

## 14. RIVERSIDE PLANTING SITES - RESULTS OF REVIEW

<b>Officer responsible</b> Greenspace Manager	<b>Author</b> Anne Greenup, DDI 941-8701
--	---

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the results of the review of riverside planting at two sites chosen by the Board in May 2004.

### BACKGROUND

Following a deputation from the Merivale Precinct Society to the Parks Gardens and Waterways Committee in February 2004, expressing concerns about the effects of native planting along the banks of the Avon River adjacent to Little Hagley Park, the Board chose this and another site for review by an independent landscape architect.

- **Site 1**  
Avon River – Carlton Mill Road to Millbrook Reserve
- **Site 2**  
Wairarapa Stream – Seven Oaks Drive to Wayside Avenue

The matters raised for consideration in the review included:

- There was no community input into the proposal to plant alongside this section of the river
- No consideration was given to the Hagley Park Management Plan
- Deliberate planting of potentially large native trees close to existing mature oaks
- Pedestrian access to the river from the car-park and for people with canoes seen as a requirement
- Inadequate maintenance. There is evidence of plenty of weed growth, particularly the margin between the water level and the river bank

### REVIEW

The review was carried out by Jenny Moore, ANZILA and included a site analysis and details of the river character, vegetation character and site character. She then proceeded to explore opportunities to mitigate, through design and maintenance, any detracting outcomes of the planting. The report (**separately circulated** to members) includes photographs of the plantings, with notations.

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Site 1: Avon River – Carlton Mill Road to Millbrook Reserve

The conclusions are stated in **3.0 Opportunities for mitigation through design and maintenance.**

- 3.1** Selective thinning of some of the Kowhai would allow for a few to be retained and to develop into well formed trees. As these trees mature, the canopy will form and a space between the canopy and ground level will be created. It will then be possible to obtain clear views through clear single or multi-stemmed trunks.
- 3.2** Suitable ground cover species should be planted beneath these trees, as a protection to the river-bank.
- 3.3** Consideration should be given to connect this space with Millbrook Reserve which requires attention
- 3.4** Planting along this riverbank requires variety in both species mix as well as scale and form
- 3.5** A design philosophy for the style and planting in Hagley Park needs to be developed and documented in the Hagley Park Management Plan
- 3.6** Maintenance of riparian areas needs to be integrated and not dealt with by separate maintenance teams. At present there are contractors who are responsible for keeping the waterways clear, then a separate contractor for maintaining the banks. Nobody seems to take responsibility for the miscellaneous strip of land, which is often difficult to access on some waterways, between the waterline and the bottom of the bank. These areas become weed infested and lead to a neglected and untidy appearance.

## Site 2: Wairarapa Stream – Seven Oaks Drive to Wayside Avenue

### 3.0 Opportunities for mitigation through design and maintenance:

- 3.1 If access to this area is desirable then it would be appropriate to remove dense understorey such as flax and toe toe and replace with lower growing species
- 3.2 It would be useful to undertake an assessment of the birdlife that is attracted to this strip of vegetation and determine whether it is attracting more birds and an increased diversity of species
- 3.3 Redevelopment of the footpath and bridge would enhance the access to the site. A well-designed bridge and interpretation panel could help create a more positive attitude towards this block of planting, particularly if it was found that the planting encouraged a more diverse and increased number of birds to the neighbourhood

#### Staff

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
  2. That remedial work be carried out on Sites 1 and 2 as recommended in the report.
  3. That the report conclusions be shared with all designers who have an input into riverside planting projects in Christchurch, in order to design more appropriately for future plantings.
  4. That riverside plantings be maintained in such a way that the detractions outlined in the report are not repeated in the future.
  5. That the Board use some of its discretionary funds to carry out some or all of the recommendations at Site 2 ( 3.3 )

#### Chairman's

- Recommendations:**
1. That recommendations 1, 2 and 4 be adopted.
  2. That the General Manager, City Environment be asked to arrange for an urgent review to provide for an integrated approach to the maintenance of riparian areas in the city.
  3. That the General Manager, City Environment be asked to arrange for an integrated approach to the design for riverside plantings, noting that where possible this should be complementary to plantings existing in adjacent private gardens.
  4. That it be noted that the Board is working through the process for redevelopment of Millbrook Reserve and the adjacent riverside greenspace area to the east, with the view of developing an enhanced premier landscaped area.