

Te maruaroa o te mātahi o te tau, te pūtanga mai o te hinu

The time of year when food is plentiful “when all elements are working together well, there is generous bounty”

INTRODUCTION

This document is one of four focus areas developed as part of a broader *My Masterton: Our People, Our Land/He Hiringa Tangata, He Hiringa Whenua Strategy*. This focus area provides a framework for our priorities that contribute toward improving the environmental wellbeing of the Masterton district.

Our view is that our environment is critical for all other areas of development. We rely on the environment for clean air, water and for the food we grow. It supports industries and our economy, and can provide opportunities for social connection. The environment also contributes to cultural development through better understanding of Iwi values/kaupapa, the preservation of our natural heritage and through our national icons like the kiwi, silver fern, koru. The environment also provides significant economic benefits through the ecosystem and natural capital.

Our aspiration is for Masterton/Whakaoriori to be a leader in environmental development, with Council, Iwi, stakeholders and our community working together as kaitiaki/stewards to preserve and enhance our natural environment and to create a better future for our people.

BACKGROUND

MDC STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Masterton District Council/Te Kaunihera ā-rohe o Whakaoriori (MDC) made a commitment in its *2015-25 Long-Term Plan (LTP)* to achieving a *Sustainable Healthy Environment* for our people. The priorities we identified through that process included caring for and protecting our environment, and increasing community resilience. More recently the Mayor, with Council support, signed the Mayoral Declaration for Climate Change, committing MDC to taking action in this area.

IWI STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Kahungunu ki Wairarapa *He Mahere Whakaneke Whakanuku Strategic Plan 2015-2019* identified environmental protection as a major goal. Key strategies KKW have identified for achieving this are:

- the protection and management of culturally significant sites
- engaging in key decision making forums
- providing opportunities for whānau to learn about environmental protection and conservation.

Rangitāne o Wairarapa have identified the following environmental priorities:

- wāhi tapu (sites of significance) and water, in particular reducing pollution and discharge to waterways which have spiritual significance to Iwi, and
- exploring irrigation options to alleviate pressure on our water resources.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

Local government operates in a highly regulated environment and is guided by a range of national legislative and policy frameworks that require consideration of, or action to support our environment, for example the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), Climate Change Response Act 2002 (CCRA) and Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA). There are also a range of environmental standards that we must achieve, and strategies that consider environmental matters from a national viewpoint. For example, the Biodiversity Strategy focuses on restoring New Zealand's native biodiversity.

At a more local level, the *Regional Policy Statement (RPS)* for the Wellington region provides a framework for sustainable development in our region; and the *Proposed Natural Resources Plan* is a key document being consulted on at present. This Plan proposes more stringent natural resource management practices that will require change. If it is adopted, MDC, and subsequently our community, will need to invest to ensure compliance.

Meanwhile, the international community has agreed on a series of important long-term sustainability goals via the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. For New Zealand, key challenges identified by the United Nations (2016) included Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change, Marine Resources, Forests and Land Use, and Partnership Work for Goals.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS

Planning for environmental sustainability and development requires consideration of future change. There is a level of uncertainty about what the future holds and what environmental impacts and climate change “really mean”, but what we do know is that currently:

On a global scale:

- We are using resources faster than these can be reproduced, polluting and putting stress on our environment in the process and generating waste that needs to be managed. Ultimately this will have a negative impact on our environment and lead to a shortage of resources such as oil, water and land.
- Temperatures are increasing and our climate is changing. The use of fossil fuels contributes to this. The consequences of climate change include more variable and extreme weather; melting ice caps and glaciers, sea level rises; more droughts and floods; new and different pests and diseases; and impacts on food production and water availability.

On a local scale:

- We have challenges with air quality in our urban area over winter months.
- Our water quality is generally assessed as “good” or “very good” (8 out of 9 monitored sites in 2015/16), but we know our community have higher aspirations and want this to be even better.
- We are managing demand for water, but climate change implications and more restrictive consent conditions in future could challenge this.
- Waste received for transfer to landfill has remained relatively static over the past seven years, but recycling out has been increasing.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Submissions on our long-term and annual plans, our annual satisfaction survey and other targeted surveys all provide insight into the areas of concern and/or priority for Masterton residents.

- A survey undertaken in November 2014 to inform our LTP attracted responses from 345 people who indicated their priorities across a range of planned and proposed projects. There was a strong directive from our community that environmental development is a key priority.
- A survey of Wairarapa stakeholders and the community in October 2015 identified environmental priorities as stakeholder engagement, legal compliance (resource consents), climate change including energy conservation, biodiversity, solid waste, water quality and air quality.
- In 2017 MDC's annual Communitrak survey showed a drop in the level of satisfaction with preservation of the natural environment compared to the previous year. Reasons for dissatisfaction included pollution of rivers/streams and concerns about run-off from farms, sewerage, perceptions of room for improvement and that MDC could do more, and opposition to proposed dam/irrigation plans.
- The survey was replicated online to enable wider participation. In the online survey "Preservation of the natural environment" had the highest level of dissatisfaction (45%) across all MDC services.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION

MDC has a range of current initiatives and projects that have environmental sustainability at their heart, including:

- Water conservation efforts over summer and pipe improvements to reduce water leakage;
- Plans to reduce treated effluent discharge to water even further over time;
- Waste management and recycling services;
- Supporting environmental education – for example, funding for Enviroschools and membership of the Sustainable Living Trust which enables our community to access information on sustainability;
- Committing to the CEMARS scheme to better understand and then reduce our carbon footprint;
- Developing an energy efficiency plan and choosing energy efficient/low carbon options where we can e.g. changing to LED street lights and exploring electric vehicles;
- Air quality bylaws and information;
- Providing cycling networks and footpaths, which also support cleaner transport; and
- Providing, maintaining and protecting parks, reserves and green spaces.

There are also a range of strategies, plans, policies and bylaws to support environmental protection including the *Wairarapa Combined District Plan*; *draft Wairarapa Sustainability Strategy*; *Wairarapa Biodiversity Strategy*; *Air Quality Action Plan*; *Wellington Region Waste Management and Minimisation Plan*; *Water Demand Management Plan* and *Reserve Management Plans*.

Supporting, driving and challenging MDC to do better, and to do more, is a committed community. We are lucky to have passionate individuals and active community groups who want to ensure that we do our best to achieve our environmental outcomes. Groups like Sustainable Wairarapa are made up of committed volunteers who want to make a difference.

"The spontaneous and ardent work of community groups and initiatives suggest strong support for sustainability"¹

¹ Masterton District Council (2015) *Wairarapa Draft Sustainability Strategic Plan*

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political will to act• Iwi values, commitment and leadership• Community interest and support• A sound base of actions and projects to build on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate change - uncertainty regarding timelines and potential implications• Understanding our carbon footprint and local impact on climate change• Global influences beyond our control• Affordability for community and for Council• Resourcing to take action and implement strategies/ plans• Managing community expectations – those that want to do more sooner vs cost of and capacity to act

Masterton has lower incomes than the New Zealand average and the urban area, where the vast majority of our people live, is more deprived than most New Zealand neighbourhoods. A key challenge for MDC will be managing our resources to achieve desired environmental outcomes whilst minimising the rates impact. There will also be challenging decisions to be made in balancing the desire for economic development against environmental outcomes as tensions between economic growth and green values come to play. The current policies, plans and actions of MDC, Iwi and others in our community however, provide a strong foundation for Masterton/Whakaoriori to move forward and to explore new opportunities too.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

MDC want to build on the positive actions that are occurring in our community to achieve our vision for environmental development. We want Masterton/Whakaoriori to be a leader in environmental sustainability and to create a better future for our people. Our vision is that:

Masterton/Whakaoriori has rivers we can swim in and drink from, clean air to breathe, and green (and blue) spaces that we can enjoy and share with future generations.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

The table below sets out how we're going to achieve our overall vision for environmental development.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT VISION	
Masterton/Whakaoriori has rivers we can swim in and drink from, clean air to breathe, and green (and blue) spaces that we can enjoy and share with future generations.	
OUR PRIORITIES	OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
Clean Air and Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving air quality • Improving water quality • Managing water demand
Protecting our Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using land sustainably • Protecting our natural heritage and wāhi tapu sites • Supporting biodiversity
Climate Change Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing our impact on climate change (Mitigation) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving Energy Efficiency/Conservation - Minimising waste - Enabling and promoting cleaner transport - Working towards a more circular vs linear economy - Working towards low carbon economy/achieving government target of 50% reduction in New Zealand greenhouse gases emissions from 1990 levels by 2050. • Preparing for future changes (Adaptation) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning ahead to build resilience - Keeping informed and sharing information - Being open to economic opportunities generated by 'a low carbon economy'
Creating a Culture of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading by example • Informing our community • Enabling our community to act by minimising barriers to change
Working Together as Kaitiaki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership and/or collaboratively with Iwi and stakeholders • Supporting community-led initiatives

PRIORITY 1: CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Air and water are essential for human life, and contribute to our food supply and the production of raw materials. We need to ensure that our people have access to clean air and water.

We have three strategic directions that support this priority:

- Improving air quality
- Managing water demand
- Improving water quality

1.1 Improving Air Quality

Air quality is fundamental to health and wellbeing. Particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emissions can have a negative impact on health and contribute to premature death. Fine particles from domestic wood burners are a particular concern and health risk.

Air quality has been a challenge for Masterton, especially in winter. Over the three winters from 2013-2015 Masterton's urban area exceeded national air quality standards for PM10 particles (one measure of air quality) on 33 occasions. The national standard requires that the number of exceedances be reduced to no more than one per annum by 2020².

Whilst our geography is a factor, home heating is the key contributor with 89% of annual PM10 emissions, and 98% of winter PM10 emissions, in Masterton resulting from home heating. The balance is from industrial sources (3% annual/1% winter); outdoor burning (6% annual/0% winter) and traffic (2% annual/1% winter)³.

Wood burners are the primary source of heating for our people with approximately two thirds of Masterton households reporting using solid fuels for heating in winter⁴. The quality of wood that is used is a factor with damp or wet wood contributing to poorer air quality. The cost of dry wood and/or no storage space to keep wood dry have been identified as barriers to using better quality wood.

MDC has been working with Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) on air quality initiatives and participated in a Ministry for the Environment pilot to test the effects of different behaviour change approaches. We have also developed an Air Quality Management Plan that is to be implemented.

Potential Key Actions:

We need to take or continue action to:

- Review and implement the *Air Quality Management Plan*, including behaviour change opportunities
- Explore regulatory mechanisms to support reduced emissions from home heating, transport and industry.

1.2 Improving Water Quality

Fresh clean water is needed for drinking and growing food. Beaches, coastlines, rivers and streams provide recreational opportunities such as swimming, fishing, diving and surfing, contributing to our liveability and to tourism. Māori have a close relationship with water in all its forms, both spiritually and physically. Water is a taonga of huge importance to Iwi and enhancing the health and wellbeing of waterways is a priority for many Iwi⁵. Council recognise cultural sensitivity around this issue. Water is also essential for economic development.

A key concern for the people of Masterton is the protection and restoration of our waterways. Water pollution contributors can include urban and agricultural run-off, industrial activity, cross-contamination between stormwater and sewage, and discharges to water⁴.

GWRC monitor recreational water quality over summer months. Of the nine sites located within the Masterton district that were monitored in 2015/16, four were graded 'A' (very low risk of illness), four 'B' (low risk of illness) and one site a 'D' (caution). GWRC did note that last year's dry summer meant that water quality was particularly good and that people should still take precautions and not swim in our rivers for at least two days after heavy rainfall as this flushes contaminants into the water. We also need to consider the

² Greater Wellington Regional Council (2016) *Air Quality – Meeting the National Environment Standard for PM10*

³ Land Air Water Aotearoa (2017) *Air Quality Data*

⁴ Greater Wellington Regional Council (2016) *Our Environment at a Glance: Environmental Science Annual Summary Report*

⁵ Greater Wellington Regional Council (2010) *Wai Māori – Māori values in Water*

contribution of our waterways further down the valley. Lake Onoke, the ultimate receiving environment for most Wairarapa valley water, is in very poor health⁶.

Masterton's wastewater has been an area of focus for the Masterton community. Our community aspire to restoring the Ruamahunga River by eventually eliminating all discharges of waste water. Currently only treated wastewater is discharged under set conditions as per MDC's resource consent, which helps to minimise any environmental impact. MDC has a long term plan to continue to reduce the amount of treated wastewater that is discharged to water.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Progress plans to decrease wastewater discharge to water
- Support conservation efforts to improve our waterways e.g. stream restoration
- Improve water infiltration.

1.3 Managing Water Demand

Water shortages and drought can have huge impacts socially and economically, especially for agricultural and horticultural based economies.

In our urban area the water supply is more secure than in many other parts of the world but should still be considered a precious resource. MDC has a Water Demand Management Plan that encourages water conservation over the summer period and this has been successful to date. However, should future consent conditions reduce the amount of water that we can take, demand management may become more challenging in the future.

In rural areas of the district water shortages are a greater concern, especially over hot dry summers where drought can negatively impact our farming and horticultural communities. The Wairarapa Water Use project is exploring options to provide greater water security for our region and could increase water availability. We need to ensure that environmental aspects of that project are considered and managed too.

We need to continue to monitor water demand and implement appropriate demand management strategies. Future opportunities could include promoting rainwater harvesting and utilisation to mitigate water shortages and to secure water for emergency situations.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Monitor water demand and implement demand management strategies
- Improve water resource knowledge
- Promote rainwater harvesting and utilisation to mitigate water shortages and secure water for emergencies.

⁶ Greater Wellington Regional Council (2016) *Our Changing Climate Presentation*

PRIORITY 2: PROTECTING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE & BIODIVERSITY

Our natural heritage includes land, landscapes, geological features and natural character. Biodiversity includes all living species in a habitat and supports healthy ecosystems vital for wellbeing.

Our unique natural heritage and biodiversity contribute to our sense of place and our collective identity, or culture⁷. Our indigenous biodiversity inspires national icons like the kiwi, silver fern and koru that are part of 'who we are' as New Zealanders; and places like Castlepoint, Riversdale and the Tararua ranges are part of 'who we are' and inspire 'what we do' (visiting the beach, fishing, tramping etc.) as people from Masterton. These features of our landscape, sites of significance and our unique biodiversity also attract tourists, and in that sense contribute to our economy.

For tangata whenua the contribution to identity is even more significant given ancestral and spiritual connections with the natural environment. Māori traditionally introduce themselves in relation to their tribal boundaries and their tūrangawaewae (standing place) with reference to mountains, land and waterways⁸. Wāhi tapu (sites of significance), traditional practices such as rongoā (traditional Māori medicine) which uses native plants, are important aspects of Māori culture⁹.

Our natural heritage and biodiversity is affected by the impacts of human activity via habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation and pollution; and needs careful management to ensure that wider cultural and ecosystem values are recognised and protected.

We have three strategic directions that support this priority:

- Using land sustainably
- Protecting our natural heritage and wāhi tapu sites
- Supporting biodiversity

MDC protects the natural and physical resources of our district, and supports the sustainable management of these, via the *Wairarapa Combined District Plan (WCDP)*. The WCDP provides guidance to carefully manage development and protect natural areas, notable trees and sites of significance/wāhi tapu. MDC also has reserve management plans to protect and manage green spaces, and supports environmental restoration, for example through the *Wairarapa Biodiversity Strategy* and community-based dune restoration carried out with the Riversdale Beach Dune Management Committee. In addition, the Masterton district has numbers of QEII covenanted land sites and many private covenants that protect biodiversity¹⁰.

Another important consideration is the sustainable management of contaminated land. The Resource Management Act 1991 requires Councils to record contaminated sites within their districts. We currently have five contaminated sites listed in our District Plan¹¹. These sites need to be managed to avoid and/or mitigate potential effects on surrounding land, water or air resources.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Protect and restore our wāhi tapu sites, natural heritage and biodiversity through policies and tools like our District Plan and resource consent processes and appropriate regulation.
- Ensure that all significant landscapes, areas of indigenous biodiversity and wāhi tapu are identified and protected, managed appropriately and considered when making decisions about the district.

⁷ Auckland City Council (2012) *The Auckland Plan*

⁸ Waikato Regional Council <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Community/Your-community/iwi/A-Maori-Perspective-Te-Ao-Maori>

⁹ Auckland City Council (2012) *The Auckland Plan*

¹⁰ Refer Section 11 of the Wairarapa Combined District Plan

¹¹ Refer Section 30 of the Wairarapa Combined District Plan

- Explore opportunities to work with Iwi and our wider community to enhance biodiversity to complement and improve land use and lifestyles.
- Manage contaminated sites appropriately.
- Promote and encourage conservation initiatives.

PRIORITY 3: CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

“Climate change is the biggest environmental challenge we face and will affect everyone in the region”¹²

Work is continuing to better understand the nature and extent of future impacts of climate change. In the meantime this poses a challenge for MDC in ascertaining the nature and extent of responses. Given the level of uncertainty there is a need to plan for different scenarios and to be flexible in our approach. This adds a level of complexity that can make it harder for some members of our community to understand; and a lack of understanding along with changing/evolving information can cause some people to question the validity and/or need to change.

We do know that climate change will have a substantial impact on our environment and our people⁴. Implications of climate change include sea level rise, more floods and droughts, coastal erosion, biodiversity changes, increased fire risk, potential new pests and diseases, and impacts on water quality and availability¹³. The impacts of climate change are expected to increase in extent and magnitude over time¹⁴.

There is strong scientific consensus that greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from human activities, especially the use of fossil fuels, are the key cause of our changing climate¹⁵. New Zealand’s biggest GHG emission sectors are agriculture (46%), energy (42%), industrial processes (7%) and waste (5%). New Zealand has unique challenges compared to other western countries in that we have around half the emissions from energy and six times the emissions from agriculture⁹ with agriculture also being key to our economy.

We have two strategic directions that support this priority:

- Reducing our impact on climate change (Mitigation) by:
 - Improving Energy Efficiency/Conservation
 - Minimising waste
 - Enabling and promoting cleaner transport
 - Working towards a more circular vs linear economy
 - Working towards low carbon economy/achieving government target of 50% reduction in New Zealand greenhouse gases emissions from 1990 levels by 2050.
- Preparing for future changes (Adaptation) by:
 - Planning ahead to build resilience
 - Keeping informed and sharing information
 - Being open to economic opportunities generated by ‘a low carbon economy’

3.1 Reducing Our Impact on Climate Change (Mitigation)

3.1.1 Improving Energy Efficiency / Conservation

Energy consumption contributes to greenhouse gases (GHGs) and therefore climate change¹⁶. Analysis by GWRC in 2014 identified energy consumption as a key contributor to GHGs in our region, accounting for 88% of the Wairarapa stationary emissions.

¹² Greater Wellington Regional Council (2016) *Our Changing Climate Presentation*

¹³ LGNZ, *The 2050 Challenge: Future Proofing Our Communities*

¹⁴ Ministry for Environment (2016) *Climate Change Projections for the Wellington and Wairarapa Region*

¹⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2015) *The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

¹⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) *Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

Reducing our energy consumption would have environmental benefits and could also result in cost savings. A survey on energy efficiency was undertaken in October 2015 and almost 90% of respondents agreed Council should have an energy policy. Affordability can be a challenge however when up-front investments are required to install 'greener' and/or more energy efficient technology. For example, installing insulation or energy efficient heating options may not be affordable for all of our community.

Council have joined the Certified Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme (CEMARS) programme and an assessment will be completed in 2017. This will help to inform priority actions for energy efficiency and reducing our energy consumption.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Develop an action plan/policy to reduce our energy consumption based on information from our CEMARS assessment
- Continue to make our homes and businesses more energy efficient
- Encourage commercial and farming sectors to reduce their energy consumption
- Inform and enable our community to choose cleaner and greener options

3.1.2 Minimising Waste

The manufacture, distribution and use of goods and food, as well as managing the resulting waste, requires energy and contributes to GHG emissions¹⁷. Hazardous waste also contains toxins that can impact on our environment that need to be managed carefully. We need to manage waste via recycling (converting waste to something else), re-using (e.g. via second hand shops or for another purpose) and/or reducing production and consumption in the first place. By reducing the amount of waste generated, we can also reduce costs associated with waste management.

MDC recently reviewed the *Waste Management and Minimisation Plan* developed in conjunction with Councils in the Wellington region; provides recycling services and special waste facilities; education on waste management and has funding in the budget for a recovery centre.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Implement the revised *Waste Management and Minimisation Plan*
- Promote waste minimisation and encourage reducing, reuse and recycling in that order of priority.
- Analyse our waste streams to better understand our waste production and needs
- Ensure hazardous waste to managed and disposed of appropriately
- Keep informed of new developments and best practice in managing waste and explore how these options might work for Masterton.

3.1.3 Enabling & Promoting Cleaner Transport

While access to a vehicle enables many social and economic benefits, such as access to services, education, leisure and shopping, there is international recognition that diesel and petrol powered vehicles contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and are unsustainable in the long-term. GWRC's 2014 analysis identified road transport as another key contributor to Wairarapa GHG emissions. Transport emissions also impact on our air quality, as noted above. As we reach 'peak oil', petrol and diesel will also become less available/more

¹⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) *Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

expensive, which is another driver for change. We also need to be aware of the coming transition away from fossil fuel powered vehicles to electric powered vehicles. The UK and France, for example, plan to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2040.

MDC currently provides footpaths, cycling lanes and networks that support alternative transport such as cycling and walking. We continue to advocate for improved train services and have recently supported the installation of electric vehicle charging stations. We are also exploring electric vehicles for our council fleet.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Enable and support the promotion of alternative transport e.g. biking, walking and ridesharing.
- Advocate for better public transport links, *noting that in a rural provincial environment public transport will never offer a complete solution.*
- Choose, and encourage our community to choose, cleaner and greener fuel options.

3.2 Preparing for Future Changes (Adaptation)

Research suggests likely implications for the Masterton district include more frequent and heavy rain/ storm events with associated flooding, landslides and erosion issues; droughts in the summer and coastal events. These changes, and the flow on effects, would have a substantial impact on our district for development across the four well beings. While there is uncertainty regarding the exact timing and impacts of climate change, general scientific and economic consensus is that doing nothing will ultimately have a higher cost⁶.

MDC has signed the Mayoral Declaration for Climate Change and committed to reviewing the 2006 Wairarapa Communities for Climate Protection Plan. Provisions in the WCDP and MDC's Infrastructure and Asset Management Plans also consider climate change impacts.

We also need to understand the vulnerabilities of our community and our economy in relation to climate change and adapt or build resilience to cope with this change; and consider the opportunities that climate change might present for our region. For example, a changing climate may enable new crops to be grown or the expansion of existing crops, and a warmer climate may attract more tourists.

Given the information available, and our understanding of this, is evolving all the time, we need to plan for different scenarios, keep informed and be willing to adapt our thinking and responses as new information comes to light.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Understand what climate change means for our community and economy – both challenges and opportunities
- Build resilience to cope with this change and plan to adapt to climate change based on best knowledge

PRIORITY 4: CREATING A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Creating a culture of sustainability is core to achieving MDC's vision for the environment and for our community. We want sustainable practices to be 'the way we do things' at Council, and in the wider community.

We have three strategic directions that support this priority:

- Leading by example
- Informing our community
- Enabling our community to act by minimising barriers to change

MDC has a leadership role to play in promoting environmental sustainability as a central value. We need to ensure our staff and the wider community are informed and understand the drivers for change; and are encouraged and supported to respond.

This will involve all staff and all aspects of MDC business. We need to be considering environmental impacts in the management of MDC's infrastructure and assets and ensuring policies and plans support environmental sustainability. We also need to understand our organisation's carbon footprint (CEMARS) and use this information to inform actions to reduce our impact on the environment, and report on our progress with this.

Equally important is enabling action by minimising barriers to change. Cost can be a barrier as 'green' options can be more expensive or require a capital investment up front. Other actions can actually save money but people need to know about them.

Potential Key Actions

We need to take or continue action to:

- Promote environmental sustainability as a central value
- Consider environmental impacts in the management of MDC's infrastructure and assets
- Ensure policies and plans support environmental sustainability
- Understand our organisation's carbon footprint (CEMARS) and report on this
- Address barriers to action for our organisation and our community, e.g. the cost of greener options or a lack of information.

PRIORITY 5: WORKING TOGETHER AS KAITIAKI

MDC cannot achieve its vision for our environment alone - we need to work together as kaitiaki, or stewards, of our local environment. Holistic and collaborative efforts are needed if we want to succeed in realising a better future.

We have two strategic directions that support this priority:

- Working in partnership and/or collaboratively with Iwi and stakeholders
- Supporting community-led initiatives.

Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa are tangata whenua and provide leadership in terms of tikanga and kaitiakitanga in our District. MDC has made a commitment to working with Māori, and to working to better understand Māori cultural views, which align very much with concepts of sustainable development. Other stakeholders in our community also have particular environmental interests and/or are taking action to improve environmental outcomes for our community. By building relationships, sharing knowledge and resources, and working together, we will achieve better outcomes.

We need to take or continue action to:

- Explore opportunities to work in partnership and/or collaboratively with Iwi and stakeholders to progress our environmental priorities.
- Ensure the views and cultural values of tangata whenua/Iwi are included when we consider environmental actions.
- Support community-led initiatives across our environmental priorities.

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