



## Minutes of a meeting of the Policy Committee held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, 14 August 2019 at 11:45 am

### **Membership**

Cr Gretchen Robertson *(Chairperson)*  
Cr Michael Laws *(Deputy Chairperson)*  
Cr Graeme Bell  
Cr Doug Brown  
Cr Michael Deaker  
Cr Carmen Hope  
Cr Trevor Kempton  
Cr Ella Lawton  
Cr Sam Neill  
Cr Andrew Noone  
Cr Bryan Scott  
Cr Stephen Woodhead  
Mr Edward Ellison  
Mr Tahu Potiki

### **Welcome**

Cr Robertson welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 11:55 am.

*For our future*

## **1. APOLOGIES**

### **Resolution**

*That the apologies for Tahu Potiki be accepted.*

Moved: Cr Hope  
Seconded: Cr Noone  
CARRIED

## **2. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

No leave of absence was requested.

## **3. ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Gardner	<i>(Chief Executive)</i>
Nick Donnelly	<i>(General Manager Corporate Services and CFO)</i>
Gavin Palmer	<i>(General Manager Operations)</i>
Sally Giddens	<i>(General Manager People, Culture and Communications)</i>
Peter Winder	<i>(Acting General Manager Regulatory)</i>
Andrew Newman	<i>(Acting General Manager Policy, Science and Strategy)</i>
Amanda Vercoe	<i>(Executive Advisor)</i>
Sylvie Leduc	<i>(Senior Policy Analyst)</i>
Liz Spector	<i>(Committee Secretary)</i>

## **4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

The agenda was confirmed as tabled.

## **5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were advised.

## **6. PUBLIC FORUM**

No public forum was held.

## **7. MATTERS FOR DECISION**

### **7.1. Plan Changes for Water Quality**

Cr Robertson introduced the report, stating water is the highest priority for the Otago Regional Council and the way in which it is managed is vital. She asked the Acting General Manager Policy, Science and Strategy (Andrew Newman) to highlight the key points as to why the Council should consider making changes to the 6A plan changes. Mr Newman said the proposal includes two primary changes intended to strengthen the regional plan. He asked Ms Sylvie Leduc, Senior Policy Analyst to review the proposed changes with the Councillors. She said the first change focuses on the timeframe for implementation of rules 12.C.1.1A (Schedule 16) and 12.C.1.3 (Overseer) and is proposed to be notified in October 2019. Ms Leduc explained the second change, to be notified in March 2020, will be a more substantial change, addressing gaps in the current framework, and will require an extensive consultation approach. She said some of the proposed changes will address stock effluent management,

sediment control from earthworks, and updated discharge policy framework. Ms Leduc said the changes are intended to strengthen the Water Plan and support the community to adopt good farm management practices.

Cr Lawton asked that the proposed plan language be clearer to ensure the community that the ORC is protecting the environment. She said community engagement on the plan change is critical and asked if the liaison team needed more staff. CE Sarah Gardner said staff resourcing was appropriate but the plan changes will present new challenges. She said key messaging about the changes have been made to staff organisation wide. She said new resourcing may be needed, but we will continue to use the existing resources in the best way possible. Cr Robertson said a comprehensive communications plan is important.

Cr Laws asked if these changes should wait until the new NPS2020 is released by the government. The Acting General Manager Regulatory (Peter Winder) said the change requested for October 2019 merely shifts the effective date of 6A to provide greater flexibility with processing of consent applications. He said when the NPS2020 is released it may include significant changes that will require rethinking but this will be done by the new council. Cr Laws asked if rules addressing wastewater discharges in urban waterways will be strengthened. Ms Leduc said those rules will be locally specific and are waiting for the FMU processes to be completed.

Committee member Edward Ellison said while iwi understand the need for plan changes, they are worried about the deadline extension. He said Ngai Tahu have been watching this play out over many years and they are supportive of the NPS. He asked that the ORC be clear in the direction they are headed. He requested going forward that iwi be involved in the process to design the plan. Cr Robertson stated the ORC has made a commitment to work with iwi.

Cr Scott said the community needs certainty the environment is being protected by the ORC and asked staff to make the water plan fit for purpose and more robust. He said there needs to be certainty on how the rules are implemented.

Cr Kempton said much work has been put into this proposal and a delay will not negatively impact water quality during that time. He said there need to be practical scientific methods to measure Sched 16 and the ORC might rethink how the State of the Environment monitoring program is set up. He also said the communications plan should stress prohibited activities and encourage compliance so the public will have trust in the ORC ability to address water quality concerns. Ms Leduc said the ORC will continue to implement education, behaviour change and monitoring and enforcement activity to encourage landowners to take responsibility for improving water quality.

Mr Newman said the proposed changes will assure long-term gain. He said the strategic issue for ORC is to get measurable improvements which will translate to the State of the Environment monitoring program. Mr Newman said monitoring of ecological health should be blended into the SOE framework but additional capacity may be needed in the land science area. Cr Robertson thanked the community members who have worked with the Council to see sustained improvement in water quality. She said while there is still a need for further improvements in many catchments, the Council is on this journey now. Cr Robertson suggested to substitute "strengthen" for "continue" in the third recommendation. Cr Woodhead agreed and moved the resolution.

## Resolution

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Approves** the staging and preliminary scope of the water quality plan changes as described in this report.
- 2) **Notes** the engagement and communication plan for the development of the water quality plan changes (in Appendix 1).
- 3) **Notes** that ORC will strengthen its education and enforcement programme for water quality.

Moved: Cr Woodhead

Seconded: Cr Hope

CARRIED


*Cr Laws left the meeting at 12:36 pm.*

*Cr Laws returned to the meeting at 12:39 pm.*

## 8. CLOSURE

The was no further business and Cr Robertson declared the meeting closed at 12:52 pm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date