

4. AVON-HEATHCOTE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Officer responsible Greenspace Manager	Author Eric Banks, Parks and Waterways Planner, Greenspace Unit DDI 941-8285
--	--

The purpose of this report is to present the final version of the Ihutai Management Plan; to seek approval of this plan; and to propose that the next step in the process is for staff to prepare an implementation plan in the first half of 2005.

BACKGROUND

Following the joint preparation by the Christchurch City Council (CCC) and the Canterbury Regional Council (ECan) of an Issues and Options document relating to the Avon Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai, a series of public consultation meetings were held. As a result of these meetings, a Trust was formed to develop a non-statutory management plan for the Avon Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai (the estuary). Both Councils resolved (June 2002) to support the formation of the Trust and to work and interact with it to develop the non-statutory management plan. At the Christchurch City Council's December 2002 meeting Councillor Cox was appointed as the Council's representative on the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust as an ex-officio member with full voting rights.

Most recently, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drawn up between the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust, the Christchurch City Council and the Canterbury Regional Council (ECan). The MoU was supported by the City Council at its December 2003 meeting and signed shortly thereafter by Chief Executives of the respective Councils and the Trust's chairperson.

The MoU makes clear the working relationship between the parties in the development of the non-statutory plan for the estuary and is an acknowledged record of how the parties came to work together, for the better management of the estuary. It also outlines what resources might be provided to the Trust to facilitate the formation and implementation of the plan.

To date, financial assistance provided to the Trust by its partners comprises –

CCC

02/03 \$15,000 – for capital expenditure + staff time (not all spent)
03/04 \$11,000 – for operational expenditure + staff time
04/05 \$11,000 - for operational expenditure + staff time

ECAN

02/03 \$15,000 - \$18,000 for operational expenditure
03/04 \$18,000 – for operational expenditure + staff time.
04/05 \$18,000 - for operational expenditure + staff time.

On-going funding will be reviewed at least every three years via the Annual Plan and LTCCP process.

THE PLAN

The full title is – "Ihutai Management Plan 2004 - The Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Management Plan, Version One, August 2004".

Following the closing of the period for comments and feedback on 31 May 2004, 24 submissions were received in addition to feedback from a public workshop. These have now been analysed and incorporated into the Plan by a Trust working party involving representatives from the Christchurch City Council, ECan and the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust (AHEIT).

The "Objects" of the Trust and its vision remain unchanged from those previously reported. The bulk of submissions resulted in minor changes to the Plan's actions and targets or were noted for use in future implementation. Ngai Tahu provided a comprehensive submission and the Trust is working with Ngai Tahu as a key partner in the community.

The Trust Board have now approved the modified document as being the final plan. The Board emphasised the point that it should be a living document however, hence "version one" in the title. The plan is to be reviewed within five years.

NEXT STAGE

The next stage will be for each partner organisation to write its own implementation plan to achieve the goals, targets and actions set out in the management plan. This is one of the goals of the Memorandum of Understanding.

From the Council's point of view, this exercise will involve extracting the relevant action points relating to the City Council and comparing them with existing functions and budgets. Those which are not already covered will have to be prioritised and either additional funding allocated or timeframes lengthened. The draft Ihutai non-statutory management plan will have financial implications and the Council cannot support the plan unconditionally in the absence of a realistic budget and timeframe.

A key function will be to liaise closely with partner organisations when drawing up each respective implementation plan, in order to prioritise action points as a team and to achieve the plan objectives in the most efficient manner.

The plan will be reprinted in the same format as the draft within the next month.

CONCLUSION

The non-statutory management plan process for the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai was first flagged by ECan and Christchurch City Council as a way of improving and integrating management of the estuary. The establishment of a Trust as a partner in the process and vehicle to develop the plan was seen as vital in getting engagement and commitment from all parties working on this issue.

The production of a joint *non-statutory* management plan by the three partners is a significant achievement and will enable the involvement of key parties in the future management of the estuary, whose input would otherwise have been of a less tangible nature. To now achieve the objectives of the management plan, support in the form of an implementation plan is required.

This plan will outline the Council's commitment in terms of budget and resourcing and therefore the current plan can only be adopted in principle until the implementation plan has been developed.

Committee

- Recommendation:**
1. That the "Ihutai Management Plan 2004 – The Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Management Plan, Version One, August 2004" be adopted subject to Council approval of an implementation plan and its budgetary implications.
 2. That staff proceed to write the implementation plan in the first half of 2005.
 3. That the Implementation Plan be brought back to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee for approval.
 4. That the Avon-Heathcote Ihutai Trust be notified of the above conditions.