

19. BELFAST AREA PLAN

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Community Board of progress with the Belfast Area Plan and, in particular, the March consultation component of the process. This report follows on from the general introduction to the Belfast Area Plan introduced to the Community Board on 22 January 2003.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS ON 10 AND 12 MARCH 2003

Public meetings were held at the Belfast School Hall on 10 and 12 March 2003. The purpose of the meetings was to provide a community voice to the way the area should continue to be developed over the next thirty years, the main issues of the area and the values that the community wished to be retained. Attached is a summary of the main points (Appendix 1) that were highlighted as a result of these meetings. It was interesting that on both nights the same issues and values were raised. The key issues were:

- To develop an integrated village character for Belfast, as distinct from Christchurch City;
- To develop a community 'heart' for the area, centred around the existing Sheldon Park;
- To improve public transport, both within Belfast and into the City;
- To develop the physical environment through enhancing the rural feel of the area;
- To co-ordinate improvements to, and the linking of, parks and reserves.

The role for the Council will be to work with a number of other agencies, eg Transit NZ, to ensure that the issues raised at the community meetings can be fully examined. The next part of the Area Plan process will involve discussion with such agencies, Council Committees and the Board to ascertain whether realistic progress can be made towards meeting such requests. The Council should pass on any progress to the community of Belfast to help prioritise issues and to provide an opportunity for their input. It is hoped that another Belfast community meeting will be held in May 2003 to report on progress and seek further input.

MAY COMMUNITY MEETING

Upon completion of the environmental constraints and opportunities analysis in March, it is proposed that a further workshop be held with the local community to develop preliminary land use concepts. The approach would be two fold:

Firstly the project team would provide background information on the area and broad land use options. The workshops would then develop this information into preliminary land use concepts that would indicate the location of industrial activities, future residential development, reserves, a community focal point, and green belts.

Secondly the workshops would examine key locations within Belfast (and with the help from Council staff) identify and sketch up potential design ideas for these. These would include:

- The northern and southern gateways to Belfast;
- Sheldon Park and the surrounding area.

Feedback will also be received at these meetings about the issues and values to be maintained in the preparation and implementation of the Area Plan for Belfast.

CONCLUSION

Overall the community input into the Area Plan has been overwhelmingly positive. The values and issues that are important to the development of Belfast are being communicated to the Council through this process. Consequently, the Council (in conjunction with a number of other agencies) is being provided with an opportunity to proactively plan for the strategic development of the area in a manner that links together the economic, social and environmental needs and values of Belfast.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the staff recommendation be adopted.