

6. AWAROA/GODLEY HEAD COASTAL PARK DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

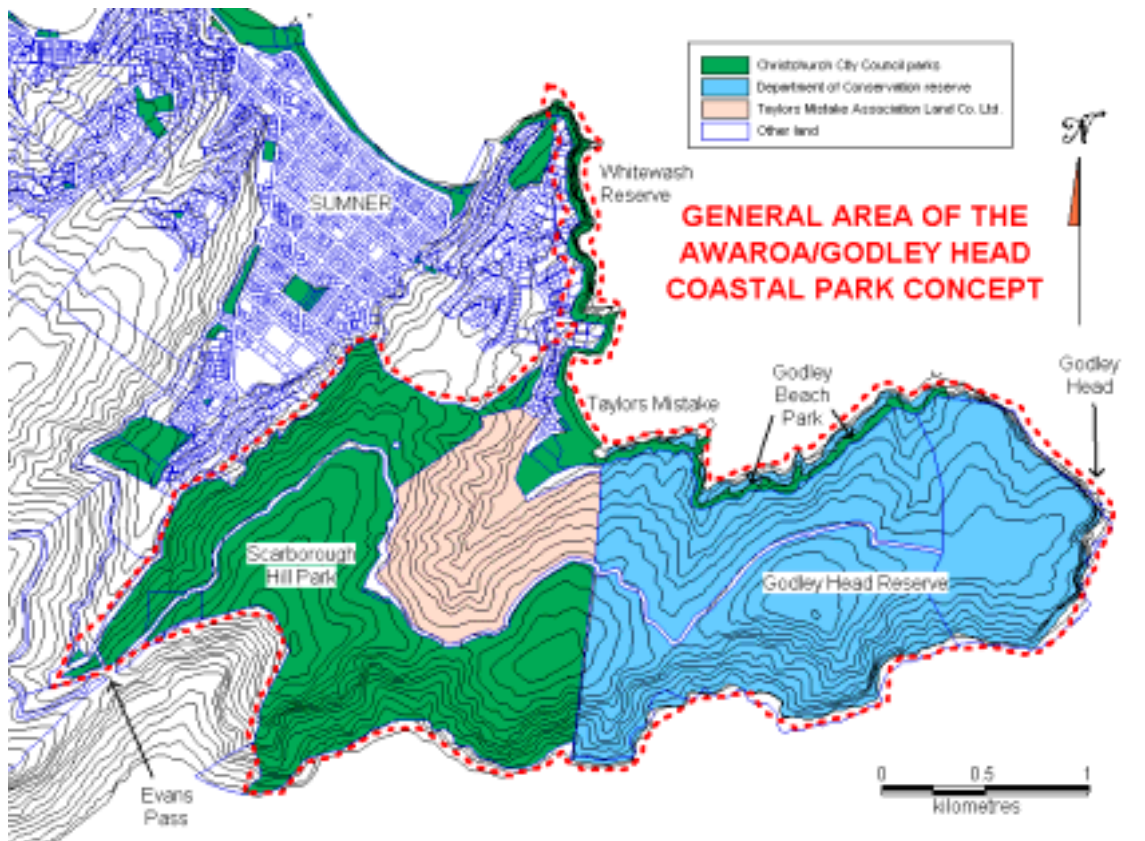
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The purpose of this report is to inform the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee of the current status of the draft development concept for the Godley Head 'peninsula', to advise of the process for the concept document's preparation and promotion, and to request the Committee to convene a joint Christchurch City Council/Department of Conservation non-statutory panel to hear submitters on the draft concept document, put out for public comment earlier this year.

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The draft Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park development concept document is the product of a joint initiative by staff of the Council's Greenspace Unit and staff of the Christchurch office of the Department of Conservation. Its production at the end of last year was the culmination of work to develop innovative draft concepts that reflect an integrated long-term vision for a proposed coastal park. This park will cover an area of the Port Hills that extends from Evans Pass to Godley Head. Part of this area is under the administration of the City Council as public park, part rests with the Department of Conservation and the remainder is under private ownership (see map).



In order to obtain a timely record of public opinion on the proposed concepts, the draft concept document was publicised at the end of last year and submissions invited to be received up to Friday 12 March 2004. Copies of the document were provided at that time, and early this year, to all Councillors, as well as to members of the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board.

The public submission response that has been received on the draft concept document will be an invaluable resource to assist the Committee in its consideration of the proposed concepts of the draft concept document. The Committee should note that many of the concepts put forward in the document simply reflect existing objectives for the area, such as the recommendation in the Draft Strategy for Grazing Management of Christchurch City Council Reserves on the Port Hills that the southern (Lyttelton Harbour side) slopes of Scarborough Hill Park is not grazed.

PURPOSE OF INITIATIVE

The purpose of this joint Christchurch City Council/Department of Conservation initiative is to explore ways to protect and enhance the considerable public values of what is a key open space area on Christchurch's doorstep, with the planning for this to consider the range of public views. There is an opportunity to contribute to meeting the vision of a sustainable Christchurch through conservation and enhancement of the Godley Head 'peninsula' environment while providing for public access and appreciation of the many values that this place can offer.

To achieve these outcomes requires the involvement of the key stakeholders. In particular, as the two main landholders on the 'peninsula', the Department of Conservation and the Christchurch City Council need to co-operate in a partnership for these outcomes to be realised.

As a partner, the Department of Conservation's involvement in the process, its response to the information and recommendations reported to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee, and its own conclusions regarding the outcomes from the public consultation on the draft Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal park development concept document, is critical. It is important that the two organisations work together to enhance the very real values that the Godley Head "peninsula" has for the citizens of, and visitors to, Christchurch.

Partnerships between organisations for effective 'seamless' land management are strongly advocated in the draft Port Hills Recreation Strategy and through associated consultation. Christchurch City Council staff already partner with the Department of Conservation and other agencies in land and resource management, for example, in recreation facilities development and maintenance on the Port Hills, integrated pest management and fire suppression. The Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park development concept document serves to reinforce and build on this initial partnership to achieve the best public and environmental outcomes for that area.

From the point of view of optimum community benefit, as well as achieving the most effective protection and enhancement of the ecological values of the Godley Head 'peninsula', it is logical to view the area as one, under one planning framework and with buy-in by the key stakeholders.

PREVIOUS RELATED CONSULTATIONS

The draft Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park development concept document reflects previous and existing planning for the wider Port Hills area. The group of concepts presented for the Godley Head 'peninsula' develops the Coastal Park aspect of the Port Hills Regional Park Acquisitions Strategy, which was adopted by the Council on 22 April 1999. This strategy provided for the acquisition of land for a coastal park, and the Council, on Scarborough Hill and at Giants Nose, has already achieved some implementation with acquisitions of land for public park purposes.

Other related planning initiatives and issues previously considered by the Council include:

- A Turning Point 2000 project proposal for a white-flippered penguin colony at Boulder Bay;
- The Coastal Parks Strategy 2000-2010;
- The possible acquisition of land to provide access from Godley Drive to Scarborough Hill Park;
- The Port Hills Recreation Strategy.

COSTS AND OBLIGATIONS

At this point in time, no commitment is being sought for the use of public funds from either the Council or the Department of Conservation to implement any of the proposed concepts. Ultimately, it is expected that the focus for funding of any developments to be implemented in the future, some of which would be expected to involve significant financial input, would be from a range of sources, including local and central government, and from the community. It is intended, following a hearing of submitters and analysis of public submissions, to report again to the Committee the outcome of the public consultation on the concepts. This report will include seeking the Committee's "approval in principle" for some or all of the proposed concepts and for its support for further detailed investigations of those concepts that have been "approved".

RELATED ISSUES

The draft Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park development concept is an attempt to present an integrated "big picture" overview of the raft of values special to, and issues affecting, the Godley Head 'peninsula'.

It is not intended that the document, or the hearing of submissions on this, to substitute in any way other separate processes currently addressing key land use issues pertaining to the area, such as the Council's consideration of land ownership issues relating to, and the subsequent future of, the baches at Taylor's Mistake and Boulder Bay.

The Property Unit will be reporting to the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board and the Strategy and Finance Committee on the outcome of these issues in 2005.

SUBMISSIONS

Over 120 submissions have been received on the draft Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park development concept document, from a wide range of submitters, including the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board, and covering a diversity of subjects. Overall, the majority of submitters are strongly in support of the proposed concepts and 30 submitters have indicated that they wish to be heard regarding their submission.

It is hoped that the outcome of the submissions analysis can be reported to the Committee in September 2004.

HEARING

A hearing is warranted, based on the significant number of submitters wishing to be heard and the significant nature of their submissions.

Although most of the areas within the proposed Awaroa/Godley Head Coastal Park area that are currently under the Christchurch City Council's management are held as Recreation Reserves under the Reserves Act 1977, the draft planning document for the proposed park is not deemed to be a management plan under that Act. It is, instead, more of a landscape concept plan. Therefore, it is not subject to the sections of the Act covering public consultation and hearings. In addition, there is neither provision nor requirement for a hearing to be held under any other statute. Following staff consideration, it was concluded that a non-statutory panel, with equal representation from both the Christchurch City Council and the Department of Conservation, would be most appropriate to hear the submitters.

It is necessary to request that the Committee convene at the earliest possible date a non-statutory panel to hear the submitters, with appointments to the panel being equally shared by the Committee and the Department of Conservation. The Department advises that it already has arranged for members to appoint to the panel.

It is anticipated that the outcome of the hearing can then be reported, along with the submissions analysis, to the Committee in September.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Resolve to set up a subcommittee as a non-statutory panel to hear submitters to the draft concept document, with the following requirements:
 - (a) The panel to comprise two City Councillors and two members appointed by the Department of Conservation.
 - (b) The panel to elect its own chair.
 - (c) The Christchurch City Council to provide a venue and facilities.
 - (d) That the Department of Conservation be requested to record the proceedings and prepare a draft report.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the recommendation be adopted and that Councillors Carole Anderton and Anna Crighton be the Council representatives on the subcommittee.