plan.

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm.

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