

QLDC Council
28 April 2016

Report for Agenda Item: 7

Department: Corporate Services

Submission on the Otago Regional Council Draft Annual Plan 2016-17

Purpose

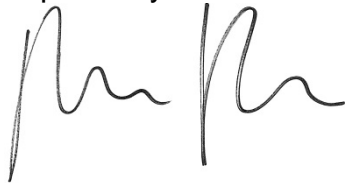
The purpose of this report is to note the Queenstown Lakes District Council submission on the Otago Regional Council Draft Annual Plan 2016-17.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report.
2. **Note** and endorse the Queenstown Lakes District submission on the Otago Regional Council Draft Annual Plan 2016-17.

Prepared by:



Meaghan Miller
GM Corporate Services

13/04/2016

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Mike Theelen
Chief Executive

13/04/2016

Background

- 1 Submissions on the Otago Regional Council Draft Annual Plan close on 6 May 2016. The Chief Executive was requested to prepare a submission responding to some of the key issues contained in the draft, namely transport, wilding conifers and civil defence and to raise one additional matter being funding of the lagarosiphon management plan for the Kawarau River.

Significance and Engagement

- 2 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Financial Implications

- 3 None

Council Policies, Strategies and Bylaws

- 4 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:
 - Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Strategy 2013-17.
 - QLDC 10 Year Plan 2015-25.
 - QLDC Annual Plan Consultation and Supporting Documents 2016-17.
 - QLDC Transport Strategy 2015.
- 5 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions

- 6 The recommended option:
 - Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.
 - Can be implemented through current funding under the 10-Year Plan and Annual Plan;
 - Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
 - Would not alter significantly 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.

Attachment: (Draft) Queenstown Lakes District Council submission on the Otago Regional Council Draft Annual Plan 2016-17.



xx April 2016

Stephen Woodhead
Chairman
Otago Regional Council
Freepost 497
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

Dear Stephen

Please find below the Queenstown Lakes District Council ('QLDC') submission on the Otago Regional Council ('ORC') Draft District Plan 2016/17. Please note that QLDC would like to speak to its submission.

Queenstown Lakes District Council Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to your 2016/17 Work Programme.

Transport

A Wakatipu Basin Network Review is underway to confirm the contribution public transport should make to the transport network. This work has been led by ORC supported by QLDC, NZTA, transport operators and other key stakeholders.

A strategic case for change was confirmed and a preferred public transport programme identified. Work continues to develop specific public transport work programmes and to ensure integrated transport solutions for the Wakatipu Basin.

QLDC would like to reinforce the importance of the ORC's continued commitment to public transport in the district and the need for the ORC to make provision for the work programme identified through the strategic case for change.

Wilding Conifers

In 2008 QLDC adopted The Conifer Strategy which recommended the establishment of the Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group (WCG). In February 2013 the Council further adopted the Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Strategy 2013-2017, which contained an eradication plan costing in excess of \$5 million.

This strategy is very much a partnership approach between both agencies and landowners. This community has made a significant long term contribution to this serious threat with a financial commitment which builds by \$100,000 annually. This year QLDC will contribute \$338,000, next year \$438,000 and then the figure will be capped at \$500,000 for subsequent years.

Although QLDC would like to commend the ORC for acknowledging this immense risk to the iconic environs of Central and Queenstown Lakes Districts we strongly maintain that this is a regional concern. By having the 'most affected districts' heavily subsidise (50 percent) of a targeted uniform rate, you are effectively targeting the same ratepayer twice.

While we support the introduction of rating for wilding conifers by the ORC, this must be in the form of a 'whole of region' rate. Notably, a recent report by Nick Ledgard for the Otago Wilding Tree Trust identifies the issue of Wilding Pines is not limited to Queenstown Central Lakes but affects all areas of the Otago Region to varying degrees. We therefore support Option 2, namely, a targeted uniform rate across the whole region, with an amended rate. We understand that the intention is to initially contribute \$50,000 to the control of wilding conifers in the Wakatipu Basin. We submit the contribution for Wakatipu alone should be \$100,000.

The additional funding of \$100,000 is required to target and remove seed sources or coning wilding trees that are causing on-going wilding issues on vulnerable land via the strategically planned control programme.

If the WCG does not receive the full amount requested it will have to look at the projects and reduce the area in which it plans to complete control work.

The outcome of not receiving the funding is that areas of seeding trees will not be cleared, the wilding trees will continue to spread seed further and the cost of control work will escalate. Wildings in the Wakatipu are at a point now where we can control and eradicate the seed source in some areas, but if left, the cost to control and eradicate becomes exponential.

Further to this, QLDC urges the ORC to consider a substantial increase to its financial commitment to eradicating wilding conifers through the review of its Otago Pest Management Plan next year (2017).

We recommend that the ORC work closely with the WCG in the preparation of the draft plan and anticipate a more meaningful financial commitment to this serious and destructive threat in the coming financial year.

Civil Defence

QLDC supports the review and development by the ORC of a Group Plan 2017-22. The provision of emergency welfare is a regional issue and it is logical to build this resource on behalf of the region.

We look forward to understanding the value and support that QLDC can anticipate from the provision of a dedicated regional welfare position in addition to the newly appointed CDEM Manager.

Lagarosiphon

As you will be aware NIWA is finalising a proposed Management Plan on behalf of Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) regarding the incursion of Lagarosiphon on just under 10ha of the upper reaches of the Kawarau River.

This Council is anticipating an equal partnership funding approach to the response between the ORC, QLDC and LINZ, which we understand to be a five year progressive containment plan to be undertaken by LINZ as the lead agency.

We therefore submit that the ORC create a 'placeholder' for the appropriate financial contribution in the 2016/17 Annual Plan. Note QLDC has allocated placeholders of \$30,000 in 2016/17 then \$20,000 and \$10,000 respectively for the following two years. This will be adjusted accordingly once the third share contribution has been finalised.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa van Uden

Mayor
Queenstown Lakes District Council