

REPORT OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE REGULATORY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 29 CIVIC AVENUE, GORE ON TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2012, AT 4.47PM.

PRESENT His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks JP), Cr Highsted (Chairperson), Crs Beale, Bolger, Davis, Dixon, Gover, D Grant, Redhead and Sharp.

IN ATTENDANCE The Chief Executive (Mr Stephen Parry), General Manager, Corporate Services (Mr Russell Duthie), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Roading Manager (Mr Murray Hasler) Asset Manager, Utilities (Mr Ross Haslemore), Senior Assets Management Officer (Miss Sarah Dowling), General Manager, District Assets (Mr Paul Withers), Planning Consultant (Mr Keith Hovell), Communications Co-ordinator (Mrs Sonia Gerken)(departed at 6.36pm), Corporate Support Officer (Mrs Tracey Millan) and two members of the public in the gallery.

APOLOGIES Crs P Grant and Watt apologised for absence.

Cr Highsted called for any conflicts of interest. None were received.

1. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT (11.19.1)

A memo had been received from the Planning Consultant advising Environment Southland had notified the proposed review of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) on 19 May 2012.

The Planning Consultant said Councillors and staff had had significant input to the draft RPS. The Committee could wait to see what other submissions were lodged before it decided which submissions it wished to be involved with.

In response to His Worship asking what impact the RPS would have in refining the Council's District Plan, the Consultant said it would not slow the process in terms of key areas. In regard to some other some areas such as the bio-diversity and wetlands, the RPS was trying to move further in these areas than in the past. That was why the Act stated once the RPS statement was operative, Councils would be required to assess if they needed to make changes to District Plans.

His Worship asked if it would then be prudent to hold off reviewing the District Plan until the RPS was finalised.

In response to Cr Bolger, the Consultant said there had been a number of rules in place about how wetlands were to be drained. Far more attention had been given to the issue in recent times.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Dixon, THAT the Council note the public notification of the proposed Regional Policy Statement,

AND THAT the District Growth Committee be delegated authority to lodge a submission and any further submissions on behalf of the Council to the proposed Regional Policy Statement.

2. NZHPT REGISTRATION OF WILLOWBANK WINDMILL AND WATER TANK (50.4)

A memo had been received from the Planning Consultant, together with a copy of a proposal to register as a Category 1 structure, the Willowbank windmill and water tank located at the corner of Waikaka Road and State Highway 90.

In response to Cr Highsted, the Consultant advised Category 1 meant the highest end of protection should be achieved in almost any case. He advised a correction to his report. The land was not owned by the Council; it was owned by the Department of Conservation. The Council administered the land.

In response to His Worship, the Chief Executive said the land area involved was about half an acre.

In response to Cr Dixon asking where the blades were from the windmill, the Consultant said they were at the Croydon Aircraft Company for repairs.

In response to Cr Redhead, the Consultant said the staff of the Historic Places Trust reported to a board. A report had been prepared with input from a number of organisations. There had been full support for the upgrade and the inclusion of the water tank.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Grant, seconded by Cr Davis, THAT the Council note the change in registration by the NZHPT for the Willowbank windmill and water tank and actin proposed to be taken to update the listing in the District Plan.

3. REGIONAL WATER PLAN (11.19.2)

A memo had been received from the Planning Consultant, together with a copy of a submission lodged to the plan change by the Chief Executive.

In response to Cr Highsted, the Consultant said it was a land use consent looking at suitability of land for dairy operation. It had come about from concerns on marginal land.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Redhead, seconded by Cr Gover, THAT the Council note and endorse the submission lodged to the Regional Water Plan, Change 13.

4. BACKGROUND REPORTS TO INFORM THE DISTRICT GROWTH STRATEGY AND THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DISTRICT (60.10.4.1)

A memo had been received from the Planning Consultant that outlined the various work streams undertaken in 2011 to assess the impacts that could occur if large scale developments such as lignite mining and processing was to be undertaken within the Gore District.

The Consultant said the reports had been prepared over a 12 month period. The transportation report was a model that scenarios could be put into and related to all of the Southland and Clutha districts.

The social and economic issues looked at existing structures and setting up models to see what the implications could be if there was to be large growth. It provided a description of what demographic and economic structures were now, and where they could go. It also looked at a framework of where the District could go in 10-15 years. There were issues in the area of young people aged 15-20 leaving town but also showed some people aged over 30 were returning. A challenge would be what to provide to prevent the 15-19 year olds leaving the town.

The ecological report provided a database of potential significant indigenous vegetation areas and what the threats were. As there were non-regulatory conditions in the District Plan, it was one area where it would be appropriate for the Council to hold back to wait and see what came out of the Regional Policy Statement.

The Council infrastructure report provided models of the Council's water, sewerage and stormwater infrastructure. Some of the information received had not been the full picture so additional field work had been required and the intention would be to come back to the Council in August with some firmer recommendations of where it should be heading.

The Consultant advised all information had been pulled together as a resource around landscape issues and regulatory documents for future use.

All available information about natural hazards and contaminated land had been brought together. Environment Southland had updated plans for natural hazards for flooding to peripheral areas of the District and would be included in the plan changes that would come back to the Council.

Cr Beale asked if there was a register available at the Council where contaminated sites or hazards could be recorded, including historical sites. He noted from information received in recent submissions to the Long Term Plan, the old hunt club farm in East Gore had an old horse grave yard and on the south side of Reaby Road there was an old mine shaft.

The Consultant said the Council now had in place a national standard relating to contaminated sites and it was still working through that with Environment Southland to see how the document would be administered. There was a layer on the GIS system, not available to the public that showed sites that might be subject to contamination. If someone wanted to build a house on an area of land where there was a possibility it could be contaminated, a series of steps were taken. It was an expensive process, so when a building consent was received old photographs were looked at and information was sought around things such as sheep yards and dips. There was more information available on urban sites and the GIS system was utilised. When a request for a LIM report was received, it was noted if there was a possibility that there had been an activity on that site that could have caused contamination. Natural issues such as old mine sites was available on files.

In response to Cr Davis asking if any more details would go into the District Plan around significant sites, the Consultant said in terms of landscape he saw nothing in the information collated that would point to a change in the Plan. The pattern in resource management was that many landscapes were seen as working landscapes until there was a major development proposed. They were then to different degrees, seen as an importance to local communities. There would still be debate about how important the landscape was to the local community.

In response to Cr Sharp asking if statistics were available for the last six years, the Consultant said the Christchurch earthquakes had prompted the cancellation of the last census. Other statistics would be collated to look at what was happening in the district. A census was being planned for 2013 and results would be 12 months after that.

His Worship said he was pleased to see the reports at this stage. They were vital steps on the future of the Gore District. They would raise as many questions as they did answers. It was the first part of what would be a long journey for the Council and staff as it put together a growth strategy from the reports.

In response to His Worship asking what the Chief Executive saw the time frame being for the next step in the process, he said the plan was to get the Long Term Plan adopted and put to bed. In July, as a lead agency, Opus Consultants would be commissioned to synthesize the information contained in the background studies and to meet with the authors of the reports and work with the District Growth Strategy Committee to eventually develop some scenarios.

One of the big questions to be asked would be to have the likes of Solid Energy which had a very influential role on how the future might play out, at the table. There would be no point in developing scenarios without having a key developer at least privy to some discussions so that planning was somewhat accurate. With Solid Energy developing its plans for a lignite to urea plant, it was envisaged a site would be firmed up by the end of the calendar year. He saw the district growth strategy being about a year in gestation, which would include a consultation process with the public. Roughly speaking, sometime mid next year a district growth strategy would be in place and would spawn whether the District Plan would need to be amended.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Redhead, seconded by Cr Beale, THAT the Council note action taken and proposed in relation to the background reports to inform the District Growth Strategy and the potential effects of large scale developments in the District.

5. REGULATORY BULLETIN (11.5.2/2.14.3)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive along with a schedule of building consents issued for April 2012, together with comparisons of the previous two years. A schedule of landuse consents issued as at 23 May, road closures and stopping had also been received.

In response to Cr Highsted, the Parks and Recreation Manager said the removal of a protected tree in Railway Esplanade had been necessary as the tree had been in a state of decline and was proving to be dangerous.

The Planning Consultant advised he had been consulted about the tree and was satisfied that it be deemed as emergency work under the act to protect health and safety.

The Consultant advised a variation to the briquetting plant had been approved the previous week.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Grant, THAT the information be received.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATORY PERFORMANCE - INQUIRY
(2.30)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive together with a copy of an introductory letter from the New Zealand Productivity Commission informing that it had been asked by the Government to investigate regulatory performance with local government.

The Chief Executive said it was a part of a suite of reforms that related to local government regulatory performance. The Council prided itself as a pragmatic and user friendly organisation when using regulatory services. It was not the same at other Councils. There was a high level of inconsistency. He understood why the Government's urgency to find out what the issues were and how it might interface with the inquiry process. It would be fascinating to see whether the conclusions drawn were a legal or organisational culture problem. He suspected it would be the latter.

His Worship said he had had the good fortune to meet with the commission and had been very impressed at the way it was going about the inquiry. He now knew more about the Commission that was very interested in local government. He thought the Council should connect with the organisation as time went on and register its interest to interact with it.

In response to Cr Redhead, the Chief Executive said the Commission would gather a lot of statistics and engage with key organisations that interfaced with local government as well as Councils.

His Worship said the Commission was interested in local government as a whole.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Bolger, THAT the letter from the New Zealand Productivity Commission be received,

AND THAT the Council note the Commission's Terms of Reference for its local government regulatory performance inquiry.

The meeting closed at 5.25pm.