

8. UPDATE ON MAKING THE CITY PLAN OPERATIVE AND AVAILABLE ONLINE

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The purpose of this report is to advise on progress with making the City Plan operative in part, including making the plan available on the internet.

The Council previously resolved in October 2003 as follows:

“That the Council aim to apply to the Environment Court to make the City Plan operative in part by 1 July 2004, the exact timing to be dependent on the completion of current references and progress on preparing the printed and electronic versions.”

A Key Performance Indicator from the 2003-2004 Annual Plan was - *to investigate and report to Council on means of making the City Plan available on the Internet.*

APPLICATION TO ENVIRONMENT COURT

Approval from the Environment Court is required if the plan is to be made operative in part. The application must specify in detail every part of the plan which is not being made operative. This includes all outstanding references and variations, and a few matters which the Council has not made decisions on. A schedule of these matters is attached to this report. It has not been possible to finalise the application to the Court as the public notification of a number of variations is still pending. Three of these are quite large, being the retail variation, a possible Clearwater variation and a variation on financial contributions. While these variations are being finalised, the opportunity has been taken to present a number of smaller variations to the Council during August and September 2004.

The timing of this Environment Court application has been subject to change for some time now. No further variations are anticipated after the 23 September 2004 Council meeting. Environment Court decisions and consent orders continue to occur, so the final application will have to reflect the situation at the time it is made.

There is one potential problem with the Court application. One or two of the remaining references seek a very generalised relief of any alterations the Court may see fit to any part of the Plan to resolve the particular issue in the reference. This matter will need to be discussed with the Court and the parties concerned.

It is intended to make the application to the Court by late September or early October 2004. Under the Resource Management Act 1991 it will be necessary for the new Council to make a resolution approving the parts of the plan to be made operative after the decision of the Environment Court is received.

The relevant clause of the First Schedule is:

“17. Final consideration of policy statements and plans other than regional coastal plans

- (1) A local authority shall approve a proposed policy statement or plan (other than a regional coastal plan) once it has made amendments under clause 16 [or variations under clause 16A] (if any).*
- (2) A local authority may, with the consent of the Environment Court, approve part of a policy statement or plan, if all submissions or appeals relating to that part have been disposed of.*
- [(3) Every approval under this clause shall be effected by affixing the seal of the local authority to the proposed policy statement or plan.”*

EDITING AND REPRINTING THE PLAN

A thorough check of all earlier proceedings has been made to ensure that the outcomes have all been correctly recorded in the Plan. The text of the plan and all the maps and diagrams now need to be revised and edited. Currently the City Plan highlights all the changes which have occurred through the submissions, references and variations process. When the Plan is made operative in part it will be necessary for all parts not currently operative to be highlighted, but it is not proposed to continue to show all the earlier alterations. This work is currently underway, and will be completed around the end of November 2004. This work could not commence until decisions had been made on electronic publishing. It is anticipated that if the consent of the Court has been received, the Plan will be ready for printing in about December 2004.

The availability of an online version is expected to reduce the demand for hard copies. A survey of existing customers has been conducted to ascertain demand, and to find out what features users wanted to see in the printed and electronic versions.

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

The Council currently maintains two separate versions of the plan. One is a Word document which is used for all editing and updating of the text. The other is an electronic version which is used for publishing on the Council's Intranet (Internal system for Council users only) and for selling to the public on CD's. It is necessary for all updates to be converted from one to the other, which is a time-consuming task. The software used for the electronic version, Folio Bound Views is excellent for searching, browsing, hyperlinks, copying and pasting, but until now has not had the capability to format the document properly for printing, which is why two versions have had to be maintained. Previously it has been too expensive for Internet publishing, but that cost has now reduced.

Objectives for making the plan operative have included making it available free on the Internet in a quality form, and maintaining only one version. This means that all editing, formatting and printing will in future have to be from the electronic version.

Staff from ITS have reviewed various available systems. The decision has been to continue with the Folio product. Improvements to the software since it was first adopted and more rigorous use of its features means an acceptable hard copy version will be able to be produced. Work is about to commence on converting the master copy of the City Plan into the Folio format, after which only one version will be maintained.

The advantages to the Council of these decisions include:

1. Ready availability of the City Plan to a wide range of users.
2. A very high quality version of the City Plan available on the Internet. Although many other Councils have their plans on the Internet, these invariably use the less versatile Acrobat software. As far as is known this will be the best example in New Zealand in terms of its capabilities and useability.
3. Additional developments will be possible, especially for internal use, such as links to legal opinions and interpretations, notes and Court decisions.
4. Availability of the most up to date versions to all users. Previously the Council maintained a subscription update service for Plan holders, but this had limited uptake and it is known that not all copies in use were fully updated.
5. Reduced time in updating the Plan.
6. Reduced demand for hard copy versions and updates.

CONCLUSION

The City Plan can be made operative in part as soon as approval is received from the Environment Court, final approval is received from the Council and the necessary editing, printing and publishing has been carried out. This is expected to be about March 2005. The Internet version should be published on the same day.

Committee**Recommendation:**

1. That the Council apply to the Environment Court for the City Plan to be made operative in part.
2. That the Environmental Services Manager and the City Plan Team Leader be jointly authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Council's application following any decisions made on the matters listed in the schedule to this report after the 23 September 2004 Council meeting.