

Report 16.207
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Committee Council
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Report on the Environment Committee meeting, 10 May 2016

1. Purpose

To inform Council of the Environment Committee meeting of 10 May 2016.

2. Public Participation

Mark Neeson spoke about signage and access to and within Belmont Regional Park.

Alan Smith (on behalf of Sylvia Allan) spoke about the Kaiwharawhara reclamation and possible uses of it by CentrePort.

3. Reports

3.1 Waiohine River Floodplain Management Plan – Draft FMP consultation

The Committee was updated on progress with the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) and considered the proposed Draft FMP consultation process.

The consultation process will begin in Greytown and the wider Wairarapa community in June 2016. It will include radio advertisements, press coverage, public meetings and the distribution of a newsletter. There will be a six week period for people to make submissions. All those consulted will be given the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft FMP.

The Committee will consider a report on establishing a hearing panel and the terms of reference for the panel at its meeting on 21 June 2016.

The Committee has approved the Draft FMP document for public consultation and the consultation process.

3.2 Hutt River City Centre Upgrade project – Property Strategy

The Committee was updated on progress with the Hutt River City Centre Upgrade project (HRCCUP). The property acquisition phase of the project has now commenced.

There are 117 property owner interests to be acquired and there will be other agreements relating to the relocation of businesses that will require formal Council approval.

The Committee was advised by officers that in order to streamline the approval process for property agreements, it is recommended that Council delegate to its Chief Executive the power to enter into unconditional agreements to acquire the property interests required for the HRCCUP. This delegation would be on the proviso that the Chief Executive is satisfied that the level of compensation agreed and other principal terms of the agreement are fair and reasonable and within budget.

The Committee requested that the Chief Executive provide a regular progress report to the Environment and the Finance, Risk and Assurance committees on property matters relating to this project.

3.3 Velvetleaf Update

The Committee was updated on the status of the pest plant velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*) in the Wellington Region.

Velvetleaf has been discovered in fodder beet crops on a number of properties throughout New Zealand. This national outbreak is linked to contaminated imported fodder beet seed. Velvetleaf is regarded as the world's worst cropping weed, damaging arable crops and lowering crop yield by competing for nutrients, space and water. Velvetleaf seedlings are vigorous and the plant grows rapidly in the first few months after germination. Seeds remain viable for up to 60 years.

There are 207 properties known to have fodder beet crops infested with velvetleaf as of 22 April. These sites are found across New Zealand, largely in the South Island. There are two known sites in the Wellington Region and both properties are in the South Wairarapa; Pirinoa with 6.8 ha of fodder beet and Hinakura with 6.2 ha. Two flowering and seeding plants were found at Pirinoa and one at Hinakura. The plants were bagged to prevent any further seed fall, removed from the site and sent to the landfill for safe disposal. Photos and samples were sent to MPI and Landcare Research to confirm the identity of the plant.

Biosecurity staff are working with the landowners to manage the future risk at these sites. Because of the likelihood that viable seeds have fallen, these sites will require ongoing monitoring and management. MPI is working with AssureQuality to manage velvetleaf in the Wellington region as part of the National Pest Management Strategy. The aim is to find it, contain it, and safely remove any plants found.

The Committee will be updated on the national and regional velvetleaf situation as it develops.

3.4 General Managers' report to the Environment Committee

The Committee was updated on the activities of the Catchment Management and Environment Management groups relevant to the Committee.

The committee noted that CentrePort is about to apply for resource consent to dredge sediment from the harbour floor. The public is able to give feedback to CentrePort on its proposals until 27 May.

4. Communication

No external communication is required.

5. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

5.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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