

Environmental Science and Policy Committee MINUTES

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Environmental Policy and Science Committee held in the Council Chamber, Level 2 Philip Laing House, 144 Rattray Street, Dunedin on Wednesday 26 April 2023, commencing at 10:04 AM.

PRESENT

Cr Lloyd McCall *(Co-Chairperson)*
Cr Alexa Forbes
Cr Gary Kelliher
Cr Michael Laws
Cr Kevin Malcolm
Cr Tim Mephram
Cr Andrew Noone
Cr Gretchen Robertson
Cr Bryan Scott
Cr Alan Somerville
Cr Elliot Weir
Cr Kate Wilson

1. WELCOME

Chairperson McCall welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 10:04 am. Staff present included Pim Borren, (interim Chief Executive), Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Nick Donnelly (General Manager Corporate Services & CFO), Gavin Palmer (GM Operations), Richard Saunders (GM Communications), Tom Dyer (Science Manager), Ben Mackey (Land Team), Erik Button (Scientist, Land and Soil) Sam Thomas (Scientist, Coast), Scott Jarvie (Scientist, Biodiversity), Liz Spector (Governance Support - online), Trudi McLaren (Governance Support).

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

No public forum was held.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The agenda was confirmed as published.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No changes were made to Councillor declarations of interest.

6. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1. Land Science Update

This paper provided an update of the major land and soil science mapping and monitoring programmes currently underway. Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science) Dr Erik Button and Dr Ben Mackey (Team Leader Land) were present to respond to questions about the report.

Cr McCall commented that this was an excellent paper which provided a base to inform decision and policy making for the future.

Resolution ESP23-101: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1) **Notes this report.**

MOTION CARRIED

6.2. 2022 Air Quality SOE Report

Chairperson McCall advised that the 2022 Air Quality SOE Report (6.2) and 2022 Air Quality Projects - NO₂ & SO₂ Monitoring and ULEB testing (6.3) would be considered concurrently. 6.2 2022 Air Quality SOE Report presented the results of the State of the Environment (SoE) monitoring for air quality for the calendar year 2022 and 6.3 2022 Air Quality Projects - NO₂ & SO₂ Monitoring and ULEB testing presented the results of the two air quality projects undertaken during 2022.

Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science) and Ben Mackey (Team Leader Land) were present to respond to questions about the report.

Cr Kelliher noted the positive trend and said it was good to see. He said that the report will allow people in urban areas to make decisions when they are looking at moving to different areas, and they will be able to select areas within towns that would be better suited to them or be able to go out of town for certain periods because of health.

Cr Laws said that these results were important for the community, and that they deserve recognition for the work they have done to address air quality issues, especially given the growth in population.

Resolution ESP23-102: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Kelliher Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1) **Notes** the 2022 Air Quality SOE Report.
- 2) **Notes** the 2022 Air Quality Projects - NO₂ & SO₂ Monitoring and ULEB testing

MOTION CARRIED

6.4. Kelp Forest Phase Monitoring Project

This report is Phase 1 of a multi-year programme developed to provide baseline knowledge and guidance for ongoing monitoring of Otago's coastal marine ecosystems.

Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science), and Sam Thomas were present to respond to questions about the report. They advised that this report was a summary of the last 10 years to set the groundwork for more significant and detailed findings over the next 5 years.

Chairperson McCall commented that this report was extremely informative and thanked the presenters/authors.

Resolution ESP23-103: Cr Weir Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1) **Receives** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that phase 1 of the kelp forest monitoring programme "Giant Macrocyctis forests; Distribution and trends for the Otago region" has been completed.
- 3) **Notes** that phase 1 is part of a broader five-year programme that will produce a passive monitoring platform online combined with in-situ long term monitoring.

MOTION CARRIED

6.5. Regional Threat Lists for Reptile Species in Otago

This paper was provided to detail development of regional threat classifications, provide examples from other regions where regional conservation statuses have added values to national assessments, and detail the first regional conservation status undertaken for a species group (reptiles) in the Otago region.

Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science) and Scott Jarvie were present to respond to questions about the report. Tom advised that this type of technical paper will be available to experts who are considering any land use changes in the future. He noted the work is in the early stages, but it will enable those working in this area to take better and more effective steps in future. He stated staff are working on this with a wide range of organisations, including the Department of Conservation.

Resolution ESP23-104: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Environmental Science and Policy committee:

- 1) **Notes** this report.

MOTION CARRIED

6.6. Marine Significant Ecological Areas Spatial Mapping Project

This report provided the Committee with information on the mapping project completed by NIWA to map the marine significant ecological areas within Otago's coastal marine area and surrounding adjoining coastal space. The mapping will be used to inform the review of the Regional Plan: Coast for Otago, and to assist in developing the coastal monitoring programme. The mapping identifies the marine ecological significant areas and key habitats/ecosystems in Otago.

Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science) and Sam Thomas (Scientist, Coast) were present to respond to questions about the report. Mr Dyer stated the report was undertaken by NIWA and included data from many different areas and sources.

Cr Weir left the meeting at 11.50am and returned at 11.55am

Resolution ESP23-105: Cr Forbes Moved, Cr Mepham Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1) **Receives** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that the marine significant ecological area spatial mapping has been completed.
- 3) **Notes** that next steps include a management framework for marine significant ecological areas, and a more detailed monitoring programme for the coastal area.

MOTION CARRIED

6.7. Key messages from the Ministry for the Environment and Stats NZ report Our Freshwater 2023 released on 12 April 2023

This report was provided to updated Councillors on findings of the Ministry's report, *Our freshwater 2023* and to make some observations regarding the implications of those findings for the Council. Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), and Peter Constantine (Acting Principal Planner) were present to respond to questions about the report.

Cr Weir thanked everyone involved for the report and noted that it contained a lot of very useful information. Following Councillor questions and discussion of the report, it was moved:

Resolution ESP23-106: Cr Weir Moved, Cr Somerville Seconded

That the Council:

- 1) **Notes** *this report.*
- 2) **Notes** *the key findings from Our freshwater 2023.*
- 3) **Notes** *the observations regarding the implications of the key findings for the ongoing work of the Otago Regional Council.*

MOTION CARRIED

7. CLOSURE

There was no further business and Chairperson Lloyd McCall declared the meeting closed at 12:12 pm.

Chairperson

Date