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Report to the Environment Committee
from Dr Jane Bradbury, Divisional Manager

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Environment Division and about any matters which have arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' Reports

The Department Managers' reports and the Divisional Accountant's reports are attached.

3. RMA Amendments

Much of the Division's managers' time has been devoted to responding to the Minister for the Environment's proposed amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991.

The Minister's *discussion* with Council raised some useful points. Staff who are working with the Act on a daily basis still disagree with some of the Minister's arguments. A lot of thought was put into our response and I beg to point out that Council did not receive bad advice – just advice that differed from the Minister's point of view!

We shall now spend some time thinking through some of the issues further, particularly the duplication between territorial authorities and regional councils.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those Councillors who have taken an active interest in this issue and put pen to paper in order to get our views known publicly.

4. **Divisional Strategy and Direction**

It seems that no sooner have we finished writing this, it is time to start another. We have been working hard to find ways of improving how we do things and seem to be making progress. In particular, we are developing a programme to address the question of staff development in the Division. This has been an issue for quite some time and I would like to think that our programme will give staff the opportunities they are seeking. I certainly see benefits for both staff and the Council.

In the last Divisional Strategy we identified priorities for the forthcoming year. Although it seems rather back to front, now that we have finished the Operating Plans, we can finalise these priorities. I am keen to do this as I feel there is some danger that we may focus too much on outputs and not on *how* we are doing things in the Division.

5. **Resource Consents**

I congratulate the Consents Management Department for getting their turnaround time for non-notified consents down to six days. The Manager, Rob Forlong, tells me that he has been lately signing off consents with a 2-3 day turnaround. Of course, timeframes are usually dependant on workload, but I hope that we can keep offering this fast service to our customers.

6. **Recommendation**

That the reports from the Divisional Manager, the Departmental Managers and the Divisional Accountant be received.

Report prepared by:

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