



Report 05.287
Date 15 June 2005
File MF/02/03/01

Committee Utility Services
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Forest Working Plan

1. Purpose

To approve the submission of a five year update of the 10 year Forest Working plan approved by the Minister of Forests in July 2000 in order to meet Council's obligations under the *Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972*.

2. Significance of the Decision

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of this Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Council's plantation forestry operations west of the Rimutaka Ranges are authorised by Part III of the *Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972*. One of the requirements of this part of the Act is for all forestry operations to operate in accordance with a Forest Working Plan approved by the Minister of Forests. Council submitted and had approved a plan for the period 2000 to 2010. Included within that plan was the intention to review the plan after five years. This report relates to that review.

4. Plantation Forest Working Plan

Section 49 of the *Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972* specifies inter alia, as follows:

“ 49. Working plans

(1) *The Board shall from time to time prepare working plans in respect of forestry operations in forestry areas and in other land vested in or under the control of the Board and used for forestry purposes.*

(2) *A working plan shall not come into force until it is approved by the Minister of Forests and may, with the consent of the Minister, be altered by the Board.*

(3) *Every such plan shall, subject to any rights existing on the date of its adoption by the Board and to the provisions of this Part of the Act, regulate the management of the forest area to which it relates for such period not exceeding 10 years as may be specified in the plan.*

(4) *Every working plan shall specify –*

(a) The maximum area of the land affected from which forest produce may be taken annually;

(b) The maximum quantity of forest produce that may be disposed of annually;

(c) Forestry operations proposed to be carried out during the currency of the plan;

(d) The protection and development operations to be carried out; and

(e) Such other matters as the Board thinks fit.

(5) *The Board shall not carry out any forestry operations unless and until a plan relating thereto is in force, and all such operations shall be carried out in accordance with the plan.”*

The attached Forest Working Plan updates the information sought in clause 4 above and includes a specific section on fire protection.

The requirements of section 49(4)(a) and (b) are sourced from the Plantation Forestry Cutting Plan, which is the main input document for the Annual Plan and Long Term Financial Strategy. Sections 49(4)(c) and (d) are consistent with the proposals set out in the Annual Plan document.

The plan reflects the proposals set out in the Plantation Forestry Department Operating Plan 2005–2015 but is expressed in a more general form so that future decision making will not be constrained.

The plan is prepared to specifically meet the requirements of the Act and, as such, it is couched in general terms. The plan includes references to other Council policy and management documents that set out the intentions of Council and the methodologies of operating in much greater detail.

5. Changes from the Present Working Plan

The policies and practices applicable to the management of the forests are approved on an annual basis through the LTCCP process and the Forest Working Plan is to provide technical compliance with the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972.

The changes to the present document are intended in the main to update the content and include:

- Updated cutting plan reflecting those changes which were necessary following the February 2004 storms.

- Updated Fire Plan setting out the latest plantings and silviculture
- Inclusion of the most recently approved Operating Plan
- More definitive specifications relating to silviculture

6. Potential sale of cutting rights

Clause 8 of the updated Forest Working Plan acknowledges that at some time during the currency of the Working Plan Council may wish to offer Forestry Rights for all or part of the Forest. The Plan recognises that a decision of this type would be “significant” in the terms of the *Local Government Act 2002* and would thus be subject to specific consultation.

7. Communications

As this is a “technical” issue and all relevant information is in the public domain through the Annual Plan process, no specific communication initiatives are required.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee recommends that the Policy and Finance Committee:

- (1) *Approves the update to the Forest Working Plan 2000-2010.*
- (2) *Forwards the Update to the Forest Working Plan to the Minister of Forestry for approval, pursuant to section 49(2) of the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972.*
- (3) *Notes that nothing in this plan is inconsistent with other Council plans, policy or management documents.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Draft Plantation Forestry Forest Working Plan