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**Report 00.656**

22 August 2000

File: X/23/5/7

(Report 2000-656 TP:ln)

Report to the Environment Committee  
from Tim Porteous, Policy Advisor

## **Vision Statement and Action Plan for the Pauatahanui Inlet**

### **1. Purpose**

- a) To present to the Committee the Vision Statement and Action Plan for the Pauatahanui Inlet which has now been finalised by the Pauatahanui Inlet Advisory Group (PIAG) following the consultation and hearing processes held earlier this year; and
- b) To recommend that the Council consider adopting the Vision Statement and Action Plan for the Pauatahanui Inlet.

### **2. Background**

Against a background of on-going concern about degradation of Pauatahanui Inlet, a workshop was held in May 1999 to discuss the future of the Inlet and how to go about initiating a process to prevent further degradation. The workshop was attended by a large number of people from a wide range of organisations including Wellington Regional Council, Porirua City Council, Ngati Toa, the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet, the Department of Conservation, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Transit NZ, Ministry of Fisheries and others. A number of Councillors from this Council and the Porirua City Council attended.

The primary outcome of the workshop was a decision to set up a small advisory group that was tasked with developing a vision statement and action plan for the Pauatahanui Inlet. This Council undertook to set-up and lead the advisory group. The advisory group (now known as PIAG) included representatives from:

- Porirua City Council
- Ngati Toa
- Pauatahanui Residents Association
- Whitby Coastal Estates

- Silverwood Forest Corporation
- Wellington Regional Council
- Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet
- Whitby Residents Association
- Federated Farmers

The Wellington Regional Council has chaired the PIAG and regular meetings have been held. The representatives of the Whitby Coastal Estates, the Silverwood Forest Corporation and the Whitby Residents Association attended the initial meetings but then chose to step back from the process.

In the period since it was established, the PIAG has:

- developed a draft Vision Statement and Action Plan;
- undertaken a round of public consultation;
- held a report-back session for all those who attended the original workshop (refer Attachment 1);
- released the draft Vision Statement and Action Plan for public comment and submissions;
- held a hearing for submitters; and
- finalised the Vision Statement and Action Plan in the light of feedback from the public consultation, submissions and the hearing.

### **3. Submissions and Hearing**

Submissions on the Draft Vision Statement and Action Plan were called for during May 2000. Thirty-seven submissions were received and nine submitters asked to be heard. A hearings committee was established comprising Councillor Shields, Jenny Brash, Mayor of Porirua, and three members of the PIAG. The hearing was held on 12 June.

The submissions covered a wide range of issues and were generally supportive of the draft Vision Statement and Action Plan. Key issues that were raised in the submissions include the following:

- Vision Statement - that it did not adequately portray desired outcomes;
- Boatsheds - expressing support for restrictions on total number and alterations to existing structures;
- Walkway around the Inlet - support for the construction of a walkway;
- Research - need for further research into water quality and sedimentation effects;
- Roding - the impact of roads on the Inlet and the need for roading strategies to take impacts into account; and
- Some new issues including shoreline erosion and the effects of sea level rise.

Submitters also raised a large number of issues which cannot be properly addressed through changes to the Vision Statement and Action Plan but which are relevant to the implementation of the Action Plan. These issues have been listed in an appendix to the plan.

#### 4. **Vision Statement and Action Plan**

The Vision Statement and Action Plan has been amended as a result of the feedback from the consultation, submissions and hearing. The changes are more in the detail than the substance however. A copy of the finalised Vision Statement and Action Plan, entitled *Towards Integrated Management – Pauatahanui Inlet Action Plan* is attached.

Changes made to the Vision Statement and Action Plan include:

- A rewording of the Vision Statement;
- The addition of a number of new issues - 1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 5.4, 8.2 and 8.3;
- Amendments to the wording of a number of new issues and actions which clarify the intent but do not affect it;
- A new Appendix II with background information about the Pauatahanui Inlet Advisory Group;
- A new Appendix III which sets out the implementation issues raised by submitters; and
- A new Appendix IV which sets out the projects already underway which are relevant to the implementation of the Vision Statement and Action Plan.

The PIAG feels that it has completed the task it was given in terms of developing a community vision for the Inlet. It is now in a position to present that vision to the Wellington Regional Council and the Porirua City Council and ask that the Councils adopt the vision and implement the action plan. The PIAG is an “advisory” group only. It does not have the capacity to instruct the Council to undertake any actions and what the Council does as a result of the work done by the PIAG is entirely its own prerogative. However, there is a degree of expectation that the co-ordinated commitment of agencies and the community is what is required to improve the health and vitality of the Pauatahanui Inlet. The adoption by the Council of the Vision Statement and Action Plan will be a tangible indication of the Council’s continuing commitment to achieving better and integrated management of Pauatahanui Inlet.

#### 5. **Implementation of the Action Plan**

The Action Plan encompasses a range of existing functions and projects that are already funded by the relevant agencies in this financial year. This recognises that there is a range of activities already undertaken by relevant management agencies such as this Council which will contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan.

In terms of the 2000/01 financial year, the Council has allocated a sum of \$40,000 for the implementation of the Vision Statement and Action Plan. It is envisaged that this

budget will be used for a range of projects in conjunction with funding from Porirua City Council. In subsequent years it is hoped this Council's commitment to fund will continue to be matched by Porirua City Council.

A report commissioned by the two Councils, *The Pauatahanui Estuary and its Catchment: a Summary of the Literature* has been completed recently and identifies a number of areas where there are gaps in our knowledge of the Inlet (to be tabled at the Committee Meeting). In summary these gaps are as follows:

- Various issues to do with sediment such as the specific interaction between sedimentation processes and the estuarine ecological and hydrological processes;
- Climate and the periodicity of storm events;
- Tidal flushing and sediment circulation in relation to the wider harbour; and
- The distribution of plant and animal pests in and around the Inlet.

In addition, the following implementation actions are currently underway or planned in the immediate future:

- Determining the role and structure of the on-going group (see 6 below);
- Investigating the viability of care groups for the catchment with the local community and establish if viable;
- Identifying sites where riparian planting would be beneficial in reducing stream bank erosion and enhancing habitat. Liasing with landowners;
- Pursuing opportunities with landowners wishing to protect native vegetation on their land;
- Working with Porirua City Council to identify potential contamination from septic tanks at various sites
- Investigating methods for controlling the spread of *Undaria* in the Inlet.

It is probable that some of the two Council's \$80,000 will be used to contribute to funding projects on these issues.

## 6. On-Going Group

One of the implementation issues raised by the PIAG and included in the Vision Statement and Action Plan (7.1) is the need for an "on-going group" which would be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan and making the link between the management agencies and the community. This group would replace the PIAG whose task is effectively completed. At this stage it was considered important to finalise the Action Plan, obtain endorsement from the two Councils and address the issue of the on-going group separately.

Council officers are intending to investigate this issue, define the range of tasks that it would be appropriate for this group to undertake and identify a range of options/models for the group's structure. This matter will be reported to both the Council and Porirua City Council for the consideration of Councillors later this year.

**7. Communications**

It is proposed to publicise the joint adoption of the Vision Statement and Action Plan for Pauatahanui Inlet by media releases in association with a public launch of the plan later this year.

**8. Recommendation**

*That the Vision Statement and Action Plan for the Pauatahanui Inlet, “Towards Integrated Management – Pauatahanui Inlet Action Plan”, be adopted by the Council.*

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Attachments: 2