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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Trecia Smith, Environmental Planner, Flood Protection Group

Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan : Environmental Strategy

1. Purpose

To seek Landcare Committee adoption of the Hutt River Environmental Strategy, subject to minor editorial changes.

2. Background

The Hutt River Environmental Strategy was jointly developed over a two year period by iwi, the Upper Hutt City Council, the Hutt City Council and the Regional Council. Comment was sought from the public in November 1999 on three concepts for managing and developing the Hutt River environment. Submitters strongly supported the proposed 'Linear Park' concept.

Alison Newell, Resource Planner, prepared a draft Hutt River Environment Strategy based on the 'Linear Park' concept. On 29 June 2000, the Hutt River Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (HRFMAC) endorsed the draft Environmental Strategy and recommended that it be referred to the Hutt City Council and the Upper Hutt City Council.

The Environmental Strategy was presented to the Landcare Committee on 24 August 2000. The Hutt and Upper Hutt City Councils endorsed and supported the Environmental Strategy at meetings on 5 and 6 September 2000 respectively. **Attachment 1** contains a letter from the Upper Hutt City Council and a copy of the Hutt City Council's resolution.

3. Environmental Strategy

The Hutt River Environmental Strategy is a key component of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. It describes a long term vision for the river and sets the strategic direction for the environmental management and development of the river, and its margins. Principles contained within the Environmental Strategy will be taken into account in the structural design phase of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. **Attachment 2** describes the Environmental Strategy programme.

3.1 Linear Park Vision

The Environmental Strategy presents opportunities that may be adopted as and when funding becomes available. The purpose of the Environmental Strategy is to encourage management of the Hutt River and its corridor in a way that:

- maintains and enhances the river environment.
- provides for a range of recreational uses.
- contributes positively to the community's spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing.

The vision of the strategy is:

“The river and its corridor developed as a linear park that provides a tranquil environment where people can go to escape the hustle and bustle of urban life, and enjoy the natural character of the river.”

The vision is supported by concept plans that provide a guide to realising the community's aspirations for the Hutt River.

Guiding principles supporting the Environmental Strategy's purpose and vision include:

- protecting and enhancing the ecological and cultural values of the river and its margins.
- improving and extending passive recreational facilities.
- allowing iwi participation in decision-making, as well as providing for community input.

3.2 Measures Ensuring that the Flood Defence System will not be Compromised

The Environmental Strategy is a strategic document and is a component of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. Implementation of the Environmental Strategy must not compromise the Hutt River's flood defence systems. The security of the flood defence system is proposed to be ensured by:

- clear guidance and policies in the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan protecting the primacy of the flood defence system.
- public ownership of land, primarily by the Regional Council.
- rules in relevant Regional and District Plans governing activities in the river and floodplain.
- developing bylaws, if required.

3.3 HRFMAC Continues to Set Direction

The Upper Hutt City Council, the Hutt City Council and the Regional Council will be the key agencies implementing the Environmental Strategy. The Environmental Strategy proposes that the management and implementation of the Strategy is overseen by a representative steering committee, comprised of iwi, and councillors and officers from the councils. The Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils support this approach. However, the exact nature of the steering group is yet to be decided. It is proposed that the HRFMAC undertake this role in the meantime.

3.4 Funding

The adoption of the Environmental Strategy places no extra funding obligations on Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council or the Regional Council. The Strategy will be implemented as and when funding becomes available. Likely funding sources are the Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, the Regional Council, and community groups. Direct and indirect provisions within the Regional Council's 10 year plan (2000-2010) for environmental enhancement works on the Hutt River are:

Hutt River Ranger (eight years from 2002/03)	\$ 922,000
Habitat enhancement (four years from 2003/04)	\$ 34,000
Environmental Strategy implementation (2007/08)	\$ 50,000
Environmental Enhancement associated with Capital Works (Indirect) (5% of \$15 million)	<u>\$ 750,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,756,000

4. Publishing and Distribution

The Environmental Strategy will be published and distributed once adopted by the Landcare Committee. Minor layout and editorial changes, including the addition of specific references, are required before publishing. Changes made to the document will not result in significant alterations to the draft Environmental Strategy, already endorsed by Hutt City and the Upper Hutt City Councils.

The programme for publishing is:

- Complete editorial changes by 1 December 2000.
- Complete layout changes by 15 December 2000.
- Complete printing by 18 December 2000.
- Distribute copies of Environmental Strategy by March 2001.

Copies of the Environmental Strategy will be made available to those agencies with an interest in the Hutt River. This will include iwi, Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, and environmental groups. Community groups, e.g. Rotary Clubs, will also receive copies of the document, as will schools and libraries in the Hutt Valley area. Other interested parties, such as elected councillors and members of parliament, may also wish to have a copy and provision will be made for extra copies in these instances.

5. Communication

Adoption of the Environmental Strategy will be reported back to the community through the next 'Living with the River' newsletter and a press release in local papers. The release of the Environmental Strategy will build on the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan public awareness initiatives to date. This should help maintain the community's interest in the ongoing development of the floodplain management plan, and the Hutt River environs.

6. Recommendations

That the Landcare Committee:

- (1) *Note that the primacy of the flood defence system is to be ensured by the inclusion of clear policies in the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan.*
- (2) *Note that Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council have endorsed the Hutt River Environmental Strategy.*
- (3) *Adopt the Hutt River Environmental Strategy, noting that the Flood Protection Group requires flexibility to carry out minor editing and layout changes as part of the publishing process.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1 : Letter from Upper Hutt City Council and the Hutt City Council resolution

Attachment 2 : Environmental Strategy Programme