



SUBMISSION TO PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2019-20

From Environment Network Manawatu (ENM)

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Speaking to our submission

ENM would like to speak to our submission.
Our preferred timeslot is 9am - 11am Friday May 10.
Second preference is 12pm – 2pm Friday May 10.
We would like to speak either just before or just after Manawātū River Source to Sea, or close to that time, if possible.

Background

Environment Network Manawatu is a charitable umbrella organisation dedicated to enhancing the environment within the Manawatu River catchment area. We currently have 53 active member groups engaged in areas ranging from water quality and biodiversity to sustainable living.

ENM appreciates Council's support in the form of our current Fee for Service contract and the new 2019-22 Strategic Priority Grant. We also receive funding from Lottery Community, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Community Organisation Grants Scheme, PNCSC's Small Grants Fund and project funding from other sources.

ENM thanks the Council for the opportunity to make a submission on the Annual Plan 2019-20. A draft submission was circulated to our member groups and has been revised in response to member group feedback. Our submission is as follows:

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Management of Hancock Community House:

ENM supports the plan to fund the Palmerston North Community Services Council to carry out the day-to-day management of Hancock Community House as a budget item in the Annual Plan.

Manawatu River Shared Pathway Ashhurst to City

We note that the final work on the Ashhurst to Riverside Drive Shared Pathway along the Manawatu River (programme 1225) was carried forward to Year 2 of the Ten Year Plan and remains in the budget for 2019-20. We support this spending and very keen to see the pathway finally completed.

Nature Calls – deciding on the best practical option for the treatment of our waste water

ENM supports the approach Council has taken in consulting with the community early in the process. This is a matter of high interest to many of our members as well as to the wider community and communities downstream of Palmerston North. We are keen to continue working with Council to help “get the word out” and to facilitate opportunities for dialogue about options with the environmental and

wider community, within the limits of our own resourcing constraints (we have just 1.3 paid staff members). We are in particular keen to see more discussion around topics such as:

- reducing waste in water at source
- turning “waste” water into a resource

Mitigating climate change:

Many of the activities undertaken by the community sector contribute to a reduction of carbon emissions. For example planting trees for biodiversity/water quality purposes also creates a carbon sink; advocacy for measures to improve cycling infrastructure and safety ultimately reduces the burning of fossil fuels; teaching people how to grow their own food reduces food miles; reducing the amount of food waste going to landfill reduces methane emissions; education in permaculture principles helps communities to generally be more sustainable and resilient; the re-use economy (for example op-shops) reduces waste and emissions associated with production and transportation, and so on.

We need a lot more action at the individual and community level but we also urgently need bold action at the local and national government level (as well as the international level) if we are to avert the worst effects of climate change.

PNCC has committed to reducing the City's carbon emissions by 25% by 2028. ENM strongly supports PNCC's intention and commitment to reduce carbon emissions across the City.

We note that in the 10 Year Plan (under Goal 1) is the sub-goal “Palmerston North will stand out by transforming its economy to a low carbon economy, backed up by an action plan” (p16.) As this sort of action is required across the country we submit that by putting this goal into action PNCC has the opportunity to demonstrate real leadership within local government.

We note and are pleased that PNCC has been monitoring energy use over the last few years. We also note that the Council intends to develop the action plan in 2019-20 as a budget of \$82K has been assigned to “Low carbon roadmap development” (programme 1526)

We strongly support the development of an action plan and encourage the City to make this a very high priority in 2019-20. The latest IPCC Report released October 2018 warned that the world has just twelve years to try to limit global warming to 1.5C, to avoid catastrophic environmental breakdown.

We believe that planting permanent forest sinks is the most effective current means of capturing carbon. However with the latest Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment report out very recently, it is even more clear that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, not just plant trees to offset emissions. We believe that public and active transport improvements are one of the best ways to make a difference to emissions. Increasing the ease and safety of cycling is an important plank. Our diesel bus fleet needs a rethink, as buses are too often empty, but big and noisy and smelly. (We know this is Horizons' responsibility, but something PNCC can work with HRC on, as HRC develops its own climate change strategy).

We are concerned that PNCC's target of 25% reductions by 2028 may not be ambitious enough. According to the IPCC report CO2 emissions would need to be halved over the next decade to stay within the 1.5C mark.

We encourage PNCC to consider a target of 45% by 2028, 75% by 2038, 95% by 2048 i.e. 45, 30 and 20% reductions in each 10 year block. It is also important to strive for more than a 25% cut as the first reductions will be the easiest. It'll get harder later on as we cut it further so might take a longer time to achieve each successive 25%. And if that is the case then we certainly won't play our part in the national goal of being close to carbon neutral by 2050.

So reducing carbon emissions is an urgent matter across all of Council's business and for all sectors of the community. Achieving meaningful reductions requires both strong leadership within the council and effective engagement and action right across the wider community.

We therefore strongly recommend that the council takes the following approach:

1. That an appropriately qualified member of the council's senior leadership team takes overall responsibility for achieving environmental sustainability gains across all of the Council, and this

person's responsibility includes overseeing the process of developing and implementing the emissions reduction Action Plan (the Low carbon roadmap.)

2. That Council employs/co-opts or promotes a person or persons with a high level of knowledge about climate change and its mitigation to assist with the process of developing the Low carbon roadmap.

3. That Council invites and supports the wider community to participate in the development of this action plan. As evidenced in the latest Colmar Brunton 10 Year Report and the School Strike for the Climate, and other actions taken to draw attention to the seriousness of the climate change issue, there is a growing concern within the community about climate change and the impact it will have on current and future generations. Many of us want (actually need) the opportunity to participate in solutions as citizens. And the City cannot reach its target without changes being made across the community.

It is therefore important that all sectors of the community are represented – this could include schools, tertiary educational institutions, youth in general, health, aged care, business generally, the community sector (social, arts, environmental and sport), both urban and rural. It is important that the process is not rushed and involves extensive pre-consultation phases as well as a more formal consultation to finalise. One option would be to create a panel that would include representatives from across society as well as experts in the field of climate change mitigation.

We request that Council provides information and data on climate change and carbon reduction on its website to enable members of the community to see what actions Council is already doing in this space, what the numbers are and how they are tracking over time.

Further budgetary considerations:

In light of the above points we question whether the \$82K budgeted is enough to enable the inclusive consultation process that is necessary to develop an action plan that is grounded in an understanding of the challenges and opportunities to reduce emissions across the community.

We also suggest that Council increases its operational budget to enable it to bring the necessary expertise in sustainability generally, and in climate change and its mitigation to the leadership team.

Looking beyond 2019-20 there will also need to be sufficient budget for ongoing implementation of the plan (including further community engagement, monitoring and updates.)

We would like to add that there are many potential emission reducing initiatives that are cost-neutral. For example Council could consider follow Marlborough's example on solar roofs whereby ratepayers have the option of adding the installation costs of solar panels, by an approved provider, to their rates bill. This comes at no cost to Council, but delivers community benefits.

Adaption to Climate Change

Planning for adaptation is of course also required. We recommend that a climate change adaptation plan is completed before and strongly reflected in the next LTP 2021-24