

9. CHRISTCHURCH BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Kelly Hansen DDI 941-8688, Kelvin McMillan DDI 941 8692, Dave Newey DDI 941 8810
---	---

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee on the process being undertaken to develop a Biodiversity Strategy for Christchurch.

BACKGROUND

New Zealand’s unique biodiversity is internationally important. It is also under threat and declining. New Zealand’s long term geographic isolation has meant that many of our native species are now endemic (found only in NZ). A Biodiversity Strategy is being prepared for Christchurch based on the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy and focussed on indigenous biodiversity.

A New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy has been prepared which aims to halt the decline in our biodiversity and sets out a vision where:

“New Zealanders value and better understand biodiversity;

We all work together to protect, sustain and restore our biodiversity, and enjoy and share in its benefits, as the foundation of a sustainable economy and society;

Iwi and hapu as kaitiaki are active partners in managing biodiversity;

The full range of New Zealand’s indigenous ecosystems and species thrive from the mountains to the ocean depths; and

The genetic resources of our important introduced species are secure and in turn support our indigenous biodiversity.”

Local authorities will be one of the key players in implementing many of the actions identified in the national strategy. We need to determine the priorities for Christchurch and how we can implement aspects of the national strategy to enhance biodiversity for the City through activities such as community education and involvement, developing a sense of place, and identifying gaps in our knowledge and how to fill them.

At present there are a number of individual projects around the City which either have biodiversity enhancement as their main focus (such as ecological restoration on the Port Hills), as one aspect of the project (such as waterway enhancements), or as a positive consequence. There are also other activities which reduce biodiversity. There is, however, no framework for linking all projects toward a common vision for Christchurch, including actions that individuals could take. It is intended that the proposed strategy would be the mechanism to provide the vision and integration.

The Biodiversity Strategy will sit alongside and complement other key Council strategies as illustrated below.

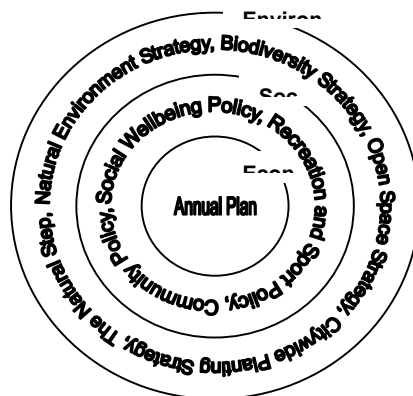


Fig. 1. Diagram illustrating the relationship of some key Council strategies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Biodiversity Strategy is being prepared to identify and prioritise actions and methods that can be implemented in Christchurch to achieve the national goals for biodiversity. The process that has been set out for developing the strategy involves a series of focus groups or questionnaires with key stakeholders to determine the priority outcomes for Christchurch and methods of achieving them at both a Council and community level.

1. Relevant Current Policy

- (a) The Proposed City Plan includes a number of policies aimed at protecting and enhancing the City's natural environment. These policies range from those aimed at protecting biodiversity at specific locations, for example ecological heritage areas, to city-wide policies which benefit local biodiversity in a more general manner and include a policy (Policy 2.4.6) aimed at conserving biodiversity. Policies 2.4.1 to 2.4.7 are particularly relevant, i.e.:
- Policy 2.4.1 To protect, and where appropriate restore, ecological heritage areas, in order to sustain the flora and fauna dependent on them.
 - Policy 2.4.2 To ensure activities are compatible with maintaining the dominant natural values of significant natural areas.
 - Policy 2.4.3 To promote environmental enhancement and rehabilitation of natural areas.
 - Policy 2.4.4 To maintain and enhance the integrity and diversity of natural ecosystems and habitats within the City.
 - Policy 2.4.5 To further extend and protect natural ecosystems and habitats.
 - Policy 2.4.6 To conserve biological diversity by protecting, enhancing and restoring the variety of species which make up this diversity, recognising particular responsibility for indigenous species within that diversity.
 - Policy 2.4.7 To establish a "green wedge" and "green edge" on either side of the city.
- (b) The Biodiversity Strategy will contribute to the Council's strategic objective of environmental sustainability.
- (c) In the Parks and Waterways section of the Corporate Plan, Output: Plans and Policy Statements, Objective 1 is to produce a range of strategic plans that integrate and co-ordinate the various open space interests of Council and focus on the natural environment, biodiversity and City wide planting strategy. Performance indicator 1.3: Contribute to the development of the Biodiversity Strategy to ensure the enrichment and stewardship of the City's biota, in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy.

2. Description Of The Proposal

The Christchurch Biodiversity Strategy aims to identify pathways to achieve the outcomes of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy at a local community and organisational (Council) level.

The goal is to prepare a document setting out a Biodiversity Strategy for Christchurch (Council and communities) which;

- Is based on the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy,
- Identifies methods of improving indigenous biodiversity within Christchurch,
- Fits within the framework of, and complements, other relevant strategies providing an essential part of a robust environmental strategy framework for the Council.

A working group of staff from the Parks and Waterways Unit and the Operations and Information Directorates has formed to develop the strategy with input from other staff, elected members, and other key stakeholders.

A series of focus groups will be held with stakeholders to identify which of the national biodiversity goals are priorities for Christchurch and the best means of achieving them. A summary of the proposed process to be followed to develop the local strategy is outlined below.

The Product	Process Stage	Task	Proposed Dates
Christchurch Biodiversity Strategy	Project Planning	Project scope and outline	August 2002
	Consultation	Council report	September 2002
		Workshops with identified stakeholders	October/ November 2002
		Internal consultation	October/ November 2002
		Other consultation, eg website, City Scene	September/October 2002
		Discussions with key partners, eg tangata whenua, ECan, DoC	October 2002
		Workshop with Councillors following community consultation	March 2003
	Document preparation	Evaluate feedback from consultation to develop vision, goals, objectives, actions and methods for strategy	March 2003
		Prepare draft document	April/May 2003
		Report to Council and release draft strategy	June 2003
		Collect and analyse feedback	July 2003
		Amend strategy as required	August 2003
		Prepare final document, report to Council and launch the strategy	September 2003

Implementation and monitoring of the strategy will follow on from development of the strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

The Christchurch Biodiversity Strategy will be a useful tool to assist the Council and the community to enhance biodiversity in Christchurch within a national context. A process has been planned for developing the strategy with the aim of having the final document prepared by September 2003.

NATURAL + PEOPLE + ECONOMIC STEP ASSESSMENT

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓0*	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use	✓	Promotes sustainable practices
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	✓	Carbon sink potential
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓✓	Protects and restores ecosystems and promotes awareness of ecological values
N4	People needs met fairly and efficiently	NA	NA - See People Step + Economic Step
The People Step			
P1	Basic needs met	✓	Protects basic environmental systems
P2	Full potential developed	✓	Increases people's knowledge and awareness of their environment and their role in it
P3	Social capital enhanced	✓	Encourages individual action and responsibility
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓✓	Protects and develops cultural beliefs and values and develops a partnership with tangata whenua
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓	High level of community involvement in developing the strategy
The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources	✓	Maximises use of current resources to achieve best result
E2	Job rich local economy	✓	Enhances uniqueness of Christchurch as a visitor destination, possible jobs in environmental field.
E3	Financial sustainability	✓	

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received and that the chair of the committee and her nominee work with the team to advance the strategy.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Chair of the Committee and Councillor Carole Evans work with the team to advance the strategy.