

**SUBMISSION BY SPREYDON/HEATHCOTE COMMUNITY BOARD
ON DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2006**

(NOTE: THIS IS A DRAFT SUBMISSION; IT IS SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION BY THE BOARD AT A MEETING ON TUESDAY 17 MAY 2005)

GENERAL SUBMISSION

Presentation, Process and Timeframes

The Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board would like to see a more “user-friendly” approach taken by production of a short, 4-6 page synopsis of the Annual Plan, with an explanation of its relationship to the LTCCP; making it clearer that the Annual Plan is an “add on” to the latter. Although it is difficult to significantly modify the LTCCP, the Annual Plan can provide an opportunity for Council to make necessary changes (Section 85 LGA).

In terms of the Annual Plan’s relationship to the LTCCP, the two processes should be tied together better, to avoid potential confusion. For example, only 6 days after the submissions on the Annual Plan close, the Council will then begin public consultation on draft community outcomes. Better planning and coordination of consultation would help to avoid any public confusion.

Changes to Less Significant Services and Activities

At the level of detail in the draft Annual Plan, it is difficult for elected members to identify whether there are going to be any changes to activities/services below the level of a significant activity (and if so, the nature of those changes). The Board seeks an assurance through the Annual Plan that the status quo will remain for such activities/services unless there is specific reference to a variation or discontinuance in the Plan or the variation or discontinuance is approved by the affected Community Board(s) or Council.

SPECIFIC SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT

Democracy and Governance

The Board questions the basis of the allocation of the cost of proposed services to “Democracy and Governance” (page 45). The only explanation given for the increases or decreases is determinations of the Remuneration Authority. A cynical view of the \$11 million cost allocated to “Democracy and Governance” would be that this is a convenient way of reducing the apparent cost of all other services.

The performance measures in the “Democracy and Governance” section are almost meaningless as measures of democracy and good governance, and require to be completely rewritten. One performance measure for Elected Member Representation should be “Monitoring of the financial performance and reporting of the Council on at least a quarterly basis”.

Since the Council is a public body, it must be seen to undertake relevant and meaningful financial monitoring and publish its accounts. There are also sound business reasons to do so. The Council should have reports on the performance of the administration against the Council’s objectives and financial management. The Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board submits that in order for the Council to fulfil its governance role, it is necessary for Council to receive at least quarterly budget reports in its agendas.

Timing of Major Capital Projects

The Council is urged to adopt as part of the Annual Plan a policy of more flexible timing for capital projects (particularly major building and roading projects), in order to achieve the same results at lower cost. This can be achieved by factoring in economic “peaks and troughs” to planning; so that wherever possible the peaks are avoided and implementation of major projects is undertaken during the “troughs”, in order to make cost savings and level out economic activity - thus benefiting both ratepayers and the local economy.

The Council as a Good Employer

Having regard to the Council’s embracing of *Triple Bottom Line* reporting, its statutory duty to be a good employer (Section 39, LGA) and several of the identified Community Outcomes, the Annual Plan must include meaningful performance measures to enable the community to judge the Council’s performance in this important area and hopefully to see the Council as leading by example.

KEY ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE TO BE ADDRESSED BY NEXT LTCCP

The Board would like to give an indication of key issues of importance that it will be promoting to be addressed in the next LTCCP.

- The administration building on the former Hillmorton Hospital site is worthy of retention and restoration. As a start, the Board is funding, from its 2004/05 project funds, the cost for a conservation plan to be undertaken for the building.
- Consideration should be given as to how the two storey Water Services building adjacent to the Beckenham Service Centre/South Library can best be utilised for community and Council purposes.
- The Board will be paying close attention to the development of the Council’s Aquatic Strategy, to ensure the needs of residents in the Spreydon/Heathcote ward are met.
- The Board is strongly supportive of urban renewal initiatives that support community “hubs” and promote local economic activity. To the extent to which funding is available for such activity, reactivation of the “Sydenham Town Enhancement Strategy” is a priority.
- Desirable activities identified by the Heathcote River Vision project and the Heathcote Asset Management Plan may require an increase in funding.

Phil Clearwater

Chair

Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board