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Report to Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Phillip Percy, Resource Advisor – Policy and Planning

End of Year Summary – Policy and Planning Section

1. Purpose

To provide a brief summary to the Committee of the subdivision and land use consent applications commented and submitted on by the Policy and Planning Section for the 1999-2000 financial year.

2. Background

The Policy and Planning Section comments on non-notified subdivision and land use consent applications that are lodged with the three Wairarapa district councils. This is not a statutory responsibility, but has been a long-standing arrangement between the Regional Council and the district councils. The Section also makes submissions on notified subdivision and land use consent applications on behalf of the Regional Council.

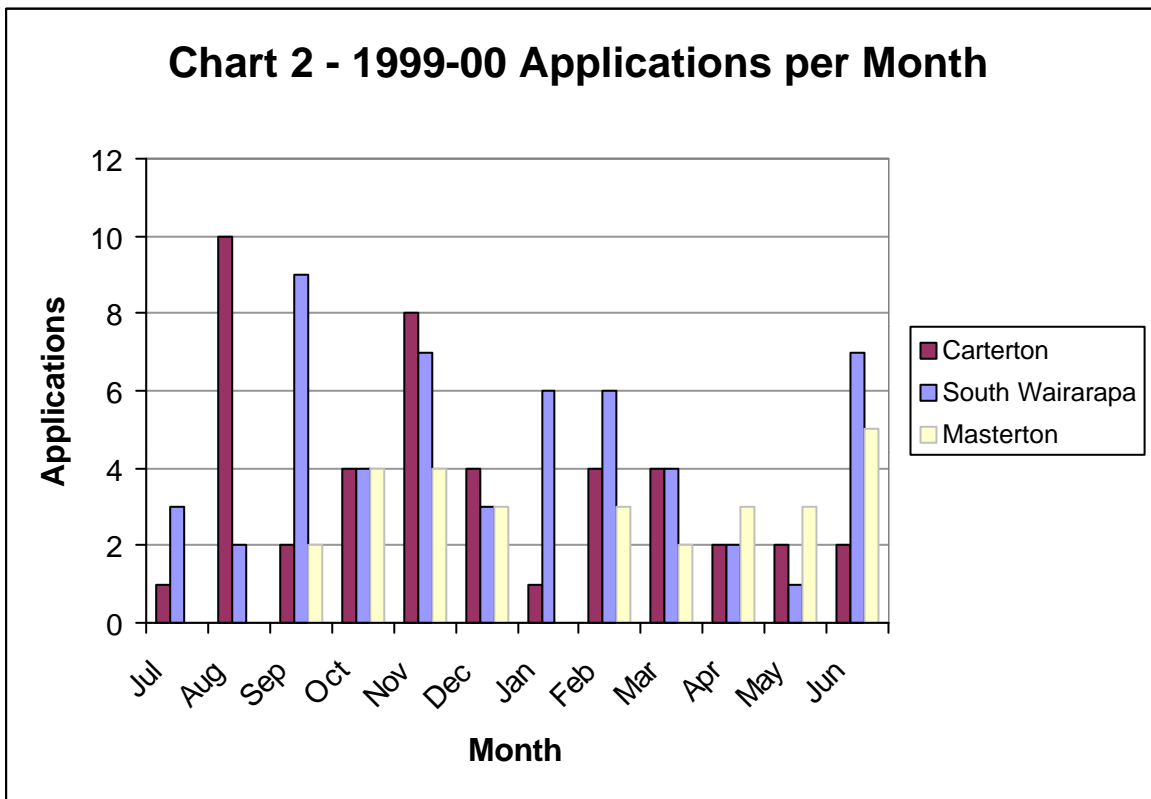
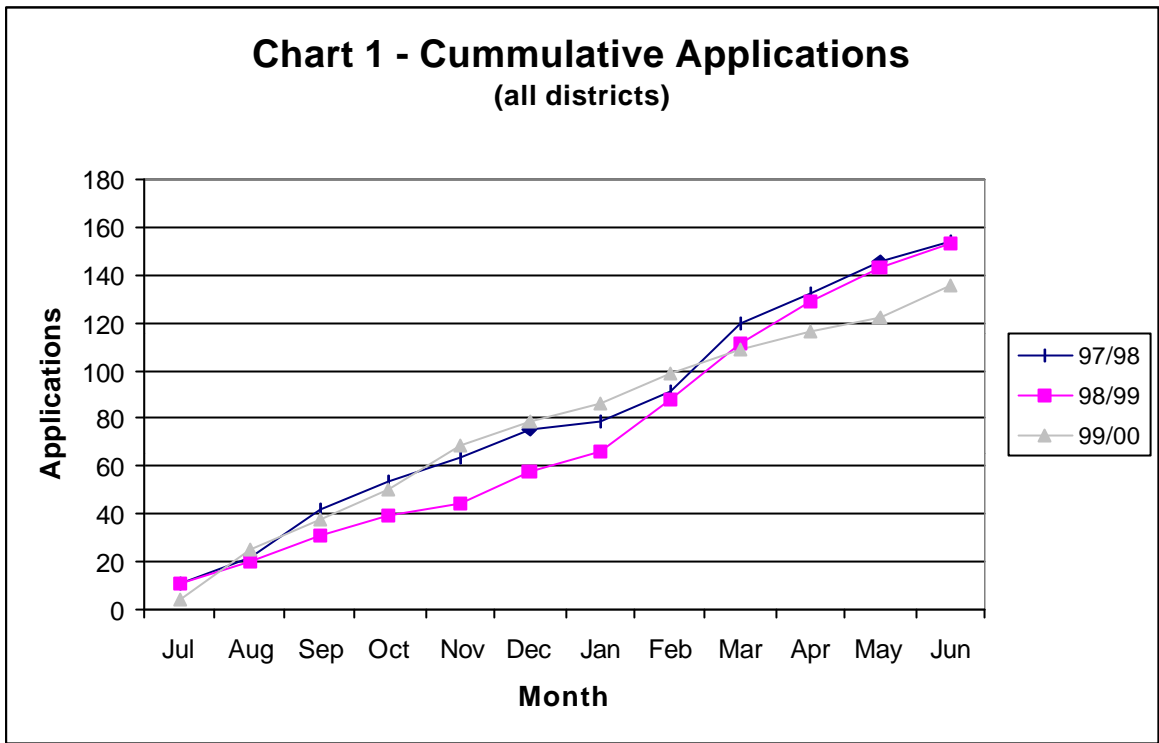
The comments and submissions made, relate to the Regional Council's responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991, and are generally guided by the objectives, policies and methods in the Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plans.

3. Comment

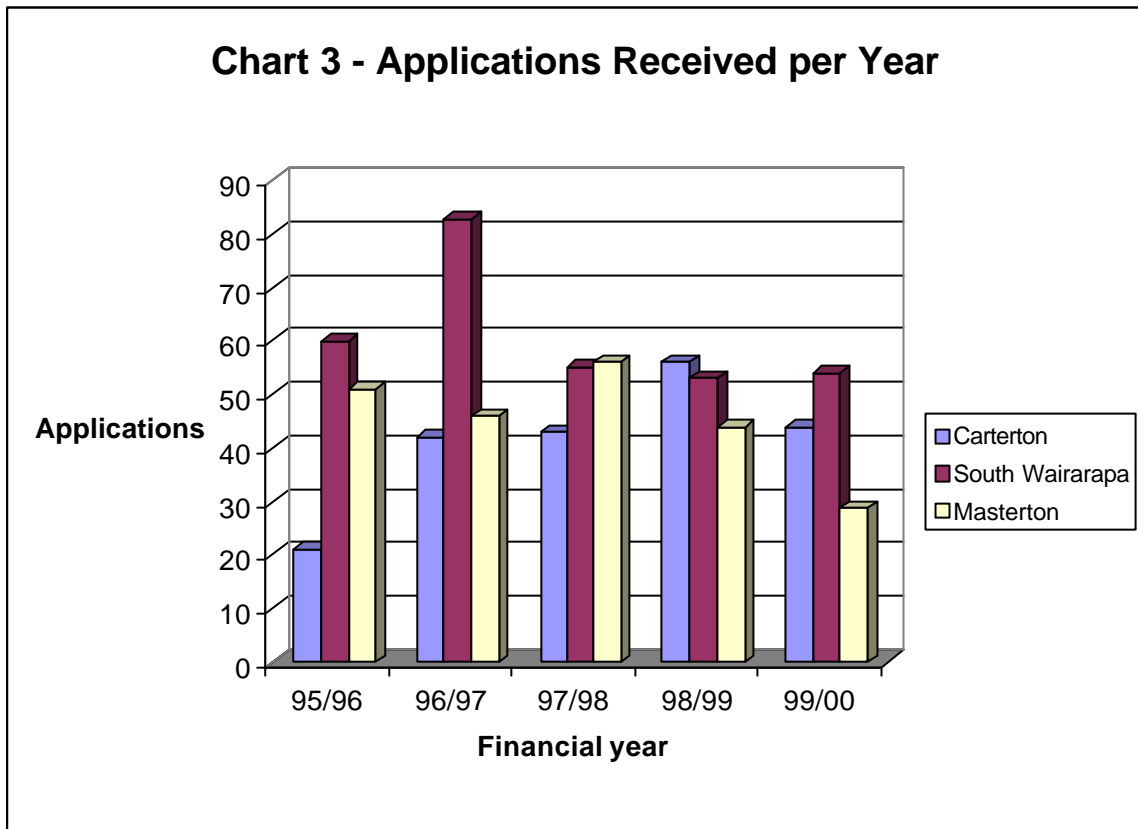
3.1 Application Trends

The total number of applications received by the Section is down on previous years. There has been a marked reduction in the number of subdivision consent applications since February 2000, particularly when compared to the previous two years (refer Chart 1). Both of the previous two years experienced a surge in the summer months before levelling out again as the colder months approached, (traditionally a time of low development activity). The summer/winter trend has not been apparent this year. It is curious to note a slight upturn in applications in June 2000, an unusual trend leading into winter. The slight upturn is seen in the

results for both Masterton and South Wairarapa Districts, while Carterton remains at a fairly constant level (refer Chart 2).



It is interesting to compare the number of applications received from each district over the past five years (refer Chart 3). South Wairarapa, as expected, has seen a consistently high number of subdivision and land use applications compared with the other two districts. Of particular note is the 80 plus applications received in 1996-97, which equated to more than twenty above any district in any other year. Masterton has shown a fluctuating trend, however this trend may be influenced by the fact that the Regional Council has not been receiving all the applications for comment from the Masterton District Council. Carterton shows a relatively even pattern (except for the 95/96 period) with approximately 40 applications per year.



3.2 Policy and Planning Activity

The majority of applications are for rural subdivisions. The most common area of comment and submission over the past year has been effluent disposal (56 comments/submissions). Due to on-site effluent disposal being a permitted activity under the Regional Discharge to Land Plan, it is vital that new subdivision lots are designed so that the permitted activity requirements are achievable.

Natural hazard comments are also common, particularly in relation to flooding and bank erosion. Many subdivisions are located next to or near rivers. Recommendations are made, in consultation with the Engineering Section of the Operations Department, on the areas that are likely to be subject to inundation or erosion and are therefore inappropriate for house sites. A total of 49 comments or submission made during the year relating to flooding and/or riverbank erosion.

One key area that has been particularly topical in the past year has been coastal subdivision. All three districts have experienced increases in pressure for coastal

subdivision over the past few years. In the past year Policy and Planning received and made four submissions on coastal subdivisions, was involved in pre-application consultation on a further five, and continues to be involved in two applications currently under appeal with the Environment Court. The Regional Council has a clear responsibility through its Regional Policy Statement to ensure that the coastal environment is being protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and this responsibility is being actively met via the subdivision and land use consent processes.

Other areas of comment included:

- Proposed Soil Plan Provisions for soil conservation, roading and tracking, and vegetation clearance;
- Protection and preservation of indigenous vegetation and ecosystems;
- Odour and reverse sensitivity issues, primarily in relation to subdivisions near existing piggeries;
- Freshwater Plan Provisions relating to groundwater abstraction, discharges, or activities in or near waterbodies;
- Identification and recommendations, in conjunction with Resource Investigations (Wellington), regarding potentially contaminated sites;
- Promotion and protection of Land Improvement Agreements and riparian protection areas; and
- Identification of faultlines and subsequent recommendations for building setbacks.

5. **Communications**

No additional communication is necessary.

6. **Conclusions**

The trend for the 1999-2000 year reflects an overall reduction in subdivision applications being commented on by the Section. However, it is considered that this trend will fluctuate as development activity responds to influences such as economic confidence, agricultural sector earnings, and market demand for property.

7. **Recommendation**

That the information be received.

Report prepared by:

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