5. POSSIBLE NON-STATUTORY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ESTUARY

Report prepared by Phil McGuigan Canterbury Regional Council.

AVON-HEATHCOTE ESTUARY

At the Joint Committee meeting held at the City Council offices on 14 April 1999 a report was tabled which outlined options for the management of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary.

In their discussions the committee favoured the Non-statutory Estuary Management approach as being the preferred management option.

Still to be examined are the methods for achieving this.

Following the Joint Committee meeting, staff of the City and Regional Councils held a joint meeting to expedite matters in relation to the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. Despite open discussions there remains a difference of opinion over the process that needs to be followed.

This report deals with a Regional Council view on how the preferred management option might be achieved.

The non-statutory approach favoured is considered to have some significant advantages:

- Encompasses the diverse interests involved.
- Allows "participatory decision making" as distinct from "autocratic authoritative figure decision-making".
- Process orientated.
- Retains flexibility. Not everything has to be decided from the outset.
- Can involve statutory instruments.
- Can consider the establishment of management structures.

BACKGROUND

There is a wealth of knowledge about the Avon-Heathcote Estuary, both amongst the community and from past joint staff examinations of issues and options assembled in a number of documents and reports. The question to be asked is, what has been the outcome from the assembly of all this knowledge?

Frustration over apparent inaction has lead to the Christchurch Estuary Association's proposal.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the report be considered in conjunction with that of the City Council's Senior Planner, Conservation.

POSSIBLE NON-STATUTORY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ESTUARY

RR 10101

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Corporate Plan Output: Conservation Policy Advice	

BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, several reports have been presented to this Committee on joint management options for the Avon/Heathcote Estuary. These have included suggestions for:

- A joint "memorandum of understanding" to clarify areas of responsibility and day-to-day management of the Estuary
- A small brochure to explain these responsibilities and points of contact for the public

However, to date no comprehensive document has been produced which outlines a vision and policies for the Estuary, combined with a list of projects to achieve these aims. The public perception is that no integrated planning is happening. This has lead to a move on the part of a couple of "interest groups", particularly the Christchurch Estuary Association, to start developing their own "charter for the Estuary.

OUTCOME FROM A COMMUNITY FORUM IN MARCH 1998

A Community Forum, organised by the Christchurch Estuary Association and the Friends of the Avon, and supported by the Canterbury Regional Council and the Christchurch City Council, was held at the Mount Pleasant Community centre on Saturday 7 March. Over 50 people attended, including representatives from the Canterbury Regional Council and the Christchurch City Council. The general concensus of the group was a desire to see a community-evolved management for the Avon/Heathcoty Estuary. However, the process for achieving this was not entirely clear.

WHO SHOULD DRIVE THE PROCESS?

Given that there seems to be concensus for the need for a non-statutory management plan, the main issue is who should have the overall responsibility for initiating and overseeing the process. The Christchurch City Council and Canterbury Regional Council both have statutory responsibilities under the Resource Management Act, part of which has been expressed through the City and the Proposed Coastal Environment Plan. Both of these documents have been through a rigorous public participation process and form the basis for resource management planning of the Estuary and its environs. Therefore, the framework is already set. In addition, the outcome of the management plan should not conflict with the content of either of these plans. The other aspect to be considered is that the two Councils will have financial responsibility for any work to be undertaken to achieve the outcomes identified in the management plan. Taking these factors into consideration, the most practical option would seem to be a process initiated and guided by the two authorities, with realistic options and opportunities that would be taken to **all** interest groups for discussion and resolution.

It is important that the process used ensures that the wider Christchurch community and all interest groups have an opportunity to influence the plan, and that the decisions are taken by those with a direct responsibility for their cost implications.

Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to the Christchurch City Council and the Canterbury Regional Council that they jointly prepare a non-statutory management plan for the Estuary, using a process which ensures that all interest groups and the wider community have opportunities for input.

Chairman's Recommendation: For discussion.