

5. ROLE OF REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT IN MANAGING URBAN DEVELOPMENT



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The purpose of this report is to alert the Council to the need for consideration to be given to what role the Regional Policy Statement should have in managing future urban growth in and around Christchurch.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed Regional Policy Statement was notified in October 1994 and the document was made operative in 26 June 1998. The RPS is the principle document guiding Resource Management for the Canterbury region under the Resource Management Act. The obligation of the Proposed City Plan is that it is not to be inconsistent with the provisions of the Regional Policy Statement. The RPS contains a chapter on the built environment (Chapter 12) that contains objectives and policies for managing the effects of urban growth throughout the region. It is largely these provisions which are causing concern and are the subject of this report and recommendations.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

The RPS has been the subject of a number of criticisms as part of decisions released by the Environment Court over the last two years. The concerns relate to the large amount of generality contained in the objectives and policies, such that they provide very little assistance either to the Court, and by application to this Council, in determining the outcome of resource consents and plan changes concerning urban development. This situation has been brought about, not necessarily because of the Regional Council, but because of the way consent orders were negotiated in the past. The Regional Council took the view that in order to get the Regional Policy Statement operative, it had to make compromises to its policies and objectives and it is largely as a result of these compromises that the problems have arisen.

Unless the objectives and policies in the RPS are tightened, or some other arrangement is made to provide metropolitan-wide provisions, the City Council will continue to have difficulties implementing its own urban development strategy. It will also have difficulty in protecting some of its outstanding natural resources, such as the landscape values of the Port Hills, versatile soils, and its rural character around the edge of the city. The Council needs to consider its position with respect to the Regional Policy Statement and in particular whether it wants the region and the districts to take any action to strengthen the provisions of the document. However before it approaches either the region or the other territorial authorities, it would be prudent for an in-house workshop to be held in order that the elected members fully understand the issues surrounding the RPS.

Staff

Recommendation: That all Councillors be invited to attend a workshop (no more than two hours) which would have as its main purposes:

- (a) Explain the significance and role of the Regional Policy Statement.
- (b) Highlight the issues of the current provisions in that document and implications for Christchurch's future development.
- (c) Discuss and identify future options for putting in place clearer objectives and policies for urban growth that cover the area of Christchurch and surrounding districts.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the workshop to be arranged focus on the purpose and value of the Regional Planning Statement.