

**Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee
(*Rautaki me Mahere*) Meeting of the
Southland Regional Council, held in Regional House,
corner North Road and Price Street, Invercargill, on
Wednesday, 24 February 2021, at 9.00 am**



Present:	Cr D Stevens	(Deputy Chair)
	Chairman N Horrell	
	Cr A Baird	
	Cr L Esler	
	Cr Robert Guyton (via Zoom Digital)	
	Cr L Ludlow	
	Cr B Mager	
	Cr L McCallum	
	Cr P McDonald	
Also Present:	R McLeod	(Fiordland Marine Guardians) – Item 2
	A Ballantyne	(Fiordland Marine Guardians) – Item 2
	S Bull	(Fiordland Marine Guardians) – Item 2
	P Young	(Fiordland Marine Guardians) – Item 2
	J Excell	(Fiordland Marine Guardians) – Item 2
Staff Present:	R A Phillips	(Chief Executive)
	L Hicks	(Policy & Planning Manager)
	W Falconer	(GM Strategy, Planning and Engagement)
	B Rickertsen	(Digital Media Coordinator)
	K Harper	(PA - <i>minutes</i>)

1 Welcome (*Haere mai*)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting for February including the wider public via livestream.

2 Apologies (*Nga Pa Pouri*)

Resolved:

Moved Chairman Horrell, seconded Cr McCallum that an apology for absence be recorded on behalf of Cr E Roy.

Carried

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 Public Forum, Petitions and Deputations (*He Huinga tuku korero*)

There was no public forum, petitions or deputations presented at the meeting.

5 Confirmation of Minutes (*Whakau korero*) – 25 November 2020

Resolved:

Moved Cr McCallum, seconded Cr Ludlow that the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting, held on 25 November 2020, be taken as read and confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried

6 Notification of Extraordinary and Urgent Business (*He Panui Autaia hei Totoia Pakihi*)

6.1 Supplementary Reports

There were no supplementary reports tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

6.2 Other

There were no other items of business raised for inclusion in the agenda.

7 Questions (*Patai*)

There were no questions asked by the meeting.

8 Chairman and Councillors' Reports (*Nga Purongo-a-Tumuaki me nga Kaunihera*)

Neither the Chairman nor any Councillors presented a report to the meeting.

9 General Manager, Strategy, Planning & Engagement Report – 21/SP&E/13

⇒ Item 1 – Policy and Planning Division Work Programme including External Agency Reports

This item was prepared to allow the Policy and Planning Division work programme to be reviewed on a regular basis, and to receive reports and discussion papers from external agencies that may be of interest to Council.

Mrs Hicks reported that the Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan Topic B mediation was moving quickly with some discreet matters being resolved by direct negotiation with parties. The Court had provisionally confirmed the formal mediation timetable, which would commence the week of 29 March 2021. Mediation was expected to go on until the end of May and cover the remaining six sub-topics.

The first week of mediation would resolve any remaining Topic B7 issues, followed by Topic B1 (water takes) and Topic B2 (water quality and discharges). Mediation was to take place in Invercargill.

In answer to a question Mrs Hicks advised that currently no parties had completely dropped out however as appeal points narrowed, parties were able to remove their appeal points should they wish to do so.

Responding to a comment Mrs Hicks explained that the freshwater planning process was significantly different to the Schedule 1 process currently happening, with the intention of it being a faster process. The timeframe was expected to be two years from notification to completion.

Regarding Plan changes, the Policy and Planning team were developing the Plan Change approach, and were working closely with the People, Water and Land Programme team around Regional Forum work.

Coastal Plan provision drafting had commenced. Remaining policy and science work was underway and due to be completed mid-year.

The Regional Land Transport draft for consultation was approved by the Regional Transport Committee the week prior to this meeting. Notification was due on 5 March 2021.

In response to a question regarding the repealing of the Resource Management Act (RMA) Mrs Hicks explained there would be transitional provisions as Council transitioned to the new legislative framework. The Ministry for the Environment were currently working on these three new pieces of legislation and council could expect some early drafts in the next couple of months. Mr Phillips noted that careful thought needed to be given as to how Council transitioned. Mrs Hicks further noted that some element of the 'new' legislation including the need for regional and local plans to be more electronically accessible were requirements that already existed within the National Planning Standards framework. This meant that all Council's plans needed to be in a similar format in advance of the RMA reform requirements.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Baird, seconded Cr McDonald, that Council note the Policy and Planning Division Work Programme including External Agency Reports.

Carried

⇒ **Item 2 – Fiordland Marine Guardians**

This item had been prepared as background for Council to hear from representatives of the Fiordland Marine Guardians.

Ms McLeod and Ms Ballantyne provided a powerpoint presentation summarised below:

- The Fiordland Marine area is a special place not just for its physical beauty, also for the wildlife, marine life and the community of the area.
- Some years ago it was perceived that such a vast area as Fiordland seemed to have an endless supply of fish, with around 4,000 tonne of crayfish being harvested per annum in the 1950's, compared with around 1,000 tonne today.
- In the 1970's there was around 230 vessels fishing for crayfish, compared with around 70 vessels today.
- In the 1980's and 1990's it became apparent that this high take of fish stock was unsustainable and active measures were taken to reduce fish stock take at that time. By 1995 the Guardians of Fiordland Fisheries had been formed.
- The following years focused on information gathering and analysis, building relationships with parties who fished in Fiordland culminating in the passing of the Fiordland Marine Management Act in 2005.
- The management of the Fiordland Marine area is widely regarded as a leading example of an integrated management scheme in New Zealand and globally.
- Representatives from different stakeholder groups including Ngai Tahu, environmental, fishing and recreational interest groups, the tourism industry and the community had worked together since the inception of the Guardians of the Fiordland Fisheries, supported by agencies providing the action on the ground work.
- The Fiordland Marine Guardians encompassed a diverse range of skills and experience including scientists, skilled communicators and knowledge depth regarding the Resource Management Act.
- The vision established in the beginning remained just as relevant and central to the work of the Fiordland Marine Guardians – 'The quality of Fiordland's marine environment and fisheries, including the wider fishery experience, be maintained or improved for future generations to use and enjoy.' It was about more than just fisheries sustainability. It reflected the importance of biodiversity, biosecurity, access and the intrinsic values of Fiordland.
- A central theme was around kaitiakitanga. Parties with a real willingness to share knowledge and information were brought together which created a strong foundation for collaboration.
- The Fiordland Marine Guardians meet quarterly with agency representatives including the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, MfE and MPI.
- The Fiordland Marine Management Act (2005) was a piece of legislation developed to encompass measures put in place to preserve Fiordland. There was also a number of changes within existing legislation that went alongside the Fiordland Management Act, particularly Fisheries, to create a package of protection for Fiordland, and to define the role of the Fiordland Marine Guardians group.

Ms Ballantyne referenced a letter from Ms McLeod that had been sent previously to Chairman Horrell and circulated to Councillors, and highlighted the concerns below:

- There has been a significant influx of people entering Fiordland.
- There had been a significant increase in applications for consents for surface water activities in Fiordland. These amounted to up to 30% of all applications.
- There was limited scope to oppose any expansion under the current Plan or to effectively deal with the human effects of surface water activities. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement would be the most relevant currently. It stated that 'adverse effects on outstanding natural character are to be avoided.' It was felt that this statement may allow Council to take a precautionary approach in the meantime.

- The Fiordland Marine Guardians were not asking people and tourists to stop surface water activities however it was difficult to deal with the cumulative effects from these activities appropriately before the new Plan was in effect.
- Progressing the Coastal Plan and putting it in place would greatly benefit the Fiordland area.
- The Fiordland Marine Guardians asked that Council look at the limits on consent durations, (10-12 years) while recognising that the consenting process can be expensive for surface water activity consent holders.
- The Fiordland Marine Guardians felt that an independent monitoring report to ascertain what the perceptions were of natural character were in the Fiordland Marine area would be of help to inform Council in its decision making process.
- Compliance was becoming a bigger and bigger job. It had been a very busy summer for marine biosecurity compliance with a number of breaches of the pathways plan. This was an area that needed to be adequately resourced whilst acknowledging the challenges of this work in such a remote area.
- A concern noted was that the regulations currently in place to help stop marine pests from getting into Fiordland were not easy for operators to comply with. One of the main reasons was that the facilities in Bluff to remove and clean vessels were not fit for purpose.

Environment Southland, the Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and the Bluff Community Board were working together to develop a new haul out facility that could provide for small and medium sized vessels in Bluff. This was to be designed around the existing yacht club ramps, which would be strengthened to take larger vessels, and a safe working space established. Larger vessels currently used the syncrolift at SouthPort. The queue for this facility was very long as vessels needed to fit in with South Port's schedule. A new haul out facility would help vessel operators in complying with regulations.

There was potential for the geographical scope of the Fiordland Pathways Plan to be increased to include Rakiura. This would strengthen the Fiordland part of the plan by raising awareness around the need to comply with regulations therefore diminishing the risk of unwittingly carrying marine pests on vessels.

Ms McLeod thanked Council for their bold work in the biosecurity space in the Fiordland Marine area, particularly around *Undaria*, and for the support Environment Southland provided the Fiordland Marine Guardians.

After discussion it was mooted that a workshop be held in the near future to investigate the detail behind the points presented and raised at today's meeting. It was noted that Council would respond to the letter Chairman Horrell had received.

Resolved:

Moved Cr McCallum, seconded Chairman Horrell, that Council receive the presentation of the Fiordland Marine Guardians.

Carried

10 Extraordinary and Urgent Business (*Panui Autaia hei Totoia Pakihi*)

There were no items of extraordinary or urgent business considered by the meeting at this time.

11 Public Excluded Business (*He hui Pakihi e hara mo te iwi*)

There was no public excluded business included on the agenda.

Termination

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.09 am.