

7. WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed process for completion of the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan and revised Wastewater Asset Management Plan and the subsequent consultation requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.

BACKGROUND

Wastewater Strategic Management Plan

In November 1996, the Council convened a community working party to help it devise a solution for renewal of the consent for the discharge of treated wastewater from the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant. During meetings of this group, concerns were expressed that there was no long term vision or strategic plan for the wastewater system within which such major projects and decisions could be placed in context.

Significant drivers for a plan identified by this group and Council officers included:

- Legal responsibilities under the Local Government and Resource Management Acts.
- A need for wastewater minimisation at source.
- The challenge of recognising tangata whenua cultural values in wastewater management.
- The variable performance of on-site systems in the rural areas.
- Durable consentable strategies that will provide certainty for investment decision making by local businesses.
- Better recognition by planners for the needs of wastewater infrastructure in urban development planning.

In response, the Council resolved to prepare a plan to set the key directions for the wastewater management challenges of the fifty years from the base year 1996 (the start of the most recent Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade). In doing so it will:

- Give more detailed expression to the policy and objectives for wastewater infrastructure and management contained within the City Plan.
- Outline the key drivers and issues facing the present and future of the wastewater system.
- Make key recommendations for policy and capital investment that will be incorporated into the Wastewater Asset Management Plan.

A Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee workshop is proposed for 21 August 2003 to summarise work to date in preparation for the presentation of the summary documents of both the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan and the Wastewater Asset Management Plan to a further workshop of this Committee on 16 October 2003.

Wastewater Asset Management Plan

The Wastewater Asset Management Plan 2003 will be a practical description of the works and projected budget for the next 20 years required to:

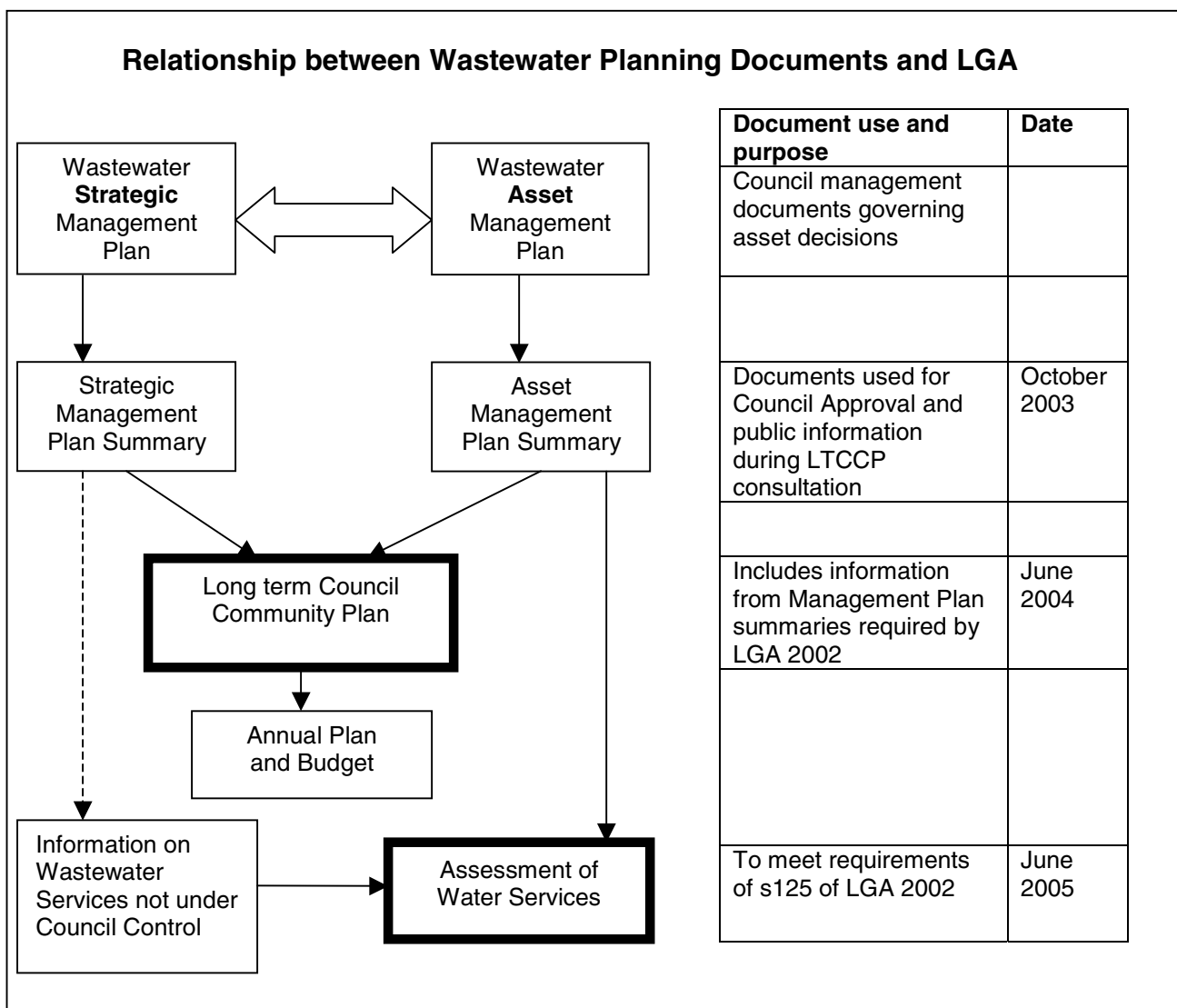
- Provide wastewater infrastructure (reticulation, pumping, treatment, and biosolids management) to meet the demands of expected city growth.
- Maintain such assets in perpetuity at their current level of service potential (or better).
- Upgrade the level of service where appropriate in response to changing community expectations or legal requirements.

It is intended that this plan:

- Will meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.
- Will describe and evaluate the fiscal impact of the key issues affecting the wastewater system.
- Will drive the development of the relevant sections of the Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Plan.

Information provided by the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan and the Asset Management Plan will meet some (but not all) of the requirements of Section 125 of the Local Government Act 2003, (requirement to assess water and other sanitary services).

The relationships between the above plans within the LGA 2002 environment are shown in the table below.



CONSULTATION UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002

The Wastewater Strategic Management Plan is required by section 539 of the Local Government Act 1974 (one of the sections of this act that has not been repealed by the LGA 2002), which describes Waste Management Plans. A Special Consultative Procedure (formerly under section 716B of LGA 1974, now section 83 of LGA 2002) is required for Waste Management Plans. This Special Consultative Procedure is also required for the Council’s first Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). The Council’s Legal Services Manager is of the opinion that, if the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan goes through the LTCCP Special Consultative Procedure, separate consultation is not a strict legal requirement.

Councillors will recall that a separate Special Consultative Procedure is planned for the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, as reported to the May 2003 Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee meeting. However, for the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan it is considered more appropriate to use the LTCCP process only, both because of timing (separate consultation could occur only a month or two before LTCCP consultation) and because this document will have less direct community interest and impact.

There is no Special Consultative Procedure requirements for Asset Management Plans, however, specific information produced through these plans must be reported in the LTCCP.

In the light of the above, it is proposed that:

- A separate formal public consultation for the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan not be undertaken.
- A summary of the major findings of the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan and the Wastewater Asset Management Plan be included within the Long Term Council Community Plan consultation programme beginning in April 2004.
- Summary documents prepared for Council approval be made available to the public to provide further information for the LTCCP and Annual Plan public consultation processes.

REMAINING PROJECT TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of the process of approval for the Wastewater Asset Management Plan and Wastewater Strategic Management Plan is shown below.

Staff complete research and developing options.	June/July	2003
Final workshop to present work to date and confirm strategy.	21 August	2003
Prepare summary documents for council approval to support LTCCP Consultation.	September	2003
Joint workshop presentation of Wastewater Asset Management Plan and Wastewater Strategic Management Plan	16 October	2003
WAMP and WSMP presented to STU Committee for adoption.	25 November	2003
Text prepared for inclusion in Long Term Council Community Plan.	February to March	2004
Public Consultation on WSMP within LTCCP consultation.	April to June	2004

SUMMARY

With the adoption of the new Local Government Act in December 2002 it is proposed that public consultation for the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan and Wastewater Asset Management Plan be conducted within the Long Term Council Community Plan consultation programme scheduled for April 2004 and that summary documents of both plans be made available to support this.

Staff

Recommendation: That the process of community consultation for the Wastewater Strategic Management Plan as outlined above be approved.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received and the process for implementation of the plan as outlined above be approved.