

7 March 2023

File Ref: OIAP-7-27177

Tēnā koe

### **Request for information 2023-027**

I refer to your request for information dated 7 February 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 7 February 2023. You have requested the following:

*"I am seeking information on how Greater Wellington responded to each of the recommendations listed in the Appendix:*

#### **Appendix: PCE Report Recommendations**

##### **Report: Growing for Good (2004)**

*That local government pays particular attention to supporting and resourcing ICM initiatives when developing plans under the RMA, and annual plans and long-term council community plans under the LGA.*

<https://pce.parliament.nz/publications/archive/1997-2006/growing-for-good-intensive-farming-sustainability-and-new-zealands-environment>

##### **Report: Weaving resilience into our working lands: Recommendations for the future roles of native plants (2002)**

*To the Minister for the Environment Initiate, in partnership with local government, the development of mechanisms under the Resource Management Act 1991, that will provide greater certainty to landowners who invest in the establishment of new areas of native plants with the intention of undertaking commercial use.*

<https://pce.parliament.nz/publications/archive/1997-2006/weaving-resilience-into-our-working-lands-recommendations-for-the-future-roles-of-native-plants>

##### **Report: Creating Our Future: Sustainable development for New Zealand (2002)**

*That the Minister of Local Government, in consultation with Local Government New Zealand, develops guidelines for local authorities on preparing long-term community plans dealing with environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability, as proposed under the Local Government Bill. Such guidelines should be consistent with the principles of Agenda 21*

*That the Minister of State Services, in consultation with the Minister of Local Government and Local Government New Zealand, identifies the capacity and capability issues associated with implementing sustainable development, and introduces methods to improve skills in integrating environmental, social and economic policy analysis and implementation.*

<https://pce.parliament.nz/publications/archive/1997-2006/creating-our-future-sustainable-development-for-new-zealand>

**Report: Wind Power, People, and Place (2006)**

*We recommend that the Minister of Energy and the Minister for the Environment direct EEC and the Ministry For the Environment (MFE) to provide local authorities with guidance on planning for wind farm development and managing tensions related to landscapes and visual amenity. This guidance should include: guidelines to assist councils to develop specific objectives, policies, assessment criteria, and implementation measures to include in plans and policy statements further work by EECA to assist regional councils to use renewable resource inventories (for wind in particular) to develop regional strategies.*

*We recommend that regional councils take a leadership role in developing a proactive, strategic approach to wind power development.*

*We recommend that territorial local authorities (LAs), where appropriate, use the extended pre-hearing provisions of the Resource Management Act (s99) to clarify or resolve matters between parties before formal hearings.*

*We recommend that regional councils and territorial local authorities use the Long Term Council Community Plan process for gaining community input on the location, scale, and extent of wind farm development considered appropriate for the district or region.*

*We recommend that regional councils take a leadership role in landscape management that includes: identifying and describing outstanding and regionally significant landscapes and features; developing policy and suggested methods for managing regionally significant landscapes in regional policy statements; working with LAs to incorporate these policies into their plans.*

**Report: Investigation into the remediation of the contaminated site at Mapua**

*I recommend that national and regional policy-makers recognise that a containment strategy for many contaminated sites may be optimal environmentally as well as financially.*

<https://pce.parliament.nz/publications/archive/2007-2010/investigation-into-the-remediation-of-the-contaminated-site-at-mapua>

**Greater Wellington's response follows:**

For ease of reading, we have responded to the individual reports as follows:

**1. Report Growing for Good (2004)**

Greater Wellington's overarching approach to regional resource management plan development (such as the Proposed Natural Resources Plan and/or Regional Policy Statement (RPS)) looks to higher planning order documents such as the Resource Management Act 1991, Coastal Policy Statement, National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards and any other regulations.

This means that in relation to any PCE recommendations directed to government or local government, Greater Wellington would tend to wait for changes to be promulgated in higher order legislation before we integrate these into regional planning documents.

One of the reasons for this is the evidentiary threshold and public submissions/hearing process. All changes to plans need to be justified, usually with expert evidence provided (e.g., following Section 32 and Section 42A processes) and it is unlikely that a PCE recommendation, on its own, will have sufficient weight in the Schedule 1 process.

That being the case, Greater Wellington observes that the PCE recommendation: *That local government pays particular attention to supporting and resourcing ICM (Integrated Catchment Management) initiatives when developing plans under the RMA, and annual plans and long-term council community plans under the LGA* has been given effect through the National Policy Statement for Freshwater (NPS-FM) and the Essential Freshwater Package.

Greater Wellington's programme for implementing the NPS-FM is called the Whaitua Programme. ("Whaitua" is the Māori word for catchment or space). The Wellington Region is divided into five whaitua - Ruamāhanga, Whanganui-a-Tara, Te Awarua-o-Porirua, Kāpiti, and Wairarapa Coast.

From 2014-2018, Greater Wellington convened the Ruamāhanga Whaitua (catchment or space) Committee, the first of the five Whaitua Committees to be convened in the Wellington region. Comprising elected members, mana whenua (Rangitāne ō Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa) and community members drawn from throughout the Wairarapa Valley, this group was brought together to provide recommendations to Council on the way forward for land and water management in their place. It resulted in the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Implementation Programme, which is being implemented through provisions in the Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan, other plans (e.g., Flood Management Plans, Farm Plans) and through local catchment communities.

As at the beginning of 2023, the Whaitua te Whanganui a Tara and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation Plans have been completed, while the Whaitua Kāpiti Implementation Committee is about to commence its work.

You may find the below links useful:

- Regional Policy Statement – [www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/regional-policy-statement/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/regional-policy-statement/)
- Ruamāhanga Whaitua Implementation Programme – [www.gw.govt.nz/document/16711/ruamahanga-whaitua-implementation-programme](http://www.gw.govt.nz/document/16711/ruamahanga-whaitua-implementation-programme)
- Natural Resources Plan – [www.gw.govt.nz/document/16711/ruamahanga-whaitua-implementation-programme](http://www.gw.govt.nz/document/16711/ruamahanga-whaitua-implementation-programme)
- Flood Management Plans – [www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/emergency-and-hazard-management/flood-protection/our-work/rivers-and-schemes/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/emergency-and-hazard-management/flood-protection/our-work/rivers-and-schemes/)
- Farm Plans – [www.gw.govt.nz/environment/land-use/farm-plans/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/land-use/farm-plans/)
- Whaitua te Whanganui a Tara – [www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-te-whanganui-a-tara/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-te-whanganui-a-tara/)

- Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua – [www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/te-awarua-o-porirua-whaitua/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/te-awarua-o-porirua-whaitua/)
- Whaitua Kāpiti – [www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-kapiti/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/protecting-the-waters-of-your-area/whaitua-kapiti/)

## **2. Report: Weaving resilience into our working lands: Recommendations for the future roles of native plants (2002)**

Greater Wellington is not aware of any mechanisms under the RMA that will provide greater certainty to landowners who invest in the establishment of new areas of native plants with the intention of undertaking commercial use.

## **3. Report: Creating Our Future: Sustainable development for New Zealand (2002)**

Greater Wellington is required by the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 to prepare a Long-Term Plan to:

- describe the activities of the local authority; and
- describe the community outcomes of the local authority's district or region; and
- provide integrated decision-making and co-ordination of the resources of the local authority; and
- provide a long-term focus for the decisions and activities of the local authority; and
- provide a basis for accountability of the local authority to the community.

While not specifically referring to “sustainability”, the LGA directs local authorities to meet the current *and future needs* of communities for good-quality infrastructure, services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most *cost effective* for households and businesses. (italics added).

Greater Wellington's Long-Term Plan 2021-31 can be found <https://ltp.gw.govt.nz>

## **4. Report: Wind Power, People, and Place (2006)**

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Generation (2011) provides guidance for local authorities, including Greater Wellington, on how renewable electricity generation should be dealt with in Resource Management Act 1991 planning documents. In responding to this NPS-REG Greater Wellington has developed enabling policies in regional planning documents including the RPS and NRP. Territorial Authorities hold the functional levers in relation to land use through District Plan development and identifying appropriate activities on land that may be suitable for that purpose.

Greater Wellington is one of a minority of regional councils and unitary authorities to own and/or manage a substantial network of regional parks, totalling an area of around 33,000ha in the Wellington Region. Management of our regional parks is directed by Toitū te Whenua – the Parks Network Plan 2020-30, which contains objectives, policies, actions and rules for usage and development. Both “small, community-scale” and “medium-large-scale” renewable energy generation activities are provided for throughout the parks network, subject to relevant permissions being granted. Any proposals are likely to involve a programme of community engagement, which could include consultation through development of Greater Wellington's Long-Term Plan and/or other methods.

- Toitū te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-2030 – [www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/parks-plans/toitu-te-whenua-parks-network-plan-2020-30/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/parks-plans/toitu-te-whenua-parks-network-plan-2020-30/)

### **5. Report: Investigation into the remediation of the contaminated site at Mapua (2008)**

Under the National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011, regional councils are required to investigate land for the purposes of identifying and monitoring contaminated land. To meet this requirement, Greater Wellington administers the Selected Land Use Register (SLUR) ([www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pollution-management/contaminated-land-slur/](http://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pollution-management/contaminated-land-slur/)) for our region. Our main objective under the RMA is the investigation of land for the purposes of identifying and monitoring contaminated land. At present we do not have a containment strategy for contaminated sites. If a site has been confirmed as contaminated and presents a risk to the environment or human health, they must be managed or remediated, which comes under the responsibility of the landowner-public (Territorial Authorities) or private, and we provide information to support this.

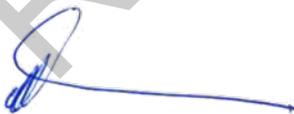
If the site has significant values or poses a significant risk, the only funding we have available to support investigation or remediation is via the MfE Contaminated Site Remediation Fund. In the case of the Miramar gasworks, Greater Wellington supported the investigation of the site through the CSRF. Jacobs undertook a contaminant migration study to access groundwater, and they found no significant risk to off-site receptors, but provided insights if construction works were ever to occur onsite.

In general, we do not have a full understanding of what sites are contamination confirmed within the Wellington Region. 74% of HAIL sites (1671) are under the classification Verified, which states that it may or may not be contaminated. We most likely do not have a report of these sites, because we cannot make property owners undertake testing unless land-use changes (subdivision), development (soil disturbance), or we have evidence of contaminated discharge occurring from the site. Overall known contamination within the region is extremely limited.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



**Nigel Corry**

Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive