

<b>R E P O R T</b>	<b>TO</b>	MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS
	<b>FROM</b>	STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS MANAGER
	<b>FILE REF</b>	474807
	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	CR CARMINE
	<b>DATE</b>	7 APRIL 2009
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT WAIKATO – DRAFT LONG TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2009 – 19 - SUBMISSION</b>

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report be received; and

AND THAT draft Submission (as amended) to the Environment Waikato Draft Long Term Council Community Plan be adopted and forwarded to Environment Waikato.

#### **1 Background**

Environment Waikato has released its draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2009 – 19 for public consultation. Submissions close on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

Representatives from Environment Waikato (Chairman Peter Buckley and Group Manager Resource User Group Chris McLay) were present at Councils meeting of 25 March to brief the Councillors on the proposals contained within the Plan.

A full copy of the document was distributed at the meeting.

#### **2 LTCCP Document**

It is very clear from reading the document that the Regional Councillors have had a very difficult time considering priorities and programmes for the 10 year period of the Plan. Not only did the Regional Council have a significant number of new Councillors, who will have had to come to grips with scope and scale of activities undertaken by regional councils, but the recent economic and financial downturn has had a significant impact; particularly on the Investment Fund returns which have been used in the past to subsidise the General Rate and some specific programmes.

The document clearly lays out the major issues and changes in philosophies and programmes contained within it and actively seeks submissions on these matters.

It appears that the Council has made recommendations on reductions in expenditure and service levels to contain the General Rate increase to 4% and will require significant feedback to re-consider these.

### **3 Draft Submission**

A copy of the draft Hauraki District Council submission is attached for discussion.

The draft submission is generally self explanatory and is largely supportive of the actions proposed by Environment Waikato given that there is a real need to minimise general rate increases across the local government sector. Generally the reductions in programmes and levels of service have a discretionary component in that they can continue with a reduced level of funding with a reduced level of service.

The funding of the clean streams programme was entirely dependent on Investment Funds returns which have significantly reduced. Should investment income return to previous levels the programme will be re-considered.

Please bring your copy of the draft LTCCP to the meeting.

Mark Buttimore  
Strategic Planning Projects Manager

16 April 2009

The Chief Executive  
Environment Waikato  
P O Box 4010  
HAMILTON EAST 3247

Dear Sir

ENVIRONMENT WAIKATO DRAFT 2009-19 LONG TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Hauraki District Council welcomes the opportunity to present the following submissions on the Draft Long Term Council Community Plan for Environment Waikato's consideration.

The Hauraki District Council believes that Environment Waikato has taken a very responsible approach in setting its rates for the 2009/10 year and that increases, while inevitable; need to be kept to a level where affordability does not become a major issue for ratepayers.

I wish to acknowledge the presentation given to the Council by your Chairman Mr Peter Buckley and the Group Manager Resource Use Group, Mr Chris McLay. Councillors found the presentation to be informative and welcomed the opportunity to discuss matters arising from the presentation with your Council's representatives.

Given the current economic climate, the many differing demands on services, the less favourable investment climate and the increasing number of requirements placed on local authorities, the Hauraki District Council fully understands the many difficult decisions that have had to be made in preparing the Statement of Proposal. This Council has also been faced with very similar issues and has also had to review Levels of Service, reduced programme funding, affordability and the other related issues.

Given the lengthy considerations that have obviously taken place in the preparation of the Draft Plan, Council has the following statements to make in relation to the specific matters raised for discussion:-

- 1 Air Quality  
The proposed reduction is unfortunate but the Hauraki District Council accepts that Environment Waikato will continue to address the Air Quality Issues, although it may not meet the Government's 2013 deadline in light of the reduced expenditure.
- 2 Clean Streams  
The Hauraki District Council has been supportive of the Clean Streams initiative but understands that in the past it has been fully funded from investment income. With this income no longer available the Hauraki District Council supports the continuation of those commitments already made and hopefully, if the investment environment improves, reconsideration can be given to reintroducing the Clean

Streams programme in the future.

3 Natural Heritage

The Hauraki District Council is supportive of the proposal for Environment Waikato to contribute \$300,000 per annum for fence maintenance and pest monitoring at the Maungatautari Ecological Island. The Council understands the potential National importance of this initiative and prefers to see funding focused into areas such as this that have a real chance of ongoing success in terms of preserving Natural Heritage and re-creating an unmodified natural environment over a significant landform.

4 Animal Health Board

The Hauraki District Council does not support the reintroduction of the ratepayer funding of the Animal Health Board.

The Hauraki District Council believes that Environment Waikato made the appropriate decision in removing this levy for the 2008/09 year and that the funding shortfall should be met from Government and industry sources.

The Council believes that the Animal Health Board should be approaching 'Dairy NZ Inc.' that currently levy millions of dollars from dairy farmers towards a number of initiatives, which include animal health. Dairy farmers have no option but to pay this levy and it would seem an appropriate source of funding towards the issues that are the responsibility of the Animal Health Board.

5 Investment Fund

Given the change in the financial climate both a global and a national level the Hauraki District Council supports risk reduction as an appropriate means of addressing future approaches for funds invested on behalf of ratepayers, at least in the short term until it becomes clearer what shape the financial markets will finally settle to be.

6 Passenger Transport

The Hauraki Council continues to support the bus service that operates between Hamilton and Paeroa. The Hauraki Council would also be interested in exploring future opportunities in relation to potential new methods of public transport service delivery utilising the many vans and club vehicles that sit idle the majority of the day within the region.

7 Waste Minimisation and Hazardous Waste

The Council understands the reasons for the reduction in the regions involvement with Waste Minimisation and Hazardous Wastes.

However, with the passing of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, additional responsibilities have been placed on Territorial Authorities to increase their involvement in waste reduction and minimisation. The Hauraki District Council will be developing a new Waste Management and Minimisation Plan and would be supportive of any regional initiative for common goals and approaches to these new plans.

The Council has been very supportive of the regional agrichemical collection and disposal programme and would be sorry to see this programme removed from the region's long term plan. Not only will this transfer costs agrichemical collection to Territorial Authorities but it in fact achieves no saving for the end beneficiary, the ratepayer.

The Council also believes this initiative is best undertaken on a regional basis where negotiations in relation to the disposal and the cost of disposal of these agrichemicals can be negotiated at a national level with all the benefits of scale.

#### 8 Pest Management

While the Council fully understands the reasons for the reductions in the Pest Management budget, it does note the significant improvements to biodiversity that occur with appropriate pest management strategies.

The Council will be interested to see if the change in the cycle for pest management control does in fact have any longer term detrimental effects. It may be appropriate that this reduced level of funding is reviewed in the future once any effects have been able to be quantified.

The Council also wishes to make the following submissions on other matters contained within the Draft Long Term Council Community Plan.

The Hauraki District Council has always been a strong supporter of the regions role in co-ordinating a regional approach to Outcomes monitoring and the Choosing Futures Waikato approach. The Council would welcome the opportunity for discussion between staff from Environment Waikato and its constituent territorial authorities in relation to other options relating to a combined and united approach in this area.

The Council understands that the ongoing Beachcare budget has been reduced as part of the considerations in preparing the long term plan. The Council is pleased to see however that ongoing budget allowance has been made for this very worthwhile programme.

As Environment Waikato will be aware, the Hauraki District Council is very supportive of the aquaculture industry and notes the increase in the budget allowed for the development of the appropriate policies and Plan Changes in this area. The Hauraki District Council believes that a high priority should be given to fin fish farming and that a Plan Change to allow for this aquaculture use should be promoted as soon as practicable.

In conjunction with this, the Hauraki District Council also believes that additional areas, particularly in the west coast harbours and the Firth of Thames, need to be set aside for aquaculture development areas.

The Waihou Piako River Scheme funding was fully supported by the Hauraki District Council and we are pleased to see the final result reflected in the draft long term plan. While there will be vastly different rating effects on individual ratepayers within the district for the first year of the new funding arrangements, the Hauraki District Council believes that the benefits in a simplified, common approach to rating across the two schemes are apparent.

The Hauraki District Council would like to be heard in support of this submission.

J.T. Tregidga  
Mayor