

Memorandum

07 September 2018

To:	Waiheke Local Board, Environment and Community Committee
CC:	Helgard Wagener – Relationship Manager, Janine Geddes – Senior Local Board Advisor, Mark Inglis – Local Board Advisor, Gael Ogilvie – General Manager Environmental Services, Shaun Sutton – Senior Councillor Support Advisor, Kareana Kee – Councillor Support Advisor
Subject:	Update on the Te Korowai o Waiheke project
From:	Brett Butland – Pest Free Auckland Programme Director

Purpose

1. To update the Waiheke Local Board and the Environment and Community Committee on the successful funding for Te Korowai o Waiheke, the project launch event and next steps.

Summary

- *Auckland Council is part of a \$10.9 million community-led initiative, known as Te Korowai o Waiheke, to eradicate mustelids and rats from Waiheke over seven years.*
- *The Waiheke Local Board and the Waiheke community have been working for several years towards predator free Waiheke aspirations.*
- *The Waiheke Collective was established to advance predator free goals as a community-led initiative.*
- *Successful funding negotiations with Predator Free 2050 Limited, Foundation North and the council have resulted in the Te Korowai o Waiheke project being viable.*
- *The Te Korowai o Waiheke project is also being enabled by funding from the new natural environment targeted rate alongside existing Auckland Council work programmes.*
- *The Te Korowai o Waiheke project will be launched on Sunday 16 September 2018 by Mayor Phil Goff and Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage.*
- *This project is an example of a partnership that has formed where the community, mana whenua, regional and central government have combined to achieve a shared outcome.*

Context/Background

2. The biodiversity of the Hauraki Gulf is distinctive in New Zealand. The Gulf is one of the richest endemic seabird breeding areas in the world, and its islands are internationally significant.
3. Waiheke is a priority location for the protection of Auckland populations of little blue penguins and native threatened lizards; including forest geckos, pacific geckos and Auckland green geckos.
4. Waiheke is a defendable island community in a strategic location. Waiheke is the second largest non-pest-free island in the Hauraki Gulf (44 out of 50 islands are already predator free). It forms part of a unique and important wildlife corridor for the region, and is only 17km by boat from Auckland. Eradication of mustelids and rats from the island would also benefit neighbouring predator-free islands, by reducing possible incursion of rats or mustelids, and positively contribute to the growing wildlife corridor between the islands and the mainland.
5. There are no possums or feral goats on Waiheke, and the mustelid population is low.

6. The Waiheke Local Board and the Waiheke community have been working for several years towards predator free Waiheke aspirations.
7. In September 2017, the Waiheke Collective was established to advance predator free goals as a community-led initiative. The Waiheke Collective is a collaboration between Waiheke community groups and key stakeholders, and is comprised of:
 - Waiheke Local Board
 - Ngāti Paoa
 - Department of Conservation
 - Royal Forest and Bird Society
 - Hauraki Gulf Conservation Trust
 - Waiheke Resources Trust
 - other Waiheke community-led conservation groups
 - Waiheke landowners
 - Auckland Council
8. In October 2017, an expression of interest for Crown funding was submitted to Predator Free 2050 Limited. The Waiheke Collective was invited to submit a detailed project proposal in December 2017.
9. In May 2018, a feasibility assessment was completed by the Department of Conservation's specialist Islands Eradication Advisory Group, followed by contract negotiations. The Waiheke Collective also established a project governance board that comprises mana whenua, the community and various skillsets.
10. The Waiheke Collective and the Waiheke Local Board have held several workshops over the last 12 months to progress the project.
11. The eradication of mustelids and rats from Waiheke is a project of significant complexity and scale. The Te Korowai o Waiheke project builds on the council's current work programme which currently receives regional and local board funding, and is delivered by Community Facilities, Community Services and Environmental Services.
12. The project will use ground-based methods over a highly populated and diverse landscape of 9,200 hectares. Waiheke is already possum-free, and one quarter of the island is part of a mustelid trap network. Also, more than 30 per cent of the island is controlling rats.
13. The project aims to start eradicating mustelids in 2019 and a rat eradication pilot programme covering 25 per cent of the island in 2020. After that, the rat eradication programme will be expanded island-wide, with the island expected to be free of mustelids and rats by 2025.
14. Once completed, eradication on Waiheke will be protected through the existing council-led biosecurity programmes detailed in the council's Regional Pest Management Plan.

Funding

15. On 4 September, successful funding negotiations with Predator Free 2050 Limited, Foundation North and others concluded and have resulted in the project being viable.
16. The project has a total budget of \$10.9 million which will enable the delivery of a seven-year programme on Waiheke.
17. Funding is being provided by Predator Free 2050 Limited, Foundation North and the council from the natural environment targeted rate. Other funds, activity and in-kind support is coming from community groups, existing Department of Conservation and Auckland Council programmes, and Waiheke landowners themselves. Key funding is as follows:
 - Auckland Council - \$2.85 million from the natural environment targeted rate
 - Predator Free 2050 Limited - \$2.6 million
 - Foundation North - \$875,000

Project launch event

18. Ngāti Paoa will host the launch event at Piritahi Marae on 16 September 2018, from 10.45am – 2pm. The event will include speeches from Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage, Mayor Phil Goff and predator free champion Sir Rob Fenwick.
19. The Waiheke Local Board and Environment and Community Committee members will be invited to the launch of the project.
20. The event is being led by the Waiheke community with support being provided by the council.

Financial implications

21. In addition to the funding from the new environmental targeted rate, the council's existing work programmes relevant to this project (valued at \$2.7million over the project term) has been included in the overall project cost. This includes, stoat and rat control work on local and regional parks, high value biodiversity sites and biosecurity risk sites.
22. Contributing business units are the Waiheke Local Board, Environmental Services, Community Facilities and Community Services.

Next steps/implementation

23. Staff will complete contractual agreements with the project governance entity, with key performance indicators, project milestones and reporting requirements shared with other funders.
24. The Waiheke Local Board will be closely involved with the project as it progresses. Updates will be provided to the Environment and Community Committee as part of the natural environment targeted rate reporting.
25. If you have any queries, please contact Brett Butland at brett.butland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz