

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

11 June 2024

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [5]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Climate and Biodiversity Plan Update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of priorities and progress of the Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP).

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report.

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Date: 20 May 2024

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Date: 20 May 2024

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Date: 21 May 2024

Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. On 30 June 2022, our second generation Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP) was adopted by Council, along with an annual plan funding increase to support its year 1 delivery.
2. This report to the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee provides an update on delivery of the CBP for Quarter 4 of Year 2. Key highlights are presented under each of the plan’s six outcome areas (see Figure 1).
3. Out of our portfolio of actions, 59 actions are currently in progress, and 9 actions are marked complete. This represents 85% of the portfolio of work either underway or complete by end of Year 2.



Figure 1. Climate & Biodiversity Plan Structure

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

OUTCOME 1: QLDC DEMONSTRATES AMBITIOUS CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Action 1.1b: Council will join a certified carbon reduction programme

4. On 4 July 2023 the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) achieved Toitū carbonreduce certification for the base year FY2018-19 and FY2019-20. Recertification was received on 22 March 2024 based on verification of data from FY2020-21 and FY2021-22. Our most recent audit of the emission for FY2022-23 was completed in February 2024 and recertification is expected before the end of the financial year.

5. To maintain carbonreduce certification, QLDC needs to demonstrate progress towards its organisational Emissions Reduction Plan. The key areas of emissions reduction investment that are being investigated as part of the draft Long Term Plan 2024 – 2034 are the conversion of the swimming pools LPG boilers (Action 1.16), continued transition to EV fleet, efficiency investments for buildings and equipment and wastewater treatment upgrades. Given the financial challenge being faced by the organisations, funding for aspects of these may be addressed as key questions for the community through the consultation document.

Action 1.15a: Climate Action Team being a key partner in the development of the next 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy

6. The draft 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy is currently being finalised as part of Council’s Long Term Plan 2024-2034.
7. The draft strategy has involved input from the Resilience and Climate Action Team to help respond to the significant decision areas associated with natural hazard risk and the effects of climate change, and the need to reduce infrastructure’s impact on the environment.
8. Preparing the district for natural disasters and a changing climate (shocks and stressors) is identified as a key priority for Council. The extent to which resilience is built into infrastructure networks and services will be a key determinant of the type and level of investment required over the next 30 years. The physical resilience of infrastructure assets will also influence the level of individual and community preparedness required for shocks and stressors.
9. The draft 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy will be available for public consultation at the same time as the draft Long Term Plan 2024-2034.

Action 1.18: Deliver the actions of the QLDC Organisational Travel Plan: Employee commuting survey

10. In April, an Employee Commuting Survey was undertaken to track implementation of the Workplace Travel Plan, estimate organisational greenhouse (GHG) emissions associated with employee commuting and working from home activities, and as an opportunity to engage with employees regarding the benefits of active travel, public transport and carpooling. QLDC engaged Abley and their [CarbonWise](#) tool to collect the data, which showed a decrease in GHG emissions per employee from 0.93 tCO₂e to 0.89 tCO₂e since the previous survey undertaken in 2022.
11. Results show that 15% of employees regularly use active travel, 15% use public transport and 19% use carpooling to commute to work. The information will be used to update the Workplace Travel Plan, and implement measures to assist employees in selecting low-emission alternative modes of transport to work.

Action 1.22: New QLDC Climate & Biodiversity website

12. The new Climate Action and Biodiversity website was launched in March 2024. It includes quarterly updates on the progress of all actions within the CBP, celebrates stories from across the

district, shares new research and information, and profiles our partnerships with Kāi Tahu, local climate-oriented organisations, and the independent Climate Reference Group.

Figure 2. Action updates

13. Please go to <http://climateaction.qldc.govt.nz> to access the new website. Subscription to our regular newsletter is available at the bottom of the [Latest Updates](#) tab.

Figure 3. Latest updates page with a selection of articles available in our newsletter.

OUTCOME 2: OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM IS LOW-EMISSION AND BETTER CONNECTED

Action 2.1.a Collaborate with Otago Regional Council and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency to plan and implement a local public transport system that is frequent, affordable, and meets the needs of local communities.

14. In recent months QLDC has undertaken a significant level of advocacy with regards to regional and national consultation over public transport services and transport infrastructure investment. These have included:

- a. On 2 April QLDC submitted to the [Ministry of Transport on the draft GPS Land Transport 2024-2034](#) consultation. This submission was endorsed by the Climate Reference Group and noted a number of concerns relating to the reduced focus on emissions reduction and the need to better recognise the unique needs and challenges of the Queenstown Lakes district.
- b. On 19 April, QLDC submitted to the mid-term review of the [Regional Land Transport Plans 2021-2031](#). The submission supported the emphasis that was placed on climate response and emissions reduction in the RLTP.
- c. On 3 May, QLDC made a submission on [Otago Regional Council's draft Long Term Plan 2024-2034](#). This included a focus on the need to adequately fund major improvements in the provision of public transport across the district. This submission was supported and elaborated upon by the [Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board submission](#).

Action 2.2 Increase investment in active travel networks and infrastructure, including improved access to public transport hubs, schools and other popular destinations across the district.

15. Stage 3 of the Wānaka Schools to Pool active travel route has been completed, with the final stage from Hedditch Street, crossing State Highway 84 and continuing along Ballantyne Road to Golf Course Road has commenced. Once completed, the pathway will connect Wānaka's town centre and Three Parks facilities.
16. Wakatipu Active Travel Stage 2 Gorge Road (C5) commuter route from McChesney Bridge in Arthur's Point into Queenstown is nearing completion. The rural trail along Gorge Road has been upgraded and linked to the Matukauri wetlands trail which has had surfacing and drainage works.
17. The new Wharehuanui Trail that links Arthurs Point to Millbrook is also nearing completion, with work on the Shotover Gorge Trail underway.

OUTCOME 3: OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS LOW-EMISSION AND RESILIENT

Action 3.2: Review the Energy Chapter of the District Plan to remove barriers to small scale and community scale renewable energy solutions

18. Council recently produced a [Solar Panel Factsheet](#) on its [Practice Notes and Guidance](#) page to help people understand the rules of the District Plan for installing solar panels (Figure 4).

OUTCOME 4: OUR COMMUNITIES ARE LOW-EMISSION AND CLIMATE RESILIENT

Action 4.4: Continue the development of a Community Response Group network across the district

22. QLDC has collaborated with Emergency Management Otago and Central Lakes Trust to purchase approximately \$40,000 of emergency equipment for Community Response Groups across the district. Included within the cache of equipment were generators, solar eco-flow batteries, lighting equipment, heaters, whiteboards, first-aid kits and large gear boxes. This equipment will add to the VHF radio equipment that was purchased in the last financial year.
23. This equipment was presented to representatives of the Community Response Groups during an evening event in April, in which updates on the Cyclone Gabrielle findings, VHF radio exercises, and presentations from the EOC Welfare team and the local Red Cross team were provided.



Figure 5: Community Response Group Evening

Action 4.6c: Support our communities to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change- Glenorchy

24. QLDC continues to work closely with Otago Regional Council's (ORC) Natural Hazards team in the delivery of the Head of the Lake Natural Hazards programme.
25. There are three significant technical studies which have been recently completed or are nearing completion. These include:
- [Socio-economic impact assessment \(BECA\)](#)
 - Natural hazard risk assessment (BECA)
 - Flood protection and nature-based solutions feasibility assessment (Damwatch).
26. As a programme partner QLDC has been invited to contribute to technical input into the studies and provide feedback on the draft reports.
27. The natural hazard risk assessment and flood protection feasibility assessment are still undergoing technical development but will be available for review in the coming weeks.

28. In response to community feedback obtained through multiple engagement sessions, the ORC has changed the sequence of its community engagement plan and is proposing to deliver the completed Adaptation Strategy by November 2024, rather than by June 2024. A draft of the strategy document is likely to be available for community/public consideration and feedback in August 2024.
29. Throughout July QLDC staff will have an opportunity to provide technical input into the draft strategy.

Action 4.7/Action 4.8: Launch a Queenstown Lakes Food Network that brings together community stakeholders to develop a shared vision of a resilient, low carbon and regenerative local food system.

30. QLDC has partnered with WAO to launch phase 2 of the Queenstown Lakes Food Resilience Project. This will involve workshops in Wānaka and Arrowtown in May. The key objectives of the workshop will be to develop a model and initial membership structure for a Food Resilience Network (FRN), developing a Food Systems Roadmap, gathering ideas of funding models, developing business cases for key initiatives to match with potential funding streams, and the development of ideas for a public awareness campaign on events, talks and media campaigns in the district.
31. The project will also develop a Food Resilience charter to guide support for our community in the event of a natural disaster or other disruption to our local food network.

OUTCOME 5: LOW EMISSION BUSINESSES THRIVE

Action 5.3: Develop a Diversification Plan that includes climate action as a key principle

32. The Queenstown Lakes Draft Economic Diversification Plan "New pathways to a thriving future" has been developed and was released for consultation in November/December. The goal for the plan is "*A resilient and sustainable economy offering a diverse range of career and income opportunities by 2050*", which intersects strongly with the goals of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
33. The QLDC Economic Futures team have been processing feedback from the consultation with the support of key stakeholders, including Climate Reference Group members.

Action 5.5: Develop a sustainability plan template with guidelines for event organisers.

34. The [Event Waste and Emissions Reduction Guide and Toolkit](#) is now available on QLDC's website and provides templates, checklists, top tips and supporting resources to help event organisers reduce their event's impacts.
35. QLDC also funded Sustainable Events workshops in Queenstown and Wānaka for event organisers, prior to the opening of the Council Events Funding round in April. The workshop was facilitated by Wao with presentations from Wastebusters and Environmental Accounting

Services, and focussed on minimising waste and greenhouse gas emissions from events held in the district.

OUTCOME 6: A FLOURISHING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Action 6.2/6.3: Partner with Kāi Tahu, and work with our community, Otago Regional Council and Central Government to create an integrated work programme to deliver climate, biodiversity and wider environmental outcomes throughout our district.

36. The strength of partnerships between Council, iwi, ORC, DOC and local conservation and biodiversity restoration groups has continuing to strengthen throughout the last quarter.
37. Council has renewed its commitment to the Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group with a staffing representation change, a motion of support for the new Chairperson (Jana Davis- Kāi Tahu Hokanui Rūnaka, Ōraka-Aparima) and recognition of two key manawhenua reports that have been delivered for the project: Cultural Values Statement (Aukaha) and Environmental Statement of Expectations (Teo Ao Marama/Kauati).
38. QLDC continues to support community and volunteer groups revegetation efforts through provision of plants, materials and in-kind support. Currently there are 33 groups in the Whakatipu Basin and 10 groups in the Upper Clutha Basin which have agreements in place to undertake planting and pest control on Council land.
39. The Whakatipu Wilding Control Group (WCG) which is supported by Council, recently announced that the Shotover Management Unit, which is approximately 67,000 hectares, was moving into a 'maintenance-only' phase after 16 years of consistent effort to remove wilding pines. More information is available via this [link](#).
40. QLDC is also supporting Te Kākano Aotearoa Trust which has 15 planting sites in the Upper Clutha, and the Whakatipu Reforestation Trust which has 5 keystone sites in the Whakatipu Basin. Te Kākano has just commenced it's 2024 planting season which will continue through to Spring.
41. The Whakatipu Reforestation Trust has also just completed its Autumn 2024 planting season.

Action 6.5: Integrate the protection, restoration and enhancement of blue-green networks and indigenous biodiversity corridors into stormwater management, infrastructure design and management of parks, reserves and open spaces.

42. Work on the Blue Green Network plan is continuing as part of the Spatial Plan and Climate & Biodiversity Plan programmes of work.
43. A number of key deliverables for the project are nearing completion including a Kāi Tahu values report. A wānanga was held on the 14 May to enable Council to discuss and learn how Kāi Tahu would like to see these values being integrated into the Blue Green Network Plan.
44. Finalisation of the Blue Green Network Plan is expected later this year to align with the Spatial Plan Gen 2.0.

Action 6.6a: Regenerate Coronet Forest as an exemplar of native biodiversity and a recreational hub.

45. Following completion of the early harvest of Coronet Forest in May 2023, a contract to “recloak” Coronet Forest with indigenous species was awarded to Te Tapu o Tāne and e3Scientific Limited in April 2024.
46. The first year of work will involve planning, pest control and site preparation, with native plantings expected to commence in March 2025.
47. This is a partnership project between QLDC, Mana Whenua, Te Tapu o Tāne and Citycare Property, with the expertise of e3Scientific. Te Tapu o Tāne Limited is an Iwi-owned and operated charitable company.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

48. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy because it is consistent with existing strategy and does not impact on the objectives set out in the Financial Strategy, Long Term Plan or Annual Plan. Although the Climate and Biodiversity plan is of high importance to the district and community, the matter is of low significance due to the fact that current progress is aligned with the goals and outcomes of the plan.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

49. The Council has partnered with rūnaka representatives in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-25 and undertakes regular engagement on its progress through the Climate Reference Group.
50. Opportunities for alignment and integration with Kāi Tahu’s Climate Change Strategy Te tāhū o te whāriki are regularly being discussed and explored.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

51. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK10012 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.
52. The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to implement additional controls for this risk. This shall be achieved through the implementation of the 70 actions with the Climate and Biodiversity Plan. These actions represent a broad risk control response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration.

53. The effectiveness of the implementation of these risk controls is supported through the advisory oversight of the Climate Reference Group and the governance of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

54. There are no variances to operational budgets or resource implications to consider at this time.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

55. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The Climate and Biodiversity Plan is aligned to the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050, particularly Zero Carbon Communities, Disaster-Defying Resilience and Deafening Dawn Chorus <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- Related policies, strategies and bylaws (including Management plans) include:
 - 2018-48 Infrastructure Strategy
 - 2018 Three Waters Asset Management Plan
 - 2018 Transportation Activity Management Plan
 - 2018 Waste Minimisation and Management Plan
- The QLDC Disability Policy was considered in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-Disability-Policy-May-2018.pdf>
- Further reference to Council policies can be found here: <http://www.qldc.govt.nz/policies>

56. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the above named.

57. This matter is included in the Long Term Plan

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive - pg. 5
- What's Changed?- pg. 19
- Taking Climate Action pg. 45
- Disaster Defying Resilience pg. 54
- Climate Action – pg. 166
- Risk, Resilience and Climate Action- pg. 167

58. This matter is also included in the Annual Plan

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive- pg. 4

Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities | Ka Ture Whaiwhakaaro me kā Takohaka Waeture

59. There are no legal considerations to take into account at this time.

60. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 as a reporting organisation.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

61. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan plays a central role in delivering upon this purpose through its focus on environmental stewardship, community resilience and intergenerational equity.

62. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
 - Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
 - Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.
-