

8. UPDATE WITH CITY PLAN REFERENCES AND VARIATIONS – APRIL 2002

The Committee received a report from Bob Nixon, Team Leader, City Plan, updating progress with City Plan references and variations since the last update report in October 2001.

The report illustrated the costs associated with the City Plan process (and planning processes generally) by reference to the Taylors Mistake reference hearings which concluded in November of last year. The cost of legal counsel and consultant witnesses had been approximately \$120,000, in addition to \$50,000 spent on the Commissioner hearings at the hearing stage. Both figures being exclusive of staff costs.

Mr Nixon's observations included:

- Where references involve the Council as the “meat in the sandwich” between two polarised groups (as in the case Taylors Mistake reference) the chances of reaching a settlement are usually much lower than where the issue is simply between the Council and a referrer.
- In this case the Council had, over many years, attempted to broker a solution, without success. There was little more it could possibly have done.
- The issue, while major locally, was **not** of strategic significance to the city.
- There is a direct relationship between the degree of controversy and conflict involved in submission/reference hearings, and the cost to the Council in staff and financial resources.

The Committee **decided** that the Minister for the Environment (Hon Marian Hobbs) and officers from the Ministry for the Environment be invited to discuss with the Regulatory and Consents Committee matters of mutual interest.