

3. **JOINT ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY/CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL PLANNING AND CONSENTS PROTOCOL**

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The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors that it is proposed to prepare a planning and consents protocol that will enable the Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury to efficiently and effectively achieve the surface water management objectives and policies set out in the City Plan and Natural Resources Regional Plan.

NATURE OF THE INTENDED PROTOCOL

Earlier this year, a preliminary draft protocol was prepared and discussed by senior staff of both Councils. The document describes how the City Council's surface water planning and Environment Canterbury's consents process could be aligned for greater efficiency. It also outlined a programme for the preparation of area based consent applications that would cover the whole of Christchurch District. It was decided to write a brief for the preparation of a protocol, the cost of which would be shared equally by both Councils.

NEED FOR A PROTOCOL

Currently the Council holds over one hundred resource consents related to the construction, operation and maintenance of specific parts of its land drainage system. They are accompanied by over 800 conditions. The number of consents is increasing year by year as new parts of the system are created either by the Council itself or through subdivision development.

The intention of the consent procedures is to ensure that water quality and quantity effects on the environment are acceptable. However, it would be a very long time before this ad-hoc project by project approach would achieve worthwhile results. A more rational, targeted approach is needed. Consents based on the comprehensive management of a significant catchment would have a number of advantages including:

- They would demonstrate that the City Council is a responsible system operator with a good understanding of surface water management.
- It would ensure that investments in water quality and quantity controls are targeted to ensure the best returns
- Areas of future urban intensification and expansion can be anticipated and provided for.

PILOT PROJECT: SOUTHWEST CHRISTCHURCH

The first area-based consent application would cover the Southwest Christchurch Urban Growth Area. This would involve the entire upper Heathcote River Catchment and that part of the Halswell River Catchment that lies within Christchurch District. The work required to obtain the consent has been programmed to be an integral part of the South West Area Plan currently under preparation. This plan provides for an integrated planning and consents approach for both land use and surface water management. No development will take place without the Council first having adopted a surface water management scheme that is covered by a cost share scheme and budget provision, and for which a resource consent has been obtained.

CONSULTATION

Once the protocol has been drafted the following parties should be consulted:

- The broader community, such as Ngai Tahu and Runanga, Fish and Game New Zealand, Department of Conservation, and larger development companies or consultants who regularly develop areas within Christchurch.

Before both Councils can formally adopt the protocol, some consultation with the public will be required. It is considered that this can be limited to interested groups and parties without the need for full public comment. A meeting at either ECan or the Christchurch City Council offices could be held to describe and discuss the protocol and then requesting feedback within a certain timeframe.

TIMING

The protocol would be ready for adoption by both Councils early in 2004 and the pilot consent application would be lodged by August 2004.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the intention to prepare a surface water management planning and consents protocol jointly with Environment Canterbury be confirmed.
 2. That southwest Christchurch be confirmed as the pilot project for the protocol.
 3. That the proposed protocol be reviewed by the Land Drainage Subcommittee being established to investigate the surface water land drainage resources issues.