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Corporate Plan Output: Capital Outputs (9.3.54)	

The purpose of this report is to seek confirmation of the approach to be used for the adoption of an asset management strategy for Waterways and Wetlands before the October 2000 budget round.

**THE ESSENCE OF THE STRATEGY**

Recently the Christchurch City Council decided to take a values-based approach to the management of the natural and physical resources that make up Christchurch’s system of waterways, wetlands and drainage. This approach has a two-fold benefit. Not only does it satisfy the Council’s responsibility to maintain its assets in good condition and budget accordingly, it also provides a means by which the Council delivers on the resource management objectives and policies contained within its City Plan.

Examples now exist of how the Council’s values-based approach has worked in practice. These include Corsers Stream, a naturalized waterway that links the Avon River and Travis Wetland as a green corridor with pedestrian access and which was less costly than the original piping scheme; Janet Stewart Reserve which is a Stewart family bequest to the people of Christchurch that has become a celebration of waterways and wetlands beside the Styx River; the wet-pond associated with the Wigram Retention Basin which not only traps contaminants from an industrial catchment, but also provides a wonderful habitat for birds and plants adding life to the landscape.

Planned with imagination and sensitivity along with community consultation, waterways and wetlands can do much to enrich Christchurch. The challenge is to progress from the past thinking of responding to needs only with engineering solutions, to one in which an investment is made in forethought and sustainability.

By understanding the natural processes linking land and water we are much more able to bring to life the values important to our community. These values have been specifically identified as ecology, landscape, recreation, heritage, culture and drainage.

The preparation of the strategy in consultation with elected representatives and Tangata Whenua is the beginning of a long process of realising the values in a way that is sustainable for present and future generations. Its success depends on full participation of the key partners and the interest and support of the key stakeholders identified in the strategy.

It is intended that this document be the foundation for a strategy that will continue to be developed through ongoing consultation and monitoring of progress.

Background information is attached to this report.

## **SEMINAR AND PROJECT AREA APPROACH**

A seminar on the strategy as it has been developed to date was held for committee members and staff on 17 September 1999. The basis of the seminar was provided by a document that provided background, an overall vision and strategy for Christchurch and specific strategies and concepts for 14 project areas. The project areas are quite different from each other. Not only do they serve to express the diversity of water environments, land use and neighbourhoods that exist within the city, but they also make it easier to discern important issues and appropriate budgeting and priority responses.

The contrast between the project areas was illustrated with presentations at the seminar of three project areas and associated costs and time-frames. Based on this experience it was considered desirable for the committee to become familiar with all the project areas and associated costs in time for the budget round next year.

## **STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING SEQUENCE**

The strategy is supported by a considerable amount of study relating to urban growth, floodplain management, groundwater and surface water quality protection, the economics of different design solutions and the ecology of the system. Implementation of the measures identified in the strategy will require further input of key partners such as Community Boards, other Council units and community groups and the guidance of key stakeholders. Gaining this input is part of the strategy.

It is envisaged that, as a 40 year strategy, there will be ongoing opportunity for it to be modified in accord with new knowledge and circumstances. This fits in with the Council's normal capital expenditure budgeting approach where the first few years are detailed with less defined, more 'generic', activity identified beyond five years.

The project area approach will enable decisions on individual expenditure items to be considered within an overall context or 'vision' for a locality. It is also possible that project areas could become a catalyst for integrating the work of other units, especially for Community Boards who require thrice-yearly reports on capital expenditure progress for the wards they are responsible for.

A reporting sequence for the development and adoption of the strategy needs to take account of the committee's metropolitan responsibilities, ie the overall strategy and budget provision and the Community Board's interest in the work to be undertaken within each project area.

It should be noted that all Community Boards have had presentations on most of the project areas pertinent to their jurisdiction.

## **Suggested Reporting Sequence**

- Parks and Recreation Committee Seminars
  - November 1999 to September 2000  
Project area reports
- Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
  - October 2000  
Overall strategy and budget
- Community Boards
  - November 1999 to September 2000  
Present any project areas not already presented
  - November 2000  
Report on the overall strategy and budgeting decisions
  - Thrice-yearly reports on capital expenditure
- Key Stakeholders

Annual report to key stakeholders on progress on asset management strategy with feedback included in report to Council on performance, ie report to key stakeholders meeting in August each year; report to Council on performance targets in September each year.

## **BUDGET ALLOCATION**

All the measures identified in the strategy have been costed and time-frames assigned. No smoothing or cost adjustments have been made at this stage. The average annual cost is approximately \$1.5M greater than current allowance. The proposed reporting sequence will enable the cost to be progressively modified in time for adoption of the strategy of the committee's October 2000 meeting. For the present budget round capital expenditure would remain at existing levels.

The strategy has revealed the need for a significant investment in planning and investigation work without which many of the measures cannot be achieved.

The estimated cost is \$670,000 per annum for the first five years and \$190,000 per annum thereafter. It is proposed that the need be satisfied by a combination of:

- redeployment of some existing staff
- reduced design and consultancy costs
- an increase in operational costs to cover additional staff

The last item will be included in the pink pages section of the Waterways and Wetlands budget for consideration by this committee through the 2000/01 annual plan and budget process. The asset management strategy has identified the need for two additional permanent staff positions to undertake the increase in planning and investigation work from July next year.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the project area approach and the reporting sequence for the development and adoption of the Strategy for Waterways and Wetlands described in this report be adopted.
  2. That the 2000/2001 budget proposals, including additional planning and investigation staff requirements, be received.

**Chairman's Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.