

Meeting Notes of the Sounds Advisory Group, held at the Committee Room, Marlborough District Council on Monday 11 August 2014 commencing at 9.00 am

Present: Councillor Trevor Hook (Chairperson), David Hayes, Victor Koller, Ken Roush, Graeme Coates, Rob Schuckard, Tim Greenhough, Rachel Drake, Eric Jorgensen, Linda Booth, Ross Withell, Councillors Graeme Barsanti and David Oddie

MDC Staff: Alan Johnson, Steve Urlich and Kay Leach (Secretary)

Apologies: Kristen Gerard, Ron Sutherland, Ian Mitchell, Judy Hellstrom, Joe Heberley, Monyeen Wedge

Introduction

Trevor Hook introduced Ross Withell as the new representative of the Kenepuru & Central Sounds Residents' Association, replacing Lynley Perkins. Ross had met the majority of the Group at the previous workshop.

MDC Organisation Chart and Committees

Kristen Gerard had requested an outline of how Council is structured. Alan Johnson showed the Group where the breakdown of Committees is located on the website <http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Your-Council/Council-Committees.aspx>.

The screenshot shows the Marlborough District Council website. The header includes the council logo and name, a search bar, and a navigation menu with categories: Services, Your Council, Our Community, Environment, Recreation, and About Marlborough. The 'Your Council' menu is active, leading to a page titled 'Council Committees'. The page content includes a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Your Council > Council Committees', a heading 'Council Committees', and a paragraph explaining the council's structure as of 31 October 2013. Below this, there is a list of committees and their members, including Assets and Services Committee, Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, Regional Transport Committee, Community and Finance Committee, Environment Committee, Regional Planning and Development Committee, and Resource Hearing Committee.

There was discussion on the various Committees. Alan Johnson advised the Regional Planning & Development Committee, which the Sounds Advisory Group came under, had been formed as a split of the Environment Committee, as at this Council term. Alan Johnson thought it would be helpful to have a flowchart of the committees. Information, such as the Sounds Advisory Group notes of meeting, went through the committee and then up to Full Council.

Linda Booth joined the meeting at 9.10 am

Rob Schuckard queried, when the Plan is complete, would the Regional Planning & Development Committee drop off? Alan Johnson advised that plans are not static so there would always be a regional planning function.

David Oddie advised that the Resource Consent Hearing Committee is directive from the RMA, regional policy statement, district plan, etc.

There was discussion around committee vs commissioner for a hearing and costings. Graeme Coates felt it would be appropriate for the RPS to seek to reduce costs. Alan Johnson advised that Council is always aware of cost implications and seeks efficiency where possible.

Trevor Hook advised that 80% of Council's budget is roading and infrastructure. This can be seen in the Annual Plan, which is available on Council's website. Trevor Hook advised this is tied to levels of service. David Oddie noted the challenge in the future is going to be Central Government pushing more services and expectations to Council and this may require funding, i.e. environmental monitoring, reporting, protection and environmental health. This would need to be balanced with levels of service elsewhere or rate increases.

Victor Koller would like to see a breakdown of expense and cost recovery, particularly waste. David Oddie advised Victor to make contact with Alec McNeil, Solid Waste Manager.

Alan Johnson then went on to show the Council Organisation Chart (**attached**). He advised staff report through the applicable management structures and committees. Trevor Hook noted that Councillors employ the Chief Executive and the CE employs the staff. At this Council, Councillors have access directly to staff, which opens up the knowledge base of staff and reduces misinformation. Alan Johnson noted governance and delegation down to staff.

Length of Resource Consents

Judy Hellstrom was unable to attend the meeting. Alan Johnson would seek advice from Bruno Brosnan and present this to the next meeting.

Discharge Policies

Graeme Coates noted an article in the Marlborough Express that a consent was granted for septic tank discharge to sea until 2016. Graeme is concerned this type of discharge could impact on mussels and acceptance to the overseas market. These discharge consents are usually given for a short period, but on expiry will the issue be dealt with? David Oddie advised that the Coastal Policy Statement, and also Iwi, encourage that no discharge to the marine environment occurs. Discharge to land is encouraged. Linda Booth felt the responsibility fell on individuals as well. Trevor Hook noted enforcement of that responsibility. Alan Johnson advised large discharges are monitored, but individual residential properties are a little more problematic to monitor given the scale and technical reasons. Trevor Hook commented that a pragmatic trigger for change is when a change to a property occurs, i.e. subdivision, building, etc. Victor Koller felt education is the best tool and a leaflet now and then would be helpful.

Graeme Coates queried what policy is in place. Trevor Hook advised the Coastal Policy Statement discourages discharges to sea. Graeme spoke on Marine Farming Association testing. Results of significant bacteria exceedances are shared with Council. Council has a very small programme in the Bathing Water Programme, but industry monitors to a larger degree.

Graeme Coates queried, if coastal occupancy charges come in, would some of that money go into bacteria monitoring? Alan Johnson advised that the existing funding is prioritised to broader hydrodynamic, water quality and ecology projects. Graeme is pleased to see the increase in riparian management strips in the Rai area.

Blue Cod Review Process

Eric Jorgensen provided an update:

Finalise group membership; application for public closed Friday. Recommendation by end of this week. Ideally ratified by the Minister end of following week (by 22 August). Commercial on board, Te Tau Ihu membership is in progress - meeting this week? Key difference being engagement of all sectors AND MPI.

Finalise Terms of Reference. Had been operating under a ToR which was a 'watching' brief. This current process is a full review of all elements of the BCO fishery whilst acknowledging that wider matters (all fisheries, all sectors, ecology, etc) will eventually need to be addressed medium to long term.

Management Objectives

Characterisation of Fishery possible (desktop)

Establish Vision, Goals and Objectives

Communications Strategy

Problem Analysis

Determine Issue

Prioritise

Determine possible remedies

Identify possible management measures (regulatory, education...)

Information Requirements

Gap Analysis

Science Working Group Update

Further results from relative abundance survey available - particularly the ageing work

Develop Management Options for Informal Consultation

Stakeholder engagement / informal consultation

Finalise Management Options internally based on above

Formal Public Consultation

Ministers Decision and Cabinet Committee Process

Implementation

Monitor and Review

Integrated Management Programme

Eric Jorgensen provided an update:

Had been operating under a Trust (Governance) and (Implementation) Committee structure. Terms of Reference for the Committee, developed by the Trustees was to develop and implement a process that would engage the Community of Users of the Marlborough Sounds to create an Integrated Management Plan underscored by the natural carrying capacity of the wider Sounds environment. A plan, if you will, that focusses on the quadruple bottom line ensuring true sustainability of the environment and, therefore, the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of all.

The Implementation Committee had over the last 12 months been focussing on the potential for development of a web based information and survey hub on all matters affecting the Marlborough Sounds. This required a robust analysis of current known information (the different nature of uses, effects and issues) and using this analysis to design and structure a web based tool. There had, in reality, been very little (no) direct communication with wider stakeholders.

Updated Regional Development and Planning Committee Mid June.

Presented background and concluded that Integrated Management project at a fork in the road:

1. Continue to progress, but energy, skills and time becoming issues
2. Up the anti and engage professional assistance to draw in agencies and significant stakeholders to the process

In acknowledging the time and effort of volunteers on this complex project effectively the take home message was that while Council considers it to be a worthwhile endeavour, it would like to see key performance indicators and milestones were established for the project and funds used to acquire the skills, knowledge and experience required to engage with key stakeholders and provide project management skills (i.e. option 2 above).

Since that time the Trustees and Mark Batchelor (Chair of the Implementation Committee) have assessed the options for progressing and, after a number of communications and meetings, determined that Phoenix Consulting had the necessary skills, knowledge, resources and experience to help re-invigorate the process.

Phoenix Consulting was engaged in the Te Korowai programme in Kaikoura and also are facilitating the Hauraki Gulf forum; a large and very complex project looking at the very same issue and potential solutions as we are. Side note here is that the funding in Hauraki is in the vicinity of \$1m / pa.

Phoenix Consulting has put together a Project Brief for how they would undertake facilitation of the project and this has been reviewed, altered and largely agreed with by the Trustees. The final stage in signing up Phoenix will be a detailed presentation by the Phoenix team to the Trustees next week.

Fundamentally the Trust is now looking at the process something like:

Inception - including the analyses that establish that the conditions exist for a successful facilitated process and the action to initiate that process.

Formation - forming a body of committed individuals to own and drive the process.

Creating connection - creating a halo of linked interests and activities around the core group.

Engaging with the issues and the data - drawing out the issues from the stakeholders and apply information and data to refine and test the veracity of the perceived issues.

Finding common ground - processes for the core stakeholders to find a common vision and apply that to create solutions that will be widely supported.

Testing solutions - engaging a wider halo of interest to test the proposed solutions, map as yet unrecognised issues and to see if the overall framework of proposals will work in practice.

Adjusting proposals - applying the findings of the testing process to that package of solutions to produce a new more effective synthesis.

Mandating - achieving recognition from stakeholders and those with formal authority to implement.

Implementing - managing the processes of implementing mandated decisions.

Eric is happy to take any questions via email (oceanbayfarm@hotmail.com).

Battle for the Birds

Graeme Elliott of the Department of Conservation gave a presentation Battle for the Birds (Powerpoint presentation available on request - 70MB). Battle for the Birds Brochure - Beech Mast 2014 **attached**.

Graeme Elliott spoke on the history of beech mast and the pest control programme to be undertaken this spring and summer. The beech mast is expected to trigger a rodent and stoat explosion. Various sites have been chosen for 1080 drops. One 1080 operation is not enough, so repeat operations will occur as required, particularly due to beech mast.

Graeme Elliott advised it is not true that 1080 kills everything. It only kills if they eat it and most native birds do not eat the poison baits we use these days. The Department of Conservation has refined its process.

Graeme Barsanti left the meeting at 12.15 pm

MDC Update

Steve Urlich

Steve and Alan Johnson talked recently with the Marine Farming Association on the implementation of the Coastal Strategy.

The Havelock Estuary is being mapped and some fine scale survey of the benthic communities to look at the effects increasing enrichment in the estuary and Spartina removal. The report is delayed until September. The reports will be used as a consultation tool.

Research in the Pelorus Sound about reconstructing the past benthic habitats in the Sounds. This will be a combination of published research as well as investigating newspapers online for the history of how the Sounds has been impacted over time.

Trying to get momentum on the Best Practice Guidelines for Salmon Farm Management. This has been held up at present. The Benthic Guidelines are almost ready.

Significant Marine Sites survey and monitoring project, which is going around all sites identified by Rob Davidson 2-3 years ago, is to get underway and contracted by the end of September. A lot of these sites are high in diversity values and Council has a responsibility under Section 30 of the RMA for biodiversity habitat. Partnership with the Department of Conservation and hopefully the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Steve would be happy to give his presentation on implementation of the coastal strategy to resident groups.

Jono Underwood

Jono spoke on the review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS). This has been used as the primary tool to delivery strategic management for pests of significance in the region. The RPMS has been produced under Central Government legislation, Biosecurity Act. There has been substantial change to the biosecurity legislation so a review is necessary. The RPMS will now be called Regional Pest Plan.

Council in the past has focused on what pest has importance for 'the best bang for the buck'. The RPMS can focus on localised threats which have potential for a big impact, including working with the Department of Conservation. The focus will now be even more on those species of high importance, or ones that we can really get some traction on. Council will be looking at some non-regulatory programme opportunities to capture some other pests which have been missed in the past or not done as well. The function could potentially support community groups a bit more.

Rob Schuckard queried Old Mans Beard, which in the past was demoted as a pest, what was the perception of how to deal with Old Mans Beard? Jono spoke on the process and the questions, do we want to keep it where we know it is, do we want to get it to low levels, or are there some sites which are of ecological importance where we want to keep it out? Old Mans Beard is very wide spread. Council holds some information about where it is, but it is not complete. There was discussion on community involvement in reducing Old Mans Beard.

Jono noted the pests being dealt with in the Marlborough Sounds are Spartina, Cathedral Bell, Madera Vine, Climbing Spindleberry, Everygreen Buckthorn, the five species which currently have a low incidence. Also there is White Edged Nightshade and Boneseed. Not so much in the Sounds, there is Moth Plant, another rampant climbing vine species. Pampas Grass is not as widespread as Old Mans Beard, but is in the same category.

Alan Johnson noted we need to consider how we can collaborate with communities and the Department of Conservation to effectively maximise future resources. Council is intending to review current levels of service under the review of the pest management plan. Linda Booth advised her residents association works very closely with the Department of Conservation.

DOC Update

David Hayes provided a Department of Conservation update:

Weeds

There has been little weed control over the last three months. Pine control using DOC drills and chemical ceased at the start of winter. No community groups have reported undertaking weed control.

Predator Control

The first stage of the Maud Island mice eradication was completed on 23 July when 8kg of brodifacoum per hectare was aerially applied. Fine cold weather for several days would have maximized the bait uptake. The second application, at the same sowing rate, is due to be applied from 6 August but is weather dependent. Prior to the operation starting several species were relocated from the island as a precaution. This included 300 Maud Island frogs to Motuara, Takahe to Kapiti and the Rangitoto and the well known Kakapo, Sirocco, continued on his travel calendar around the country. The few remaining sheep were also removed and it is unlikely sheep will return to the island.

The large scale poison operation for the Battle for the Birds is not yet certain but is very likely. Rat numbers continue to climb in both the 1080 treated and control areas in the Tennyson. The monitoring results in June indicated 31% in the control area and 62% in the non controlled area. It is expected that the August monitoring will indicate close to 100% in both areas. There will be some changes from the November operation and the main ones are

1. Close the Nydia Track to walkers until the area around the track is completed and the track checked for bait.
2. Have a greater set back from the track and infill by hand.

After three possums were caught on Blumine Island nothing further has been found after monitoring and checking with both rat and possum dogs. In the future Blumine will be checked monthly for stoats and 3 monthly for rats.

Pickersgill Island has been found to have rats present after a long period of no known pests. Being about 200 metres from Arapawa, swimming the gap is the most likely scenario. At this time the use of kill traps and hand laid poison are the likely methods of control.

Checks with predator dogs on Motuara and Long Island is still to occur.

After some heated and interesting meetings on D'Urville Island about the use of toxins to protect the bat population in the beech forest on the island, rat monitoring is underway with some assistance from DOC. If monitoring indicates increasing numbers of rats and the home range of the bats is located a limited control operation is possible.

The national trial to exclude pests by the use of control methods rather than a predator fence at Putanui Point has been discontinued. Instead a larger trial covering 10 times the area at Bottle Rock is being developed with lines cut, traps and other control methods established along with monitoring devices. Later the use of hand laid toxins will probably be required.

Endangered Species

There have been some relocations as a result of the Maud Island mice eradication project and these have already been mentioned.

There is a large number of rowi kiwi on Motuara Island at the present time because of a successful breeding year in South Westland last summer. Over time these birds will be relocated back to Okarito when they are able to protect themselves from stoats.

Approval to relocate little spotted kiwi from Long Island to an area protected by a predator fence and traps at Cape Kidnappers has been approved. However time constraints prevented the transfer occurring. A proposal to relocate fairy prion from Stephens Island to Mana Island is being developed. Both these relocations will or have involved Iwi from both the donating and receiving locations.

Community Assistance

The results of the local Community Conservation Partnership Fund applications has not been announced by the Minister of Conservation yet. However several local groups have received some funding from DOC for their particular tasks. Link Pathway, Ngakuta Bay and Kaipupu have received some financial assistance in the last few months.

It was pleasing to learn that the Link Pathway project received \$300,000 over four years from the Council. This is an excellent proposal with almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of the distance between Havelock being on reserve land.

Mistletoe Bay have employed new contractors who are vastly experienced having worked in a large council campground near Wanaka. HEBS have provided men and machinery to form a road around the back of the bay and install a culvert crossing. A Marlborough constructed kitset house has been ordered but unfortunately the engineering unit that did the building the last two times is not available to construct it. There is the possibility of another engineering unit may assist.

A viewing platform beside an old and large rimu has been built in Howden's bush behind Furneaux Lodge. The project is the result of a local community initiative and their successful bidding for some funds, a \$10,000 donation by King Salmon, 20 days effort from Outward Bound moving material from the coast to the building site and 64 days of construction by carpentry students from Nelson/Marlborough Institute of Technology. The project is now complete apart from signage. Accommodation for the NMIT students was provided free at Furneaux Lodge.

A memorial seat accidentally placed on a mitten site in Duncan Bay has now been relocated to neutral ground.

Marine Mammals

The annual whale survey has now been completed. This survey would not be possible without the involvement of OMV who sponsor the project and the volunteer ex whalers who provide the eye ball power. This year was one of the more successful years with over 90 whales sighted.

Picton staff have been developing a training course for marine mammal viewing operators to increase their knowledge of the marine mammals and the legislation relating to their operations. The intention is to run two courses in both Picton and Kaikoura during October.

A new innovation is an arrangement between Air NZ and the Department attempting to increase the profile of marine reserves. Long Island is one of the locations chosen to lead the bid for greater recognition of marine reserves, and more travellers visiting them, in a similar way as the Great Walks have benefited with the association with Air NZ. Two meetings with operators have been held and the attraction area increased to include Ship Cove, Motuara and Blumine Islands. The cultural story with the involvement of Te Atiawa is thought a point of difference.

Islands

Many items relating to islands has been covered elsewhere. Stephens Island has not been mentioned but there has been activity there as well. The first annual planting trip took place from 24 to 18 July, shortened from 8 to 17 July by bad weather. Ten people, eight of them volunteers, planted 4,000 trees. The second trip, 5 to 14 August, is underway now with another ten people, nine volunteers. The RNZN serviced the island recently by placing bulky material, like potting mix, on the island and removing rubbish. A very successful operation for both parties with some of the rubbish taken to Auckland. This is called exporting your problems.

With the recent incursions on to pest free islands the quarantine system has been upgraded. Both the Picton and Havelock quarantine rooms have been upgraded and the checking has been upgraded significantly. The presence of Argentinian Ants in Havelock necessitated control around the Havelock location.

Recreation

The most significant activity is the upgrade of Momorangi Campground. Two toilets on the foreshore are being replaced along with most of the power lines along the foreshore being undergrounded. Progress is also made with the Kathmandu sponsorship with involves signs, native plantings and track formation.

Shortly after the last meeting the 2014 upgrade of the Queen Charlotte Track was completed. Concerns about the impact of the track were resolved by specialist historic staff meeting with the concerned locals.

In between many other tasks of higher priority, vegetation clearance on the Queen Charlotte Track has been undertaken.

General

On 1 August, Iwi received the land promised to them under the Treaty of Waitangi Settlement. Many small areas of reserve were transferred to Iwi both with and without reserve classification from the DOC estate as cultural redress. The old school house site in Catherine Cove received a tidy up before being transferred to Ngati Koata.

Other lands were also transferred such as Queen Charlotte Forest to Te Atiawa and Ngati Toa.

Positive Feedback

Rob Schuckard noted that Integrated Management had almost reached the end with the Best Practice Guidelines for Salmon Farm Management. It has been overall a very interesting and productive process. Conclusion for public release is hopefully in the next couple of weeks.

Next Meeting

The next meeting to be held at Mistletoe Bay on Monday 10 November 2014.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm

**Agenda items should be sent to
Kay Leach (e-mail Kay.Leach@marlborough.govt.nz)
by Monday 20 October 2014.**

Action	Responsibility
Length of Resource Consents	Alan

Record No: 14173149