

12. DRAFT SURFACE WATER STRATEGY

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Draft Surface Water Strategy be approved by the Council for public consultation beginning in July 2009.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The primary purpose of the Surface Water Strategy is to guide the Council's decision-making relating to surface water management, and establish what the Council will do to meet the challenges identified.
3. Over the last 10 years (since the *Natural Asset Management Strategy* was adopted by the Council) the policy and planning framework for surface water management has changed considerably:
 - The Proposed Natural Resources Regional Plan (PNRRP) was notified by Environment Canterbury in 2004. The PNRRP contains objectives, policies and rules governing water quality, quantity, beds and margins of lakes and rivers, and wetlands. It stipulates water quality standards for the region, and minimum flow levels for freshwater resources that Council must comply with.
 - The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS), adopted by the Council in 2007, establishes that urban growth in Greater Christchurch will be accommodated by Greenfield development (at a decreasing rate) and by increasing the rate of urban intensification and renewal within the existing city boundaries. Both forms of development impact significantly on surface water quantity and quality.
4. Improving water quality in Christchurch's rivers and streams (to work towards PNRRP standards) is a challenge, particularly when coupled with Greenfield and intensification development, which increase the impervious surfaces of the city. Increases in impervious surfaces ('hard' surfaces, for example, roads, car parks, buildings) are resulting in more stormwater run-off, carrying contaminants and pollutants into waterways. In the current urban intensification City Plan zones – Living 2 and Living 3 - upgrades to the stormwater network will be needed in some catchments to manage the expected increase in stormwater run-off.
5. Climate change will also impact surface water management. Projections suggest it is likely that heavier rainstorms may occur more frequently. If this eventuates, it will have a significant impact on stormwater management in the city, particularly in areas already prone to flood events. Sea level rise will further increase the risk of flooding in parts of Christchurch, and salt water will reach further upstream, impacting freshwater ecosystems. The capacity of existing stormwater infrastructure will be reduced, and during flood events, stormwater in low lying suburbs may need to be pumped from areas below sea level into waterways with higher water levels. In time this will affect most stormwater systems east of Fitzgerald Avenue.
6. A summary of the current situation and issues was discussed with Councillors at a workshop on the 27 May 2008. Councillors will also have an opportunity to discuss the Draft Strategy at a workshop on 23 June 2009, prior to the Council meeting on 25 June. Key stakeholders, such as Ng i Tahu and the UDS partners, have also been involved in the development process.
7. The Draft Surface Water Strategy (**separately circulated**) builds on the 'values-based' approach to surface water management adopted by the Council in the *Natural Asset Management Strategy*. It includes a vision, plus goals and objectives. It states the Council's policy for stormwater management in different land-use areas, and sets out a programme for meeting the surface water management challenges identified.

8. The draft vision for Christchurch surface water is that:

The surface water resources of Christchurch support the social, cultural, economic and environmental health of the City's citizens, and are managed wisely for future generations.

9. The draft goals are to:

- *Improve the water quality of our surface water resources.*
- *Reduce the adverse effects of flooding.*
- *Improve the ecosystem health of surface water resources.*
- *Restore Tangata Whenua values associated with surface water resources.*
- *Support a range of recreation activities on and around waterways.*
- *Protect heritage values associated with surface water.*
- *Protect and enhance the landscape values of surface water.*
- *Support community involvement in surface water management.*

10. These draft goals are aspirational, long term, and reflect the direction the Council is committed to heading in, for example, stating Council's commitment to improving water quality, rather than maintaining or allowing a reduction in water quality. The goals and objectives are intended to guide Council's decision-making at various levels, from the Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) to individual street renewals. They are long-term goals, reflecting that the Council has a range of strategic objectives that must be balanced and prioritised. However, over time the Council will work towards achieving the goals and objectives, improving surface water management in the city.

11. To work towards achieving the goals, the Draft Strategy includes an implementation programme which focuses on areas where the Council can make the most difference and address the most pressing issues. It reflects a realistic expectation of what the Council can put into action. The draft programme states the Council will:

- *Minimise sources of pollutants,*
- *Manage stormwater in-line with policies stated in the Strategy,*
- *Develop Integrated Catchment Management Plans (ICMPs)*
- *Review development standards,*
- *Implement a community education programme, and*
- *Undertake further investigations.*

12. The development and implementation of Integrated Catchment Management Plans (ICMPs) are the key component of the implementation programme. ICMPs are required for urban catchments stipulated in the PNRRP. ICMPs establish water quality and stormwater management objectives for a given area, and set out how stormwater will be managed to meet those objectives. The South-West ICMP has already been completed, and the Styx ICMP is underway. The Draft Strategy states the Council's commitment to developing ICMPs for all catchments in its jurisdiction, sets the ICMP boundaries, and establishes a programme for development. Page 47 of the Draft Strategy contains more information on the proposed ICMP programme.

13. The extent to which the draft implementation programme is actioned and funded will depend on decisions made in future Long-Term Council Community Plan processes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. As with any strategy the achievement of it is dependent on balancing the goals against the ability to achieve the outcomes. The strategy builds on established principles and practices, but continues to develop these to address emerging standards, pressures and issues. Within the strategy we estimate that all of the short-term (0–3 years) tasks identified in the implementation programme can be financed through existing budgets. Additional funding would be needed to fully fund the medium-term (4–10 years) and long-term (10 plus years) projects. The majority of these costs would be for the preparation of ICMPs:

- \$1.175m in the medium-term (4 – 10 years).
- \$1.25m in the long-term (10 plus years)

15. Implementation beyond current resources will need to be addressed as part of the 2012 and future LTCCPs. More detail on the implementation plan can be found on pages 67 to 69 of the Draft Strategy.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

16. The Strategy provides policy guidance for Council on surface water matters pursuant to the LGA (2002) and the RMA (1991).
17. The Council's surface water management responsibilities are primarily described in the Local Government Act (LGA 2002) and Resource Management Act (RMA 1991). The LGA (2002) requires the Council to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of current and future generations (Section 10 a and b). The Act confers specific land drainage responsibilities on territorial authorities – to assess stormwater services and maintain the capacity of existing stormwater networks (Section 125 and 130). The RMA (1991) promotes the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, and requires the Council to manage the use, development and protection of these resources, including wetlands, lakes and rivers (Section 6). The RMA also requires the Council to give effect to the Regional Policy Statement. The RPS contains two chapters directly relevant to surface water management: Chapter 9 (water) and Chapter 10 (beds of rivers and lakes and their margins). The preparation of ICMPs will enable the Council to meet the requirements of the PNRRP.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

18. Preparation of the Draft Strategy is in line with the Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways Activity in the current (2006–16) LTCCP *“to provide a network of parks, open spaces, waterways and wetlands that meet community and environment needs”*. In the proposed 2009–19 LTCCP, the preparation of the Strategy contributes to the City and Community Long-Term Policy and Planning Activity performance measure *“Advice is provided on key issues that affect the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the city”*.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

19. The Draft Surface Water Strategy supports the implementation of the UDS – integrating land-use, infrastructure and funding. The Draft Strategy assesses the capacity of stormwater infrastructure in current ‘intensification zones’ (L2 / L3 and L4 City Plan zones), and provides guidance for stormwater management in Greenfield and urban intensification areas.
20. The Draft Surface Water Strategy is also part of the suite of ‘Healthy Environment’ Strategies:
 - Biodiversity Strategy (adopted). The Draft Surface Water Strategy supports the Biodiversity Strategy through improving water quality and the ecosystem health of our waterways.
 - Water Supply Strategy (draft). The Draft Surface Water Strategy is linked to the Water Supply Strategy, particularly in those Banks Peninsula communities that rely on surface water for drinking water supply.
 - Open Space Strategy (in preparation). The rivers, lakes, streams and multi-value stormwater management mechanisms (for example, swales and rain gardens) discussed in the Draft Surface Water Strategy form part of the public open space network.
 - Climate Change Strategy (in preparation). The impact of climate change on surface water resources is discussed in the Draft Surface Water Strategy, and will inform the development of the Climate Change Strategy.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

21. The development of the Draft Strategy has been informed by feedback from Community Boards, Te Runanga o Ng i Tahu, Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited, UDS Partners, and external stakeholders including the Avon/Heathcote Ihutai Trust, Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, Environment Canterbury, North Canterbury Federated Farmers, Waihora Ellesmere Trust and Travis Wetland Trust.
22. If the Draft Strategy is approved by Councillors, public consultation will run for five weeks from 6 July to 7 August, followed by a Council Hearings Panel on submissions in September. The final Strategy is planned to be presented to the Council for adoption on 26 November 2009.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Approve the Draft Surface Water Strategy for public consultation.
- (b) Establish a Hearings Panel of up to five Councillors including a Chairperson (to be nominated at this meeting) to hear public submissions and recommend changes to the Draft Strategy to Council.

BACKGROUND

Development of the Strategy

23. The Strategy development began with an analysis of the present situation. A series of background reports were prepared by Council staff:

- *Community involvement in surface water*
- *Climate change effects on surface water*
- *Minimum development standards*
- *Policy and planning framework*
- *Proposed community education programme for surface water*
- *Proposed ICMP programme*
- *Proposed monitoring programme for waterways Summary of key issues and drivers*
- *Stormwater management outcomes and mechanisms*
- *The ecology of Christchurch's surface water*
- *The heritage values of Christchurch's surface water*
- *The recreation value of Christchurch's surface water*
- *The Tangata Whenua values associated with Christchurch's surface water*
- *The urban growth of the Christchurch and its impact on surface water*
- *The water quality and quantity of Christchurch's surface water*

These reports were supplemented by consultant work:

- *Landscape values of Christchurch's surface water (Di Lucas Associates)*
- *Market research: public perceptions for the Healthy Environment Programme (Opinions Research)*
- *Change in impervious surfaces (Landcare Research)*

24. From these reports the current surface water issues and their drivers were identified and presented to Councillors and Community Boards. Key external stakeholders were also invited to comment on the draft reports and the issues identified.

25. Draft goals and objectives were then prepared, based on the holistic, values-based approach to surface water management established in the *Natural Asset Management Strategy*. These goals and objectives were discussed with Community Boards, Ng i Tahu, and the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy partners and committee (which includes Waimakariri District Council, Selwyn District Council, and the New Zealand Transport Agency).

26. The proposed stormwater policies are the result of an assessment of stormwater mechanisms. A range of stormwater management mechanisms (for example, detention basins, pipes, swales and rain tanks) were assessed against their ability to meet the Draft Strategy's goals. Capital and operational costs of the different mechanisms were also compared. Finally, the feasibility of the mechanisms in different land-use areas was considered.

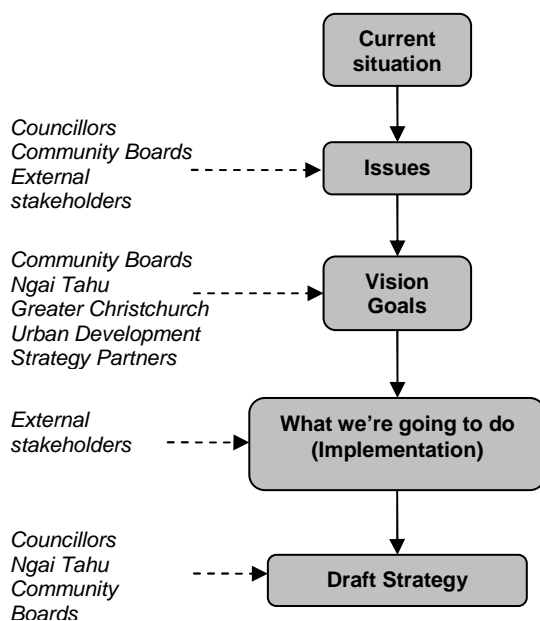
27. The proposed ICMP programme was developed by assessing the ICMP areas against a set of criteria: whether the ICMP is required by the PNRRP, whether Greenfield or urban intensification development is planned, flood risk is high, or existing water quality and biodiversity values are high. This assessment allowed a 'ranking' of ICMP areas, which is reflected in the timeframes outlined in the implementation programme.

28. Due to the need for co-ordination with other organisations (particularly Environment Canterbury), the policies and programmes relating to stormwater management were reviewed by external stakeholders

29. To develop the proposed community education plan, existing community education relating to surface water was reviewed. Key target markets were identified and outlines for education plans drawn up. These are summarised in the Draft Strategy.

30. Finally, the Draft Strategy itself was pulled together, and a series of internal meetings held with staff throughout the Council to review the draft before being presented to Councillors.

Figure 1: Development of the Draft Surface Water Strategy



The Policy and Planning Context

31. The Council's planning and management of surface water sits within a complex national and regional policy framework, set out in both statutory and non-statutory documents. At a national level the RMA (1991) and the LGA (2002) describe the Council's responsibilities in relation to surface water.
32. The LGA (2002) requires the Council to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of current and future generations (Section 10 a and b of the Act). The Act confers specific land drainage responsibilities on territorial authorities – to assess stormwater services and maintain the capacity of existing stormwater networks (Sections 125 and 130).
33. The RMA (1991) promotes the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, and requires the Council to manage the use, development, and protection of these resources, including wetlands, lakes and rivers (Section 6). This is achieved through a hierarchy of policy statements and plans.
34. The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) contains objectives for enabling the use of freshwater while safeguarding the life supporting capacity of the resource, preserving natural character, protecting habitats, and maintaining and enhancing amenity values. The Council is required to give effect to the RPS, and must comply with the regional objectives, policies and rules established in the Proposed Natural Resources Regional Plan (PNRRP). The PNRRP contains objectives, policies and rules, governing water quality, quantity, beds and margins of lakes and rivers, and wetlands. It sets water quality standards and minimum flow levels for freshwater resources, including surface water.

35. The Draft Surface Water Strategy establishes the Council's strategic framework for meeting policy and planning requirements (for example, the proposed ICMP programme, partly required by the PNRRP). It also identifies other challenges, such as providing infrastructure to support the UDS, and managing the impact of climate change. The proposed implementation programme identifies changes needed to current development standards (set in the District Plans, the Infrastructure Design Standards, and the Waterways, Wetlands and Drainage Guide). It also recommends the preparation of ICMPs and development of community education programmes.

Figure 2. The relationship of the Surface Water Strategy to the RMA (1999) and LGA (2002)

