4. EBEX21 PROGRAMME FOR REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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The purpose of this report is to review previous reports and Council decisions regarding the EBEX21 initiative and to propose recommendations that both reflect and clarify previous conclusions.

This project has been reported to both Environment and Parks and Recreation Committees, each Committee recommending that the Council supports the scheme. At the full Council meeting, questions were asked about certain aspects and it was agreed that before proceeding with the partnerships envisaged by EBEX21, a Council seminar be arranged to review the project. This was held on 27 August and was addressed by Richard Gordon, Director, Landcare Research. The consensus view of Councillors at the seminar was that the Council should endorse involvement in EBEX21 and encourage companies wishing to engage in carbon sequestration as a means of offsetting carbon emissions to use the EBEX21 vehicle.

A summary of previous information describing the scheme is set out below:

1. EBEX21

Essentially EBEX21 is a non profit enterprise set up by Landcare Research to facilitate the trading of greenhouse gas emission in exchange for carbon certificates which can be generated by developing carbon sinks, especially through the development of native forest in perpetuity.

EBEX21 is targeting nationally three major issues facing New Zealand today:

- *Climate change fuelled by greenhouse gas emissions.*
- *Biodiversity decline*
- *Resource use efficiency and waste minimisation.*

In addition to the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change, there has been a move by Corporations to compensate for carbon dioxide emissions through sponsoring or funding through partnerships the development of carbon sinks. The EBEX21 scheme facilitates this process.

Organisations are encouraged to express interest in joining as sponsors or partners. There are commitments needed to make a significant difference to energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and to fund native tree planting or restoration projects.

Sponsors	***Partners***
* *Can be private sector and government agencies.* * *Are helped by EBEX21 to assess and reduce energy use and emissions.* * *Fund EBEX21 to support native plantings and restoration.* * *Aim for "emission-zero" business or products on a reasonable timescale.* * *Engage staff/clients with projects, if desired.* * *Receive audited reports of carbon and biodiversity gains.*	* *Supply land under legal protection in perpetuity.* * *Manage planted/restored sites.* ***Or*** * *Supply seedlings, fencing etc* * *Employ and train new staff.* * *Develop new methods to reduce costs.* ***Or*** * *Assist with energy audits and reduction projects* * *Assist with monitoring carbon and biodiversity gains.*

2. THE BENEFITS

The benefits for Christchurch are significant. The off-setting of greenhouse gas emission is an important contribution to our future health and well being. EBEX21 will work with organisations to reduce their emissions by setting significant goals. The benefits include the biodiversity value of the project, the undertaking to reduce emissions and the use of carbon sequestration to offset emissions not able to be eliminated.

Although the establishment of native forest tree plantings is the ultimate goal there is no reason why mixed plantings of exotic trees should not be included. The bottom line however, is that the restored native bush/forest is not intended for felling.

There will be revenue in the form of in-kind labour, supply of plants, fencing, and weed control through the companies in the EBEX21 project. This will enable our current planting programme to go further and achieve more in a shorter time.

Most of the planting will be carried out on our larger regional type parks where average maintenance costs are $1,000 per hectare. With help from organisations to release plants from grass and other weeds, maintenance costs will be kept to a minimum.

3. ROLE OF SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Sponsors

As facilitated by Landcare Research the sponsors or corporate sector and business will be involved in planting native trees and restoring existing sites to achieve carbon sequestration, usually through a combination of dollar contribution and in kind activity. Companies whose emission 'footprint' requires allocation of an extensive area of land may choose to achieve this by taking responsibility for an area of high country land and a smaller high profile area from the Council where it could showcase its activity through signage and provide a base for staff involvement.

Putting back native forest in perpetuity is the best way of locking up greenhouse gases in the long term. It also helps to:

- *Restore bird and insect life and other organisms*
- *Provide ecosystem services such as enhancing riverbanks, reduction in water pollution and cooling/cleaning air in cities*
- *Enhance our landscape*
- *Provide new opportunities for citizens to engage in Council parks projects*

What distinguishes EBEX21 is that:

- *Results will be audited, scientifically verified and quotable with confidence.*
- *Organisation emissions are offset in the present*
- *Environment, social and economic issues are addressed together.*
- *Opportunities exist for organisations staff and customers to be involved.*
- *Opportunities for cost-saving through resource use efficiency and waste minimisation.*
- *Government will be asked to include EBEX21 approach in Kyoto responses.*

Landcare Research will be responsible for leverage of funds from organisations contributing to the programme.

Partners

As a partner the Christchurch City Council through the Parks & Waterways Unit will provide land under open space protection in perpetuity.

The unit will manage the planted and restored sites with help from the sponsors.

Two sites have been surveyed for this project and work has already started in a small way in two valleys on the Port Hills at Dry Bush and Bush Head, Bowenvale Reserve.
On these sites some planting has commenced and fences installed to stop stock grazing the new plants. These sites will slowly regenerate with new plantings and weed control measures to ensure the success of the trees and shrubs.

Other sites such as other Port Hills Parks, The Green Edge, Travis Wetland and Heathcote Valley Waterways can be considered. In all cases certain scientific criteria will be used when considering sites including ease of monitoring, plant growth potential and available seed source.

4. NAMING RIGHTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Businesses and corporations may wish to install signage to indicate their sponsorship and interest in the site.

Currently we have an Adopt-A-Park scheme, which allows "ownership" of the particular sites by assisting the City Council to manage and maintain a particular park or part of a park.

The sponsors will be acknowledged on a standard Adopt-A-Park sign at the site and will be issued with a certificate by Landcare Research indicating their adoption and the area involved in EBEX21.

Organisations will be able to use the name of the site in any advertising material, as being part of the programme.

Additional points to note are:

1. Recognising the credibility that involvement through EBEX21 will confer on company participation, it is recommended that the Council promotes EBEX21 as the preferred scheme for carbon sequestration.

2. Because of the very long timeframe involved, there is a need to ensure that the land use is protected in the long term. Typical reserve status may not be adequate and other instruments such as covenanting or adopting a more protective status such as "Scenic Reserve" could be advisable. This issue will be investigated and reported back.

3. Concerns about indigenous versus exotic planting can be addressed by requiring that new planting conforms with the Council's planting strategy.

4. The EBEX21 strategy is to show how a company can reduce its emission 'footprint' and then employ carbon sequestration to offset the remaining emission content.

5. The Council can engage in the programme in two ways - as a sponsor whereby it uses planting to offset its own emission footprint and as a partner, ie a supplier of land to allow planting or regeneration. Both roles are recommended

6. The Council will need to be cautious when establishing projects to ensure the ongoing commitment can be met within existing maintenance programmes. Examples of where this will be possible include offering land where planting programmes are already planned and budgeted, or alternatively land that is already earmarked and managed for regeneration.

Recommendation:

1. That these recommendations replace those adopted by Council on 26 July 2001 dealing with the EBEX21 programme.

2. That the Council endorses the EBEX21 programme for the offsetting of carbon emissions through carbon sequestration.

3. That the Council agrees, in principle, to participate in the programme as a Partner by providing land to be used in perpetuity for afforestation.

4. That the Parks and Waterways and Property Units prepare a strategy that identifies and prioritises land suitable for EBEX21 projects.

5. That a report be prepared jointly by the City Council and Landcare Research on how the programme can be implemented.

6. That the report includes recommendations on the appropriate status to be given to the land used for EBEX21 purposes

7. That the report includes information on indicators to be used to measure the Councils carbon emission footprint and recommendations on how the Council can address its carbon emission through carbon sequestration.

8. That new planting be in accordance with the Council's planting strategy.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the officer's recommendations be supported.