

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

7 March 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 Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

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

Prepared by:



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Date: 14 February 2024

Prepared by:



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Reviewed and Authorised by:



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Title: General Manager Strategy and Policy

Date: 15 February 2024

Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. On 30 June 2022, Council’s second generation Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP) was adopted, 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 3 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, 57 actions are currently in progress, and 7 actions are marked complete.

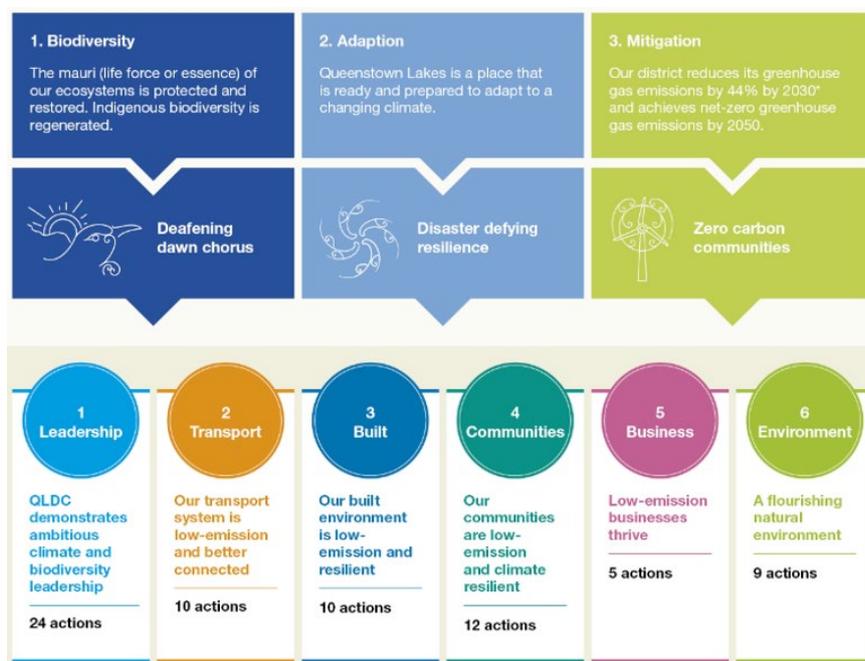


Figure 1. Climate & Biodiversity Plan Structure

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

OUTCOME 1: QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL (QLDC) DEMONSTRATES AMBITIOUS CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

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

4. Council completed an audit with Toitū Envirocare in January 2024 of its organisational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for FY2022-2023. This audit brings Council up to date for all GHG annual emissions from FY2018-2019 to FY2022-23.

5. Council officers are working with Toitū to issue the GHG inventory reports for FY2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022 audits that were completed last year.
6. In addition to the GHG inventory reports Council will seek recertification of its Toitū Envirocare’s carbonreduce certification. To maintain certification, Council needs to demonstrate progress towards its Emissions Reduction Plan which sets targets of a 44% reduction in organisational greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, against our 2019 baseline.

Action 1.22: New QLDC Climate & Biodiversity website

7. The new Climate & Biodiversity website is planned for launching in late February. The launch will be a key feature in Council’s next Scuttlebutt edition.
8. The website will be used to provide regularly updates on the progress of all actions within the CBP, celebrate stories from across the district, share new information and research and profile our partnership with Kāi Tahu, local climate-oriented organisation, and independent Climate Reference Group.
9. Please go to www.climateaction.qldc.govt.nz to access the new website.

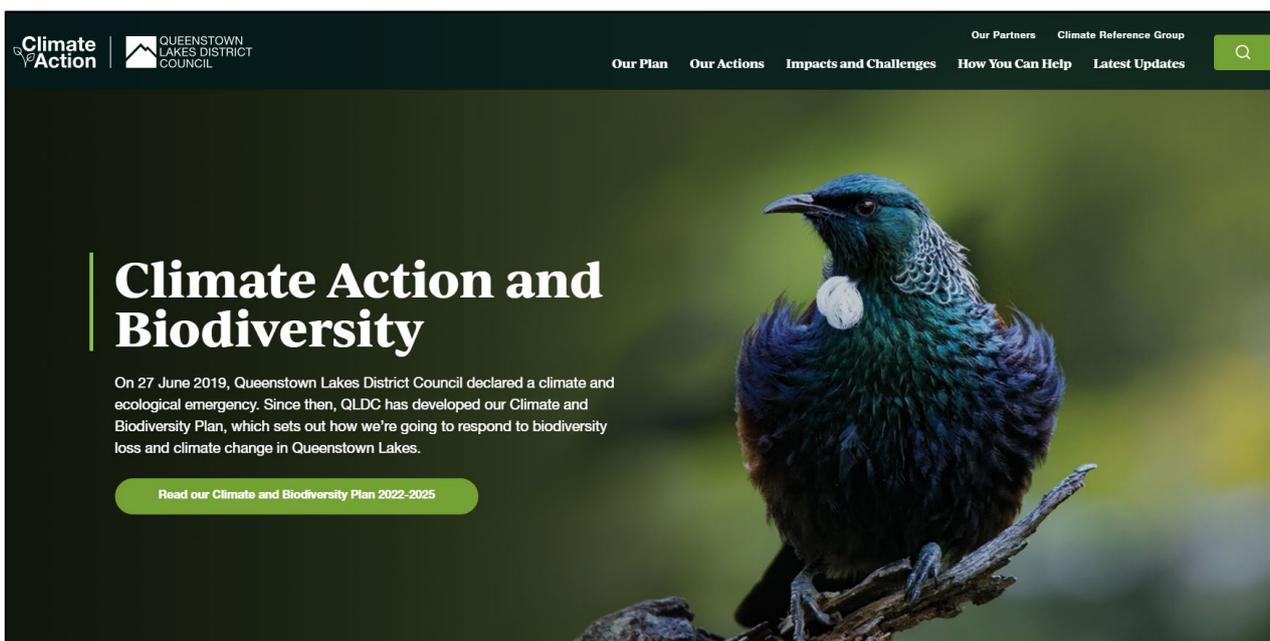


Figure 2: New website landing page

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

Action 2.7: Reduce car use and encourage uptake of other transport options through the ‘Traffic Demand Management’ initiative.

10. Council has worked closely with Way to Go (W2G) partners to develop a comprehensive Travel Demand Management (TDM) Programme and present a Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) to the Infrastructure Committee on 27 February 2024.
11. The SSBC outlines four focus areas and a series of activity bundles to help manage demand on the transportation network by making sure new and existing developments are designed to both reduce the need to travel, and make it easier for new residents, tenants, employees and visitors to adopt sustainable travel modes such as public transport, walking and cycling.

Action 2.8a: Partner with local organisations to promote active travel and public transport.

12. Council has partnered with The Lightfoot Initiative and Wao to promote the Aotearoa Bike Challenge for February 2024.
13. The programme includes both business and community engagement and activations, to promote using a bike for commuting around the district. This includes a targeted marketing campaign to local businesses, e-bike taster sessions, bike maintenance services, bike pitstops, pop-up bike mechanic services, sessions where children learn to ride and a marketing and promotional plan for the Challenge.
14. A programme of events is available at <https://lightfoot.org.nz/abc2024/>.

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

Action 3.3: Support energy demand management technologies, tools and behaviour change to decrease energy usage at peak times.

15. Council is partnering with Transpower, Aurora, Powernet and other industry stakeholders to investigate future demand projections for the district's electricity supply. A working group has been established to evaluate growth and decarbonisation scenarios which are likely to drive a considerable increase in future average and peak levels of electricity demand.
16. Council has also partnered with Rewiring Aotearoa which is a recently launched not-for-profit organisation that is focussed on supporting communities to switch from fossil fuels to renewable electricity. QLDC is providing funding to support household energy survey and data collection for the purposes of mapping out potential pathways for community level emissions reduction.

Action 3.4: Increase the promotion and availability of sustainable building design expertise and education products to the community.

17. Council has provided funding of the update of the Superhome Design Guide. The updated guide will provide ideas and best practice advice on what makes a sustainable 'Superhome' presented in a predominantly digital format with videos of building projects, technologies, techniques and interviews.

18. For more information please refer to the Superhome website <https://www.superhome.co.nz/>.

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

19. QLDC has collaborated with Emergency Management Otago to launch fifteen Community Response Groups across the district, with planning in place for 5 more.
20. A new webpage has been launched which contains updated information and resources about the Community Response Group (CRG) programme. These resources include the new Community Emergency Hub Guide as well as copies of community emergency flyers that have been developed to inform local communities about how to be prepared for emergencies and how to get connected with their local CRG's. [Community Response Groups | Queenstown Lakes District Council \(qldc.govt.nz\)](https://www.qldc.govt.nz/community-response-groups)
21. A co-funding agreement between Council and Central Lakes Trust has been confirmed to purchase a wide range of emergency equipment to kit out each Community Emergency Hub. This equipment will add to the VHF radio equipment that was purchased last financial year.
22. Training is being rolled out to each group and opportunities for sharing information and support between groups to build capability and encourage new membership are being continually investigated.

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

23. Council has launched a Wildfire Risk Reduction programme to support the mitigation planning for wildfire risk across Council reserves. There are several workstreams that are being coordinated to support a holistic approach to wildfire risk reduction.
24. In December 2024 a new Reserve Closure protocol and Activity Control Plan for managing risk of wildfires was launched. These new protocols were developed by fire risk experts and is based on the forecasted Fire Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research NIWA Fire Weather Indices and vegetation fuel Buildup Index. The closure protocols were enacted on 11-13 January for the Mt Iron reserve due to the extreme risk of fire.
25. In late January, the new Attentis environmental sensor network was installed around Mt Iron and along the front face of Ben Lomond Reserve in Queenstown. Each of these 5 sensor networks will monitor local weather conditions, air quality, and continually monitor the reserve vegetation for ignition or heat sources using thermal imaging and infrared cameras. If an ignition source is detected then alerts will be sent through the public app and to a dashboard that local FENZ team have access to.
26. The Attentis Network is currently undergoing acceptance testing and during this period the sensors and cameras were turned on to allow verification of the system and to calibrate what data was required to support the monitoring capability of the network. Regrettably during this testing phase images of private residences were captured which could be viewed through the

public app. Once notified Council took the network off-line to ensure that this data was no longer being captured. A privacy impact assessment is underway as well as work to configure the system so that only data relating to fire risk on reserve land will be monitored. Privacy considerations are a priority for Council and the final configuration will be verified through an acceptance plan prior to the official launch of the system.

OUTCOME 5: LOW EMISSION BUSINESSES THRIVE

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

27. The Queenstown Lakes Draft Economic Diversification Plan "New pathways to a thriving future" has been developed and was released for consultation in November/December.
28. 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 & Biodiversity Plan.
29. The QLDC Economic Futures team is now gathering feedback from the consultation and key stakeholders will be invited to endorse the plan once finalised. More information can be found here: <https://letstalk.qldc.govt.nz/draft-economic-diversification-plan-2023>

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

30. A guide to help event organisers reduce their waste and greenhouse gas emissions is currently being finalised to be available prior to the 2024 Event Funding Round.
31. QLDC is also funding Sustainable Events Workshops facilitated by Wao and Wastebusters, with speakers from events around the district that are leading the way.

OUTCOME 6: A FLOURISHING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Action 6.2: 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.

32. Council has funded an ecological research study through a project with Southern Lakes Sanctuary, Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust, and WAI Wānaka, to assess potential ecosystem and fauna attribute mapping and identification of potential invasive predator elimination sites within the district. The final report was made available in November, with the mapping tool launched in December on the QLDC spatial data hub (see Figure 1)
33. More information on the project can be found here: <https://www.scene.co.nz/queenstown-news/local-life/ground-breaking-report-released/>

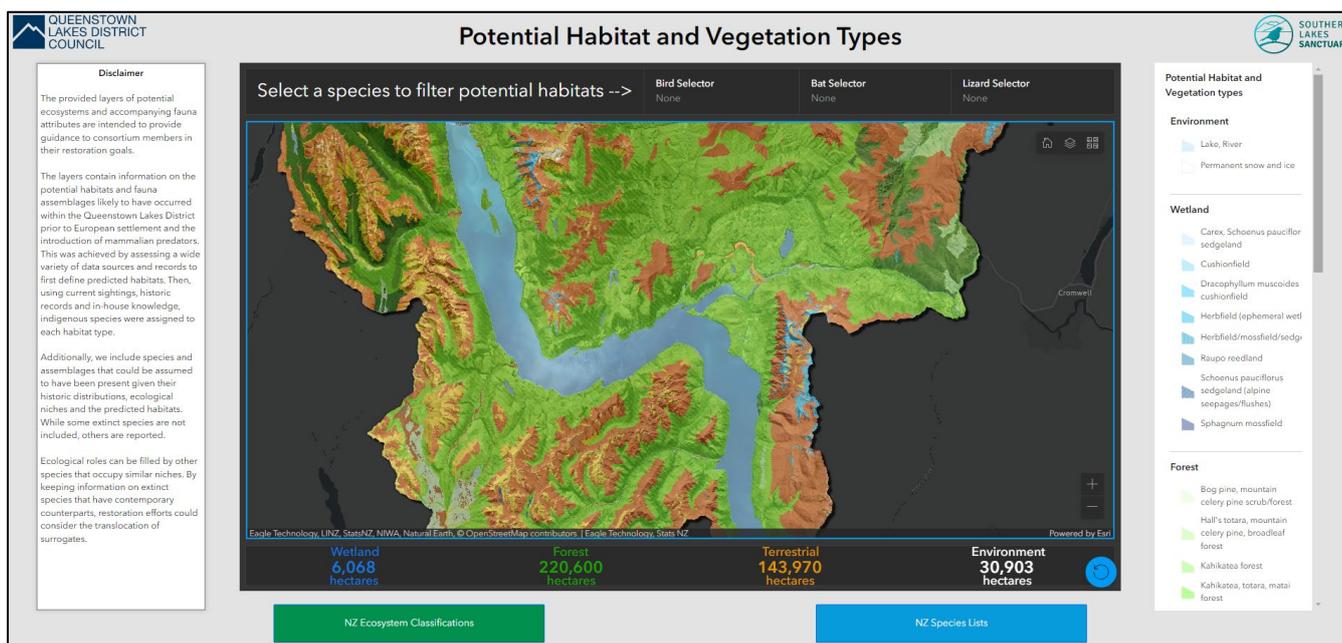


Figure 2: Potential Habitat & Vegetation Type Map

Action 6.6b: Develop and implement plans to protect, restore and enhance Council land that has high biodiversity potential

34. Following the acquisition of Mount Iron and Little Mount Iron by QLDC in May 2023, the community was asked to share their ideas to help develop a Reserve Management Plan for this site during October and November 2023, via workshops and an interactive map on the Let's Talk webpage.
35. This work is being led by the Parks & Open Spaces team and a summary of this engagement is available at <https://letstalk.qldc.govt.nz/87026/widgets/426187/documents/277080>

Actions 6.9: Invest in a Council Biodiversity fund to support innovative community and business projects that respond to biodiversity loss and restoration.

36. A review of the best model for providing funding support to local partner organisations in the climate action and biodiversity space is underway. The intent is to adopt a strategic partnership model rather than a contestable fund.
37. This will involve collaboration with other funding agencies to ensure that key funding decisions are strategically aligned to help build capacity and accelerate progress across the district.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

38. 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

39. 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.

40. 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

41. 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.

42. 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 & Biodiversity Plan. These actions represent a broad risk control response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration.

43. 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

44. 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

45. 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 & 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>

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

47. 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

48. This matter is also included in the Long Term Plan

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

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

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

50. 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

51. 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;

52. 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.
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