

9. WASTEWATER STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

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The purpose of this report is to inform the City Services Committee of the rationale for, and the progress made in the preparation of the Christchurch Wastewater Strategic Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

In November 1996, the Council convened a community working party to help it formulate its approach for the renewal of the consent for the discharge of treated wastewater from the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant. This working party expressed concern that there was no long term vision or plan for the wastewater system within which such major projects and decisions could be placed in context.

There are a number of significant drivers for such a Wastewater Strategic Management Plan including:

- Part XXXI of the Local Government Amendment Act 1974 (LGA), requires Local Authorities to prepare a waste management plan, but recently the High Court ruled (*Manukau City Council v The Attorney General HC Auckland M104-IM99*) that this includes wastewater (as well as solid waste).
- Section 31(a) of the Resource Management Act 1991 which specifies the following function of territorial authorities (a) the establishment, implementation and review of objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources.
- A desire to see the development of wastewater minimisation at source.
- The growing challenges of environmental sustainability and tangata whenua cultural values
- Issues surrounding on-site systems in the rural areas
- The need for a vision for planning purposes.

The purpose of a Wastewater Strategic Management Plan would be to set the key directions required to meet the wastewater management challenges of the next 30 years.

The Plan will also provide practical ways of complying with the

- City Council's Mission Statement
- Objectives for wastewater management, and
- Christchurch City Council Environmental Policy Statement.

For these reasons council resolved in December 2000 to develop a long term Wastewater Strategic Management Plan in terms of Part XXXI of the Local Government Act 1996.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The project (prepare a Wastewater Strategic Management Plan) has now been scoped and the work of preparing the actual plan is underway.

The Plan will be an overarching document articulating social, technological and ecological visions for the production and treatment of wastewater from both domestic and business/industrial sources and biosolids from the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant. The management of bulk liquid hazardous wastes will also be covered. Other specific matters will include desired environmental standards, levels-of-service, the role of outlying communities, funding, ownership, and possible changes to the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant beyond its current 30-year plan.

It will not be a detailed action plan. This is provided by the Wastewater Asset Management Plan which describes programmed future capital and maintenance and associated long term budget forecasts (including depreciation) for the public wastewater system assets.

It is intended that this initial plan will set out the present management framework and outline possible options for the future. The options will be discussed and an indication given of their likely suitability for use within the Christchurch context. It is thought that the first edition of the plan will be a relatively small document and will narrow down the options to a few more likely viable ones and conclude with a recommendation that further work be undertaken to investigate these options in more detail over the next period.

It is envisaged that the preparation of this initial plan will be given a relatively low public profile and not involve extensive public dialogue and input. Rather it will be limited to input from a small number of key interested and knowledgeable people with a range of viewpoints, combined with a short series (perhaps 3 or 4) focus groups involving small groups of the public to gauge wider community feelings on the subject.

It is proposed that Councillors appoint a subcommittee (perhaps three to five members) who will report progress on the preparation to the City Services Committee and full Council.

It is anticipated that The Plan will be in a position to be presented to Council in July 2002 as shown on the attached barchart timetable.

Work on the findings and recommendations of the initial Wastewater Strategic Management Plan will commence immediately after council adopts the document. This will conclude in the preparation of a second and more detailed Wastewater Strategic Management Plan, which is likely to involve greater community wide consultation. This latter document should be ready for presentation to Council in a further three years time.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the course of action proposed in this report be approved.
 2. That a Wastewater Strategic Management Plan Subcommittee be appointed after the October 2001 elections.

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