

<b>Officer responsible</b> Environmental Services Manager	<b>Author</b> Jane Donaldson
Corporate Plan Output: Building Consents, Subdivision Consents and Resource Consents	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a new service introduced recently by the Environmental Services Unit.

This new service provides project co-ordinators upon request for significant building developments and subdivisions. The aim is to provide a single point of contact with the Council, and to avoid any unnecessary delays in the overall process to obtain development approval.

Over the past 18 months the Environmental Services Unit has been meeting regularly with two groups of customers. One group comprises local developers and the other is made up of representatives from professional bodies such as Master Builders, Architects, Designers, Engineers and the Planning Institute. It was at these consultative forums that several of our major customers sought the introduction of this service. They indicated they were prepared to pay for it, as they were of the view that this would be cheaper than the cost of delays.

As the new service will streamline the processing of consents required for major developments and has been introduced in response to requests from developers, the Strategy and Resources Annual Plan Working Party endorsed a new charge of \$85.00 per hour. This will be added to the Environmental Services Unit's schedule of fees for the 1999/2000 financial year. This charge has been calculated on a cost recovery basis. There will be no charge for the initial meeting between the applicant, the project co-ordinator and other relevant Council staff.

The Annual Plan Working Party also resolved that details of the new service be submitted to the Environment Committee, including consideration of the possible extension of this system to cover all resource consent applications.

At the moment, the Unit is not sufficiently resourced to be able to extend the service. The service offered covers buildings consent, subdivision consent and land use consent applications using existing Team Leaders responsible for these outputs and two senior planners. In seeking the introduction of this service our customers made it clear they expected senior staff to fulfil the role of project co-ordinators in order for it to succeed. These staff already have high work loads, and budget constraints preclude the appointment of additional staff at the present time. If the service proves to be popular and well utilised, however, we may be able to employ additional staff on a cost neutral basis. At this early stage it is not known what the demand is likely to be.

Our long term aim is to provide some form of project co-ordination for all projects, not just resource consents as suggested by the Annual Plan Working Party. In practise we have found that single processes such as resource consents or buildings consents generally run smoothly. It is when more than one process is involved that life becomes more difficult for applicants. This is compounded if more than one Unit is involved. For example, a proposal to open a licensed café/bar with outdoor tables and seating can involve up to four Council Units and requires a multitude of approvals under different legislation such as building consent, resource consent, sale of liquor, health licensing, structure on street, trade waste and dangerous goods. It is not difficult to see that this is where real problems can arise for applicants, and where the new service is most likely to provide benefits. It is for that reason that we are targeting these types of development with the project co-ordination service. We also believe that the service will highlight where bottlenecks occur and where our processes generally need improvement. This will be helpful in pinpointing specific areas in need of process re-design.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.