

**Subject:** Annual Plan 2010/11 Activity Report - Natural Resources Policy

**Prepared by:** Yvette Kinsella

**Meeting Date:** 5/6 May 2010

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## Report to COUNCIL for decision

### SUMMARY

Two submissions to the draft 2010/11 Annual Plan contained comments relating to the Natural Resource Policy Planning activity (submissions 41 and 45). Detailed officer responses and recommendations to these submissions are attached. The submissions support:

- protection of the natural environment, particularly enhancement of biodiversity values and management of chemical herbicide use; and
- planning for strategic environmental issues, particularly peak oil / energy crisis.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council

1. receives the report
2. approves all officer responses contained in Attachment1 - Natural Resources Policy submissions and responses
3. makes no changes to the draft Annual Plan 2010/11.
4. requests that the Economic Development Team Leader attend the next Transition Tairawhiti meeting to discuss energy issues and report back any matters arising to the Community Development Committee.

Yvette Kinsella  
Team Leader Natural Resources Policy

Hans van Kregten  
Environment and Planning Manager

## Summary and Response by Issue

For: Annual Plan 2010/11 - NATURAL RESOURCES

Issue	Submitter
<b>Natural Resources Policy</b>	
41	Lorraine Still
<p>Supports all environmental issues. Supports replanting, but hopes that care is taken to preserve the biodiversity of all ecosystems. Does not support the use of chemical herbicides in any form as they kill important soil organisms and insects. Misuse of herbicides in farming areas should be a major concern for council.</p> <p><i>Officer Response: GDC has a number of plans and policies aimed at managing environmental quality across the District. They cover a wide range of environmental issues across the District, for example, biodiversity, energy and discharges to air. These documents are reviewed regularly (10 years from the date they take effect) to ensure they are up-to-date and responsive to changes. Issues in the District to be reviewed and redefined. Officer Recommendation: That there be no change to the draft Annual Plan.</i></p>	
45	Transition Tairawhiti
<p>Transition Tairawhiti feel that the council needs to acknowledge and take action on the rapidly approaching energy/peak oil crisis. Our community needs to prepare for the reduction of fossil fuels and to make the transition to more sustainable sources of energy. Would like to see a review of the energy management section of the Regional Operative Policy Ch 5.2.4 Reasons for Objectives, Policies and Methods. Rather than waiting for central government action on this issue we feel GDC should facilitate community planning around a more sustainable future for Tairawhiti immediately. We request that the GDC staff support the establishment of a sustainable energy advisory group, working with Transition Tairawhiti and other interested stakeholders (residents, businesses, community organisations and central government agencies) over the next 12 months to start identifying opportunities to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels in preparation for a rapid increase in oil prices over the next 10-20 years. We estimate this is likely to take less than one hour per week for one staff member.</p> <p><i>Officer Response: Council has a number of resource management plans that cover a wide range of issues including biodiversity, discharges to air and energy issues. These documents are reviewed regularly (10 years from the date they take effect) to ensure they are up-to-date. The Urban Development Strategy in particular includes policies that reflect concern over peak oil. Council is keen to work with stakeholders to ensure that consultation over its policies is meaningful and that there are appropriate opportunities for all members of the public to contribute when the plans come up for review. It is also worth noting that the Council has been proactive in the area of energy efficiency and renewable energy promotion for a number of years. When the oil crisis became a matter of international significance in early 2000 and Peak Oil a major discussion point, the Tairawhiti Development Partnership (TDP) initiated an energy review. A regional energy assessment was completed in 2005 which addressed a number of issues around both renewable energy alternatives and energy sustainability. This resulted in the development of a regional energy strategy with a district strategy following. The end result being the establishment of the energy group from which a number of initiatives evolved, e.g. the Warmer Homes programme which saw the 1000th retrofit completed in February 2010; the October Energy Fest held in 2006 which saw all the various alternative and renewable energy options being extensively promoted within the community. GDC has also continued to work alongside the local manufacturers of biodiesel within the community and have a number of initiatives that are in the developmental stage. A major assessment of the potential for wind energy within the region was undertaken as a result of the focus on renewable energy. In addition, a significant number of micro hydro plants have been installed within the district. These and many other initiatives to reduce our consumption of traditional energy sources have been actioned and continue to be promoted. The energy group also focused on the promotion of energy audits in the community with a number of the major energy users having had these conducted. The Council has conducted energy audits on all of its operations, with all audit recommendations being actioned. The Economic Development Unit (EDU) have, and will continue to, address regional energy issues. Officers from Natural Resources Policy and other areas of Council such as EDU, will be pleased to work with Transition Tairawhiti on energy issues as part of Council's normal community consultation activities. Officer Recommendation: That there be no change to the draft Annual Plan. That the Economic Development Team Leader attend the next Transition Tairawhiti meeting to discuss energy issues and report back any matters arising to the Community Development Committee.</i></p>	