

**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 4 December 2024, commencing at 10:00 AM.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/43CQWdli2R8?si=-kzPKnSjEzA4EJjh>

PRESENT

Mr Edward Ellison	<i>(Chair)</i>
Cr Lloyd McCall	<i>(Co-Chair)</i>
Ms Karen Coutts	
Cr Alexa Forbes	
Cr Gary Kelliher	
Cr Michael Laws	
Cr Kevin Malcolm	
Cr Tim Mephram	
Cr Andrew Noone	
Cr Gretchen Robertson	
Cr Alan Somerville	
Cr Elliot Weir	
Cr Kate Wilson	

1. WELCOME

Chair Ellison welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 9 am. Staff present included Richard Saunders (Chief Executive), Anita Dawe (GM Regional Planning and Transport), Tom Dyer (GM Manager Science and Resilience) Joanna Gilroy (GM Environmental Delivery), Tami Sargeant (GM People and Corporate) Amanda Vercoe (GM Strategy and Customer, Deputy CE) online, Kylie Darragh (Governance Support).

2. APOLOGIES

Noted by the Chair was the absence of Cr Laws.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

No requests to address the Committee under Public Forum were received.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The agenda was confirmed as published.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors were reminded to advise of any conflict of interest if they arose.

6. PRESENTATIONS

No presentations were held.

7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Resolution: Cr Somerville Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the minutes of the Environmental Science & Policy Committee 26 September 2024 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record.

MOTION CARRIED

8. OPEN ACTIONS FROM RESOLUTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

There are currently no open actions for this committee.

9. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1. Regional Pest Management Plan Review Options

[YouTube 7:58] This report presented options for the potential review of the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan. Murray Boardman, Performance and Delivery Specialist and Libby Caldwell, Manager Environmental Implementation, and Joanna Gilroy, General Manager Environmental Delivery, were present to respond to questions on the report.

At 10:05 am Cr Malcolm moved, and Cr Wilson seconded:

That the committee adjourn for ten minutes break to draft additional recommendations.

MOTION CARRIED

The Committee reconvened at 10:15 am.

Resolution ESP24-112: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Weir Seconded

That the Environmental Science & Policy Committee:

- 1. Notes** this report.
- 2. Recommends that the Council approves** the recommendation of **Option 3A** to undertake a full review of the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) and **provides** staff direction as to the year this would be started.

a. Notes that the timing of the recommended option may be dependent on when the current Biosecurity Act is amended by Parliament.

b. Notes that staff will make any necessary adjustments to budgets through the 25/26 Annual Plan process.

MOTION CARRIED

Cr Mephram voted against the motion.

Additional recommendations were reviewed by the committee and taken separately by division.

Resolution: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. Recommends** to Council that in addition to commencing the full review of the RPMP staff are requested to engage with the community to identify priorities for new site led programmes for inclusion in the RPMP, with those sites to comply with the site led programme objectives in the existing Otago Pest Management Plan 2019 – 2029.

<i>For:</i>	<i>Cr Kelliher, Cr Malcolm, Cr Mephram, Cr Noone, Cr Wilson</i>
<i>Against:</i>	<i>Cr Forbes, Cr McCall, Cr Robertson, Cr Somerville, Cr Weir, Chair Ellison, Karen Coutts</i>
<i>Abstained:</i>	<i>Nil.</i>

MOTION FAILED

Resolution: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Committee:

- 2. Recommends** to Council that staff are instructed to report back to the Committee with an update following an assessment of whether the new site led programmes identified above can be added without the need for a partial review of the plan.

MOTION FAILED

Resolution ESP24-113: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Committee:

- 3. Recommends** that staff are requested to correct inconsistencies and errors within the existing Otago Pest Management Plan through the minor changes process outlined in option 1.

MOTION CARRIED

Cr Malcolm voted against the motion.

Resolution: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Committee:

- 4. Recommends** to Council that staff encourage consideration of Otago Pest Management Plans objectives and rules as part of the development of Integrated Catchment Action plans.

<i>For:</i>	<i>Cr Kelliher, Cr Malcolm, Cr Mepham, Cr Noone, Cr Robertson, Cr Wilson</i>
<i>Against:</i>	<i>Cr Forbes, Cr McCall, Cr Somerville, Cr Weir, Chair Ellison, Karen Coutts</i>
<i>Abstained:</i>	<i>Nil.</i>

The vote was tied, and the Chair declined to use a casting vote.

MOTION FAILED

9.2. Biodiversity Monitoring Programme Update

[YouTube 1:44:40] This paper highlighted some of the biodiversity work the Environmental Monitoring (EM) team is involved with at the Otago Regional Council. Scott Jarvie, Senior Scientist - Biodiversity, Tom Dyer, Eve Bruhns, Environmental Monitoring Manager, Matt Salmon, Environmental Technician Biodiversity, and Lauren Harrex, Team Leader Monitoring - Ecology/Water Quality, were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution ESP24-114: Cr Weir Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes** this report.
- 2. Notes** that EM teams work on biodiversity will continue as part of established work programmes.

MOTION CARRIED

9.3. Lake Programme update

[YouTube 1:58:08] The purpose of this report was to provide the committee with an update on the lakes programme as a supplement to the regular State of the Environment (SOE) reporting. This included presenting the latest data and performance update from lake buoys currently installed in Lake Hayes, Lake Wānaka, and Lake Whakatipu. Additionally, this report covered recent lake snow monitoring results from Otago lakes and assessed the ecological condition of three key lakes in the Otago region—Hāwea, Whakatipu, and Wānaka—using the Lake Submerged Plant Indicator (LakeSPI) developed by NIWA. Hugo Borges, Senior Scientist - Lakes (online) Ben Mackay, Manager Science, and Tom Dyer, General Manager Science and Resilience were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution ESP24-115: Edward Ellison Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives** this report.

MOTION CARRIED

9.4. Deep Lakes Technical Advisory Group update

[YouTube 2:18:00] The purpose of this paper is to provide and update to Council Committee on the formation and progress of the Otago Deep Water Lakes Technical Advisory Group and share the initial outputs from the Group. Tom Dyer, General Manager Science and Resilience, Hugo Borges, Senior Scientist – Lakes (online), Ben Mackay, Science Manager and Helen Trotter, Scientist - Water Quality, were present to respond to questions on the report. There was an addition to the recommendation.

Resolution ESP24-116: Edward Ellison Moved, Cr Forbes Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes** this report.
- 2. Requests** an updated report be prepared for the Committee for mid-2025.

MOTION CARRIED

9.5. Annual Surface Water Quality Report

[Youtube 2:35:45] This report provides an annual update of water quality and ecosystem health monitoring results from the State of the Environment surface water monitoring network, for the period July 2023 to June 2024. This annual reporting is required by the National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management. Tom Dyer, Ben Mackay and Helen Trotter were available to respond to questions on the report. Helen Trotter demonstrated to the committee the LAWA website and the data maps and ranges and further fact sheets, state trends. (Land and Water Aotearoa).

Resolution ESP24-117: Edward Ellison Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes** this report.

MOTION CARRIED

Cr McCall left the meeting at 11:52 am

Cr McCall returned to the meeting at 11:53 am

9.6. Estuary SOE update for summer 2023 - 24 monitoring season.

[YouTube 2:56:50] The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an annual update on the progress of the state of the environment estuary monitoring programme. The report outlines what monitoring has been completed over the summer monitoring season of 2023/24 and outlines the next steps in the monitoring programme, including the upcoming estuary programme review. Tom Dyer, General Manager Science & Resilience, Ben Mackay, Manager Science, and Sam Thomas, Senior Coastal Scientist, were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution ESP24-118: Edward Ellison Moved, Cr Malcolm Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. *Receives*** this report.
- 2. *Notes*** that the Estuary monitoring programme has been implemented according to the updated estuary monitoring programme plan in 2020 and now has obtained data for every estuary in Otago.
- 3. *Notes that next steps*** include an estuary monitoring programme review this financial year to ensure the programme is delivering maximum value and to start prioritising areas for investigations and targeted management/restoration where needed.
- 4. *Notes*** that an SOE report for the state of Otago's estuaries, pulling together current data will be presented to council before the end of FY in June 2025 after the final pieces of data are gathered this summer 2024/25 to inform this report.

MOTION CARRIED

Cr Noone left the meeting at 12:02 pm.

Cr Noone returned to the meeting at 12:03 pm.

Cr Weir left the meeting at 12:07 pm.

Cr Weir returned to the meeting at 12:11 pm.

Cr Wilson left the meeting at 12:12 pm.

Edward Ellison left the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Cr McCall chaired from 12:16PM

9.7. Blue carbon potential in the Otago Region

[YouTube 3:04:40] This report presented the findings of a recent study by Tidal Research and NIWA into blue carbon habitats within the Otago Region. Blue Carbon is carbon that is stored within marine habitats and ecosystems such as salt marshes, seagrass intertidal sandflats, soft sediment and kelp forests. The study provides information on the importance of the ecosystem services provided by blue carbon habitats and the potential for restoration opportunities throughout the Otago region around estuaries, both currently, and under potential future sea level rise scenarios. Ben Mackay, Manager Science and Sam Thomas Senior Coastal Scientist, were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution ESP24-119: Cr Forbes Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Committee:

- 1. *Receives*** this report.
- 2. *Notes*** the opportunity available in the Otago region for the potential to increase blue carbon storage, biodiversity and ecosystem services through restoring salt marsh.
- 3. *Notes*** that this report is to provide guidance about potential sites for restoration opportunities for landowners and catchment groups, as well as outlining the current benefits of salt marsh restoration and the potential for future credit opportunities.

MOTION CARRIED

Kelliher and Cr Malcolm voted against the recommendations.

9.8. Regional conservation status of selected fungal taxa in Otago

[YouTube 3:30:50] This paper documents the regional conservation status of selected fungal species (nonlichenised agarics, boletes and russuloid) in the Otago Region. Scott Jarvie, Scientist - Biodiversity, Ben Mackay, Manager Science and Tom Dyer, General Manager Science & Resilience, were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution ESP24-120: Cr McCall Moved, Cr Weir Seconded

That the Committee:

1. **Notes** this report.
2. **Notes** that the regional threat assessment for other species groups will continue as part of the terrestrial ecology work programme.

MOTION CARRIED

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

11. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Nil.

12. CLOSURE

There was no further business, Karen Coutts said a karakia and Chair McCall declared the meeting closed at 12:32 pm.



Chair

20 Feb 2025
Date