

## 6. ADOPTION OF CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL RURAL FIRE AUTHORITY FIRE PLAN

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941 8656
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Civil Defence Emergency Management & Rural Fire Manager
<b>Author:</b>	Keith Marshall, Principal Rural Fire Officer

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to consider and recommend the adoption of the new Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority Fire Plan.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Under the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005, the Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority is required to adopt a new Fire Plan in the form set out in the Forest and Rural Fire Regulations 2005. The Plan was adopted on 1 September 2005. At the same time and concurrently the former Banks Peninsula District Council Rural Fire Authority also had to write a new Fire Plan in the form and manner set out in the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005.
3. As a result of the merging of Christchurch City with Banks Peninsula District, the National Rural Fire Authority has advised that the Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority needs to produce and adopt a new Fire Plan covering its total territorial area.
4. Furthermore, the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 requires that the sections of the Plan under the heading of 'readiness' and 'response' be reviewed every two years. Any changes made as a result of this review means the Fire Authority must promptly provide a copy of the amended Plan to the NRFA.
5. No significant changes have been made to the Plan but there is now recognition that rural fire management is part of the Council's new Civil Defence and Emergency Management and Rural Fire Business Unit and the Plan sets out various responses and actions which fall on that unit as opposed to the Transport & Greenspace Unit.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Two options have been considered in terms of their financial impact and although the recommended option may involve some minor increase in operating expenditure, the potential cost of non-compliance could result in not having access to National Rural Fire Authority funding.

### Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

7. Yes

### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. The Council must comply with the provisions of the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005.

### Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

9. Yes

### ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

10. LTCCP Page 99, 'Civil Defence and Rural Fire': The Council participates in the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, as well as providing a response to rural fires in its area of jurisdiction. The Council also supports the city in planning for pandemic influenza.

### Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

11. Yes

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES**

12. Yes.

**Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?**

13. Yes.

**CONSULTATION FULFILMENT**

14. Not required.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council as the Rural Fire Authority adopt the new Fire Plan as produced in the format required by the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 and as required by the National Rural Fire Authority.

## **BACKGROUND (THE ISSUES)**

15. The Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority (CCCRFA) was required, in 2005, to prepare a Fire Plan which complied with the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 for the Council's Rural Fire Authority's territorial area.
16. The former Banks Peninsula District Council Rural Fire Authority produced a Fire Plan which complied with the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005. That Plan was largely based on the CCCRFA Plan and staff from the Christchurch City Council helped in its compilation. The Banks Peninsula District Council adopted its Fire Plan on 31 August 2005.
17. As a result of the merger of Banks Peninsula District and Christchurch City the National Rural Fire Authority has advised that the Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority must now produce a single Fire Plan.
18. In addition under Regulation 40(i)(a) of the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005, all fire authorities are required to review the Fire Plan sections on 'readiness and response' within two years of initial adoption of the Plan ie by 30 September 2007.

## **PRESENT SITUATION**

19. The Fire Service Amendment Act 2005 removed the Rural Fire Management Code of Practice as a standards setting and compliance document.
20. The Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 provide:

Part 2, Fire Control Operations sub-part 1 – Fire Plans of those Regulations state

- (1) A Fire Authority in existence at the commencement of these Regulations must prepare and adopt a Fire Plan no later than 60 days after the commencement of these Regulations.
- (2) A Fire Plan must set out the policies and procedures of the Fire Authority under the following headings and in the following order:
  - (a) Reduction
  - (b) Readiness
  - (c) Response
  - (d) Recovery
- (3) A Fire Authority must provide to the National Rural Fire Authority (NRFA) a copy of its Fire Plan no later than 30 days after the Plan is adopted.

## **FIRE AUTHORITY JURISDICTION**

21. The Council's Rural Fire Authority's territorial area comprises two gazetted Rural Fire Districts: Bottle Lake Rural Fire District, and Chaney's Rural Fire District. The balance of the land outside these two gazetted districts and the NZ Fire Service districts is known as the Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority Territorial Area. This means Christchurch City Council has a legislative requirement to produce three Fire Plans as all three Fire Authorities areas were in existence at the time of passing of the Regulations in 2005. Plans for Bottle Lake Rural Fire District and Chaney's Rural Fire District were adopted on 15 December 2005. However, the Council's Principal Rural Fire Officer is currently discussing with the National Rural Fire Authority and Department of Conservation the possibility of having one Fire Plan covering the entire Christchurch City Council's rural fire area ie a single plan that also covers Bottle Lake Rural Fire District and Chaney's Rural Fire District.
22. A Fire Plan has now been prepared in the style and the format set out in the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005.

## **THE OBJECTIVES**

23. The objective is to prepare a Fire Plan that covers the former Banks Peninsula District and the CCCRFA that meets the requirements of the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005, and which is adopted by the Council as the Fire Authority. Meeting this objective will give the Council continued access to the grant assistance from the National Rural Fire Fighting Fund and grant assistance for our Voluntary Rural Fire Forces registered under an agreement with the NRFA.

## **THE OPTIONS**

### **24. Option A**

The Council could choose to continue to use the existing current Fire Plans. These existing Fire Plans provide a 'response format' which has worked very well for the last two years. However this option would not comply with the requirements of the National Rural Fire Authority.

### **25. Option B**

The Principal Rural Fire Officer prepares a single Fire Plan in the form prescribed by the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005. This option requires the Council, as the Rural fire Authority, to approve and adopt the new single Fire Plan and forward to the National Rural Fire Authority a copy of the Plan within 30 days of adoption. The Council must also make available for public inspection a copy of the Fire Plan under Section 12(4B) of the Fire Service Act 1975.

## **THE PREFERRED OPTION**

26. The preferred option is to have a Fire Plan that complies with the Forest and Rural Fire Regulations 2005. Therefore, option (B) is preferred.

## ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

### The Preferred Option

#### 27. Option B:

Complies with the Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 and the written request of the National Rural Fire Officer to produce a single Plan which combines the existing Plans written and adopted by both the Banks Peninsula District Council RFA and Christchurch City Council RFA.

	<b>Benefits (current and future)</b>	<b>Costs (current and future)</b>
<b>Social</b>	Continues to give the Council access to grant assistance from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund and grant assistance funding for equipment.	There are positive cost benefits by compliance.
<b>Cultural</b>	Expectation that rural fire emergencies will be dealt with 24/7.	
<b>Environmental</b>	Potential for improvement in rural fire management and performance with flow on effects for people, property and the environment.	
<b>Economic</b>	Will give the Council continued access to funding from the NZ Fire Service.	There may be flow on minor costs on compliance but it is difficult at this stage at see where and what they may be.
<p><b>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:</b></p> <p>Primary alignment with community outcome a Sustainable Natural Environment Protection. Also contributes to Liveable City and a Safe City.</p> <p><b>Impact on the Council's capacity and responsibilities:</b></p> <p>Responsibilities to provide a ready reaction response 24/7 under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.</p> <p><b>Effects on Maori:</b></p> <p>Would have been considered as part of the Act review.</p> <p><b>Consistency with existing Council policies:</b></p> <p>Comply with conditions of Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 and the Fire Service Act 1975 and subsequent amendments.</p> <p><b>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:</b></p> <p>There will be support from the National Rural Fire Authority and from other Fire Authorities within Canterbury for Christchurch City Council Rural Fire Authority to remain compliant with the Legislation.</p> <p><b>Other relevant matters:</b></p>		

**Maintain the Status Quo (if not preferred option)**

**28. Option A:**

Retaining the former BPDC and CCC Rural Fire Authority Plans, and non compliance with the Forest and Rural Fire Regulations 2005.

	<b>Benefits (current and future)</b>	<b>Costs (current and future)</b>
<b>Social</b>	Little change providing that service levels comply with the current Fire Plan.	There will be additional cost to the Council as it will not be able to make claims on the Rural Fire Fighting Fund.
<b>Cultural</b>	Still an expectation for the Council to respond to rural fire emergencies 24/7.	
<b>Environmental</b>	Benefits would be as they are present. Missing the opportunity for improvement.	
<b>Economic</b>	Economic cost would vary from year to year but the expectation is there would be a cost to the Council each year.	Costs could vary ranging from several thousand dollars to very significant costs (in the hundreds of thousands).

**Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:**

Primary alignment with community outcome a Sustainable Natural Environment Protection. Also contributes to Liveable City and a Safe City.

**Impact on the Council's capacity and responsibilities:**

Responsibilities to provide a ready reaction response 24/7 under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

**Effects on Maori:**

Would have been considered as part of the Act review.

**Consistency with existing Council policies:**

Comply with the conditions of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, Forest and Rural Fires Regulations 2005 and the Fire Service Act 1975 and subsequent amendments.

**Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:**

The National Rural Fire Authority and other Fire Authorities within Canterbury would probably feel less than satisfied with non-compliance as it is likely it would have some impact on them as well.

**Other relevant matters:**