



CHAIR'S REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Michael Higgins, Environment & Planning Committee Chair

REFERENCE: S611

SUBJECT: **CHAIR'S REPORT - REPORT EP10-04-06** Report prepared for meeting of 8 April 2010

The past few weeks have been relatively quiet for the Environment & Planning committee, as Council concentrated on annual work-plans and budgets. A Policy hearing on the issue of frost fans has been completed and staff are formatting decisions for release. Submissions to this hearing were of a high standard, with a big effort made by affected parties. I am mindful of the evidence that rural people working in the rural environment are being subjected to noise through the night that is unreasonable at best, and perhaps intolerable.

Council as a whole, in its endeavour to implement permissive rural policies, has stepped in a hole on this issue and needs to put it right. To have two fans operating in close proximity to a house from 2.30 am until daylight on a consistent basis would never be tolerated anywhere else and arguably, should never have happened here.

The further issue of rural noise from motor-cross bikes in Golden Bay has received some action in the past month and hopefully an agreement with property owners will be achieved.

Council has been unsuccessful in an Environment Court challenge against a building consent issued in Torrent Bay. In reviewing the case, I have to say that I am comfortable with staff action on this consent, and regard the court decision as a line call. I would not like staff to become "gunshy" over this decision and to continue best endeavours to do the right thing. Mr Bush-King will refer to this at the meeting.

It was expected that the Committee would have received further advice today on zoning policy around Mapua. As you might guess, national policy on sea level rise is causing staff to take care over advice on the issue. For that reason, the advice has gone back for further review.

Today is a good day to chew issues over as we have the time.

Michael Higgins
Chair, Environment & Planning Committee