

12. AVON-HEATHCOTE ESTUARY : ISSUES REPORT

Officer responsible Environmental Policy and Planning Manager	Author Adele Scoon Graduate Planner
Corporate Plan Output: Conservation Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to inform Board members of the recent completion of an 'issues' discussion document for the Avon–Heathcote Estuary and adjacent land, and its place in the production of a non-statutory management plan for the Estuary.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, concern has been expressed about unresolved issues and the most appropriate form of management of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. In response, a lot of discussion and a number of reports have been prepared by Council staff for the Environment and Joint CCC/CRC Committees seeking to identify and address many of these issues. However, it is acknowledged that many issues still remain unresolved and a plan is required which facilitates greater integration, co-ordination and co-operation in the management of this valued resource. Both Councils have now agreed to pursue a non-statutory management plan for the Estuary which ensures that all user groups and the wider community have opportunity for input.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

As a first step, an issues report has been prepared to form the basis and preliminary stage towards developing this non-statutory management plan. It provides an overview of the issues affecting the Estuary in order to stimulate thought and focus public debate on the issues and possible options for their resolution. It outlines the process that Environment Canterbury and the Christchurch City Council have agreed to follow in the development and implementation of a non-statutory management plan (as shown on attachment (a)) and the opportunities for the public to be involved in the process.

The report identifies the major contentious issues affecting the Estuary as:

- Public access and illegal structures
- Recreational use and capacity
- Protection and enhancement of Estuary margins
- Protection of Estuary ecology
- Sea lettuce growth
- Sea level rise and surface flooding
- Sedimentation and erosion
- Water quality
- Catchment issues
- Confusion over roles and responsibilities
- Roading and transport

After investigation of alternative mechanisms, this report reinforces that a non-statutory management plan is the most effective method of achieving greater integration, co-ordination and success in resolving many of the outstanding issues affecting the Estuary. It also acknowledges current and future Council projects and policies which may contribute to the future resolution of some of the issues involved.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The next stage in the process of developing the management plan is to place this report before the Environment Committee and joint Ecan/CCC Committee and then release the report to the public for their consideration and discussion at a public workshop to be held at a later stage (see attachment b). It is hoped that this will provide an opportunity for the public to identify any further issues that they see as important and to consider possible options for the resolution of these issues. The outcomes of this workshop will contribute to the content of the draft non-statutory management plan.

Recommendation: That the Board's comments and views on the report and process are sought.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** For discussion.