

## 16. UPDATE ON THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CITY-WIDE PLANTING STRATEGY AND THE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

<b>Officers responsible</b> Parks and Waterways Manager and Policy Leader – Open Space and Water	<b>Author</b> Kelvin McMillan – Strategic Natural Areas Planner, DDI 941-8692; Jenny Ridgen – Environmental Scientist, DDI 941-8407 Liz Briggs, Policy Leader –Open Space and Water, DDI 941-8641
--	--

The two main purposes of this report are:

- (a) to update the committee on the proposed work programme and completion dates of the above two strategies
- (b) to highlight the difference in purpose of the two strategies as well as the area of overlap

The authors of this report will be present at the committee to provide further information as required.

### UPDATE ON THE CITY-WIDE PLANTING STRATEGY:

A draft document was produced in September 2000, following input from two seminars with a wide range of staff, and two seminars with the previous Environment Committee and Park and Recreation Committee.

Comments and submission were requested by 24 November 2000. A further joint seminar was held with the Parks and Recreation committee and Environment Committee on 23 July 2001, and further submissions made and changes suggested.

The strategy was considered by the Garden City Sub-committee between July and November 2002, and some suggestions for changes were made.

It is now time to review the summary of all submission made since September 2000, and subsequent agreed changes to the draft Strategy, and to suggest a work programme for completion of the strategy.

Following the last seminar and further discussions with key staff responsible for planting and design it was agreed to divide the strategy into three parts.

- Part 1: Introduction/ Background/ History (chapters 1-6)  
Part 2: Key elements of the strategy and framework (chapters 7 and 9)  
Part 3: "Best Practice" for designers and decision makers (chapters 8 and 10)

It has been generally agreed that Part 1 and Part 3 are not contentious and they are factual and based on information already available within the organisation. It is Part 2 ie Chapters 7 & 9 that require further elaboration, detailing and consultation. This work will be carried out over the next three months, with the aim of bringing a revised draft strategy back to the committee for adoption in March 2004 (see Strategy timelines – attachment A).

### UPDATE ON BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

The Biodiversity Strategy has been developed as a response to recent changes in biodiversity policy at a national level. In February 2000 the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for the Environment combined to produce a biodiversity strategy for New Zealand<sup>3</sup>. The goals of this document include halting the decline in New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity, and encouraging community and individual involvement in achieving this. The national strategy recognises local government as one of the agencies that will play a key role in achieving the desired outcomes.

Legislative changes in the last 12 months<sup>4</sup> have reinforced this role for local government, including expanding the functions of territorial authorities under the Resource Management Act to specifically include:

<sup>3</sup> Department of Conservation and Ministry for the Environments (2000). *The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy: Our Chance to Turn the Tide*. Wellington, New Zealand.

<sup>4</sup> Local Government Act (2002) and the Resource Management Act (1991) as amended by the Resource Management Amendment Act (2003).

*“the control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protections of land, including the purpose of - .....  
(iii) the maintenance of indigenous biological diversity (Sec.31).*

This is further supported by the purpose statement in the recently updated Local Government Act (2002), which states that one of the purposes of local government is:

*“To promote the social, economic, **environmental** and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future.” (Sec. 10 – emphasis added).*

In addition, the release of a national policy statement on biodiversity issues is imminent (under the provisions of the Resource Management Act). This is likely to increase the mandate for the pro-active approach taken by the Christchurch City Council in preparing a biodiversity strategy for the city of Christchurch

A seminar was presented to the Parks, Garden and Waterways Committee on 21 July 2003. It outlined the main components of the Strategy that have been developed to date. The strategy aims to increase community awareness and involvement in improving the health and functioning of ecological systems within the City and its surrounds, and covers much more than just plants.

The work programme for the preparation of the draft Strategy is shown as Attachment A – Strategy Timelines. It is intended to present the Draft Biodiversity Strategy to the committee in February 2004, for adoption, prior to external circulation and consultation.

#### **COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO STRATEGIES**

The Biodiversity Strategy and City-wide planting Strategy are similar in that they:

- (a) Are Council initiated strategies that are seen as key outputs in Business plans.
- (b) They are metropolitan-wide and will provide frameworks for further action and outputs at sub-regional and local level.
- (c) They have implications, once adopted, for integrating related outcome, and outputs across the organisation.
- (d) They will assist in translating the Council's "Vision" on environmental sustainability and the "Garden City Vision" into practical outcomes and outputs.

However, while there are areas of overlap, it is important that these two strategies are produced as separate but complimentary documents for the following reasons.

- (a) The City-wide Planting Strategy is a "best practice" framework for planting themes and design in the network of public spaces across the city. This will include planting alongside the major roads, rivers and coastal areas, as well as reflecting and reinforcing the existing strategies, concepts and management plans for the city's outstanding natural landscapes, such as the Port Hills and Travis Wetland. It will also reflect the most effective way of promoting and enhancing the Garden City Vision at the metropolitan level, using a wide range of species depending on the location and function of the planting.
- (b) The Biodiversity Strategy is being produced in response to national policy directives, and the recent statutory requirements under the amendment to Section 31 of the Resource Management Act 1991. It will focus primarily on opportunities for halting the decline of indigenous biodiversity across the spectrum of native plants, birds, fish and invertebrates.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Both Strategies provide an innovative and comprehensive opportunity for reflecting not only national policy guidelines but also a meaningful way of improving the quality of life for the citizens of Christchurch and therefore helping to realise the social, environmental and even economic outcomes of the Community Outcomes and Priorities currently being prepared. A healthy, sustainable and diverse natural environment is the platform for improving the general wellbeing of the people living and working in Christchurch and attracting increasing numbers of tourists.

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** That the work programme and strategy timelines for the Biodiversity Strategy and the City-wide Planting Strategy, as illustrated in Attachment A be adopted.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.

**Committee members are asked to bring their copies of  
"City-wide Planting Strategy" to the meeting for reference purposes.**