

**REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER**

**1. COMMUNITY AREAS AND WARDS WITHIN CHRISTCHURCH CITY –  
SEEKING COMMUNITY VIEWS** RR 10489

<b>Officer responsible</b> City Manager	<b>Author</b> Stephen Phillips
Corporate Plan Output: Various	

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the outcome of consultation with residents on the proposed new electoral boundaries and to seek agreement on an electoral proposal for forwarding to the Local Government Commission. Councillors will recall that the Council requested the Local Government Commission to not promulgate a final re-organisation scheme relating to a proposed merger with Banks Peninsula until this consultation had taken place. The Commission is aware that the Council intends to resolve the matter of boundaries at this Council meeting.

**BACKGROUND**

At its special meeting held on 2 July the Council resolved (inter alia):

*“That the techniques for seeking community views as outlined in the City Manager’s report be adopted subject to all publicity and explanatory material setting out clearly:*

- (a) The option recommended by the local Commissioners.*
- (b) The current ward system.*

*That the consultation process be focused on seeking a clear expression of preference as between the option recommended by the local Commissioners and the current ward system.*

*That information and attitudes be sought on the implications of moving from the current pattern of boundaries to the pattern proposed by the local Commissioners.*

*That in the process of seeking the views of the public, under the Council’s Seeking Community Views Policy, views on the names for the proposed community and ward areas be sought.”*

## 1 Cont'd

The techniques used for seeking community views were:

- Focus Group Research
- City Scene
- Residents/Stakeholders group meetings

Banks Peninsula District Council was invited to comment on the proposals.

Two schools were also invited to participate in a “community of interest” project.

### CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following summarises the process in respect of the three key pieces of consultation undertaken.

Gary Nicol Associates conducted four focus groups during the last two weeks of July. For focus group purposes the City was divided into four quadrants and participants from each quadrant were randomly selected. Group sessions were held at Sockburn, Beckenham, Shirley and Papanui Service Centres.

A four page “Ward Boundaries” supplement was included in the July City Scene. Readers were invited to either return a reply paid submission form or forward a letter/submission.

The response rate (when compared with the Banks Peninsula issue) was disappointing with 64 submission forms being returned. In addition to these submission forms 34 letters/submissions were received.

During the last week of July public meetings were held at each Service Centre and at the Civic Offices.

Again, the response was disappointing with a total public attendance (excluding elected members and staff) of 35 persons.

### VIEWS OBTAINED

- **Focus Groups**

The Executive Summary of the report from Gary Nicol Associates details the main findings as follows:

- “
  - *Focus group attendees in general appeared to be most interested in making a contribution to the consultation process*”

1 Cont'd

***Community Board Boundaries***

- *Group members agreed that the proposed boundaries for the community areas generally reflected the City's communities in a much better manner*
- *None of the groups appeared to be at all convinced that maintaining the status quo was a viable option*
- *Attendees considered that the focus of the Commissioners on creating community areas with roughly equal populations was appropriate*
- *Without exception, attendees supported the creation of the Hagley Community Area. It was considered to be an area of interest in its own right*
- *Concerns were raised by the focus group held in Beckenham with regard to the geographic spread of the Heathcote Community Area and the resulting financial pressures which this may place on the Community Board*
- *Members of the focus group held in Shirley had doubts that the area between Moorhouse Avenue and the Summit Road could be regarded as having a common community of interest*
- *Attendees generally accepted proposed boundaries for the other community areas as being appropriate*

***Ward Boundaries***

- *Apart from the members of the focus group held in Beckenham, attendees generally accepted the proposed ward boundaries as being appropriate*
- *Some members of the focus group held in Beckenham believed that the proposed ward boundary between Cashmere and Spreydon could have the potential to foster the following attitudes within the community:*
  - *Perceived division in socio economic/class status between the two ward areas*
  - *Possibly have an influence on real estate values in these areas*

**1 Cont'd**

*It was considered by some members of this focus group that these problems may be offset to some extent by the inclusion of Wigram in the Cashmere Ward.*

*Concerns were also raised regarding the very large size of the Cashmere Ward itself.*

*Concern was also expressed regarding the amount of essentially undeveloped land which exists between Cashmere and Halswell and whether or not these particular suburbs could be considered to have a common community of interest.*

**Ward and Community Board Names**

• ***Sockburn Community Area***

*Overall, members of the focus group held in Sockburn strongly believed that this name was inappropriate for a number of reasons which included:*

- *Sockburn is proportionately a very small part of the proposed community area*
- *Sockburn is essentially an industrial area and the name does not necessarily reflect the make up of the community as a whole*

*Alternative name options included either Papanui or West Christchurch.*

• ***Heathcote Community Area***

*Members of the focus group held in Beckenham strongly believed that this name was inappropriate mainly because:*

- *Confusion may result regarding the geographic location of the community area*
- *It was inappropriate for the name of one suburb to represent an area that included several other suburbs*

*Members of the focus group held in Sockburn also considered this name to be inappropriate.*

**1 Cont'd**

- ***Other names***

*Except as indicated above all other ward and community area names were considered to be suitable as generally they had been more or less in common use for some time and most residents would readily identify with them.*

***Number of Councillors & Community Board Members***

- ***Councillors***

*Attendees were supportive of the proposed reduction in the number of councillors from 24 to 22.*

- ***Community Board Members***

*Virtually all attendees at each of the four focus groups questioned the need for the Hagley Community Board to have six members.*

*Such comments were made on the basis of comparing the population of this community area with the five other areas.*

*Group members generally believed that having four members would be more appropriate.*

*No concerns relating to the number of members on the other five Community Boards were raised.*

*Apart from the comments relating to the Hagley Community Board attendees at all four focus groups appeared to be satisfied with the proposal that the numbers of Community Board members remains unchanged at 36.*

***Other Issues***

- *While some members of the four focus groups could recall receiving City Scene none remembered seeing the Ward Boundaries insert*
- *Many focus group attendees were interested in the proposed amalgamation of the Banks Peninsula District Council and the possible implications on the Ferrymead Community Area.*

Complete copies of the focus group research report are available on request.

## 1 Cont'd

- **City Scene**

Of the 64 responses returned 25 indicated that having looked at the boundaries for the proposed new wards they felt that these would better reflect the City's communities.

Twenty four indicated that they felt they would be worse, or there should be no change and other requests should be addressed, and nine felt that they would be about the same.

Themes in the comments from those feeling that the proposed new wards were better included:

- The five suburban community areas better reflected communities of interest
- The central/Hagley area is good
- More logical/makes sense.

Themes in the comments from those feeling that the new wards would be worse included:

- Costs will outweigh savings/waste of money
- Too soon to change prior to a decision on the Banks Peninsula merger.

Respondents were also asked to look at the current and proposed boundaries and to identify any that should be linked together or separated.

Responses suggested:

- Rural areas should be together – wards should be rings, not radial
- Merivale from Heaton Street/Innes Road should be one - focus around their Mall
- Springfield Road is not a significant boundary
- Linwood should be kept intact
- Avonhead/Fendalton/Ilam/Upper Riccarton should be linked in one area.

Comments on names were mixed and suggested:

- Hornby should be called Western (or Paparua)
- Names were generally appropriate and made sense
- Names could be compass based, eg western, south etc
- Heathcote should be Barrington
- Should be a St Albans Ward
- Pegasus was not right to cover St Albans as well
- Sockburn was not a good name. Paparua would be preferable
- Retain Waimairi
- City Centre would be better than Hagley
- The name Avon should be used.

## 1 Cont'd

### RESIDENTS/STAKEHOLDERS GROUP MEETINGS

Attendance at the meetings was very low but given locational variations the outcomes are separately detailed below:

- **Beckenham Service Centre Meeting**
  - Proposed community areas seen as being slightly better than the existing boundaries
  - Support for the Sydenham business area to be included in the Spreydon/Heathcote community
  - Proposed Hagley community/ward makes sense. Suggested an “inner ward” within the four Avenues to elect three Community Board Members and an “outer” residential ward also electing three Board Members
  - There was support for compass point names, eg South Christchurch.
- **Civic Office Meeting and Linwood Service Centre Meeting**
  - Main concern was the fairness of representation in that the Hagley Ward would have eight elected representatives for 26,000 people
  - Concern about splitting residents group areas
  - The community of interest variation in the Hagley Ward was also raised.
- **Shirley Service Centre Meeting**
  - There were no strong feelings either way about the proposal but the question of “why change something that is working” was raised.
- **Sockburn Service Centre Meeting**
  - Proposed change is unwarranted and does not provide for better local government.
- **Papanui Service Centre Meeting**
  - St Albans Residents’ Association would be worse off and would be split into three
  - Hagley should not have six Community Board members

## 1 Cont'd

- The Canon Street boundary between Pegasus and Hagley did not take account of communities of interest. It created a disadvantage to the community, eg the Packer Reserve community – the boundary should go back to Bealey Avenue
- The Springfield Road boundary split a community of interest
- The rural areas of Kainga and Brooklands become separated from Belfast/Papanui – they have always identified with them. This would affect bus transport
- Issues of the airport and the Burnside High School zone needed attention by the Fendalton/Waimairi community and Board
- On the positive side, this was an opportunity to sort out the current confusion with the Shirley Service Centre being located outside the Shirley Ward.

In regard to the naming of the wards, it was suggested that 'Styx' would be more appropriate than Northcote, particularly if Kainga was part of the ward.

Geographical names were suggested – North, South etc.

The overall view of those present was that the status quo was the preferred option.

- **Fendalton Service Centre Meeting**

- Residents' groups present were opposed to being split between two Board areas.

An effective rapport and goodwill currently existed with the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board and they did not want to lose the relationships built up over the last ten years.

- The proposed boundary changes would have a major impact in splitting communities, eg Rugby Street south to Carlton Mill Road has no affinity to the central city, and Fendalton Road/Memorial Avenue would split neighbourhoods and school catchment areas.
- The airport zone and the surrounding rural area have their own community of interest. Residents choose to live in this environment.
- The rural representatives present stated that if this ongoing change is to occur, then they would prefer to be transferred to the Selwyn District Council – a rural local authority more understanding of their needs.
- Leave the ward names as they are. To change again will only lead to confusion.



**1 Cont'd**

- The timing of this review is inappropriate given the forthcoming general election and the issues surround the future of the Banks Peninsula District.
- Irrespective of any changes that may occur, there was a strong belief that Community Boards should be given more delegation and powers.
- The unanimous view of the meeting was that the status quo be retained.

**DETAILED SUBMISSIONS**

The following groups and individuals took the time to lodge detailed submissions:

- Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board
- Shirley/Papanui Community Board
- New Brighton Police
- Canterbury Regional Council
- Friends of the Park at 125-129 Packe Street
- Bill Sykes and Peggy Kelly
- Frances Adank
- St Albans Residents Association
- Aileen Edwards
- Hazel Ashton
- Lynn Le Prevost
- Pauline Cotter
- Sunbeam Kindergarten Committee
- Tim Barnett, MP
- M B Tickle
- L F N Chapman
- Mrs E E Hunter
- Jeffrey Paparoa Holman
- Jeanette King
- John Osborne, Jennifer Leahy, Amelia Osborne and Jack Osborne
- Daphne A Banks
- South New Brighton Residents Association
- M R McGregor
- Richmond Neighbourhood Cottage
- Merivale Precinct Society
- Deans Avenue Precinct Society
- Linwood Neighbourhood Committee
- S M McNeill
- Bexley Residents Association
- Shirley Residents Association
- Christchurch Residents Association
- Mt Pleasant Community Centre and Ratepayers Association
- Ouruhia Residents Association Inc
- H M Turner

## 1 Cont'd

A number of these submissions seek retention of the status quo but rather than summarise them they are attached to this report.

The Riccarton/Wigram Community Board has also reaffirmed its previous position of recommending that the status quo be retained.

### **COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECTS**

Avonside Girls' High School and Shirley Intermediate School participated in Community of Interest projects and the outcome of those projects is also attached for information.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This issue did not attract much public interest, although some of those who did respond expressed strong views on the matter.

When assessing the outcomes of the consultation exercise regard should be given to the following factors:

- Sample sizes (responses to City Scene and the public meetings) are very small
- Those who responded to the City Scene and the public meetings self selected
- The City Scene gave predetermined options for response
- Focus group participants were randomly selected.

Looking at the responses received the following general comments are made:

#### **Focus Groups**

The proposed boundaries for community areas were generally seen as better reflecting the City's communities. Creation of the central city Hagley Community area was supported but the level of board member representation was questioned.

#### **City Scene**

Virtually equal numbers of respondents felt that the proposed boundaries would be better than the existing ones.

## 1 Cont'd

### **Public Meetings**

Responses were mixed ranging from seeing the proposed boundaries as an improvement and supporting the new central ward (subject to representation levels) to calls for retention of the status quo.

### **Other Submissions**

Generally seek retention of the status quo. Issues regarding the location of boundaries in the St Albans, Merivale and Linwood areas have also been raised.

### **SUMMARY**

In terms of the consultation exercise the question arises as to whether any significant issues were missed by the local Commissioners in their study. All the matters raised have been addressed in the two "Community Areas and Wards" reports.

It is appreciated that Councillors and Community Board members tend to favour the status quo. The City Scene responses and public meetings have confirmed that there is a balance of support for both the changes proposed and the status quo.

The randomly selected focus groups indicated general support for the proposal put forward by the local Commissioners for a central community area and five suburban community board areas.

Regarding the naming of the community areas there seems to be general support for a single name to be used in preference to the twinned names, eg Hagley/Ferrymead, used currently.

The names suggested in the "Community Areas and Wards" report have been generally supported with one or two exceptions. These include questioning of the community area names of Sockburn and Papanui (where alternatives including Papanui and Waimairi have been suggested). The ward names were widely accepted with reservations about Northcote and Cashmere.

There were also suggestions regarding the central area boundaries in Linwood, St Albans, Merivale and Riccarton. These detailed adjustments are not easily resolved at this stage and may best be left for detailed consideration as part of the submissions to the Local Government Commission.

The Chairman of the local Commissioners, Malcolm Douglass, has reviewed the submissions received, and this report, and comments:

**1 Cont'd**

*“The indications of support for the logic and desirability of a central community board area is gratifying. There seems to be considered support for the five suburban “spokes” as community board areas. Both these aspects seem to be accepted as better reflecting community of interest areas for Christchurch.*

*Defining the boundaries of the central area to create a Hagley community area will, of course, give rise to the expression of preferences and many opinions. There could well be some “residents’ associations” that will span these boundaries of “collaboration” in two Board Areas.*

*In the end these inner boundaries are defined to provide a population of about 26,000 for election purposes. It is to be hoped that the central population will increase over time so the boundary could be redefined more compactly in the future.*

*Having adopted the principle of establishing a central community board area, it follows inevitably, and as a reflection of true community of interest, that a band of inner city residential blocks to the east, north and west must be included in that central community area.”*

Officers recommend that as the detailed work by the local Commissioners and the processes used seem to fulfil the request of the Local Government Commission that a thorough review be undertaken, the proposal for the new electoral boundaries, subject to amendments as detailed below, be approved for forwarding to the Local Government Commission.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council approve the proposal for new community and ward boundaries set out in the “Community Areas and Wards” report subject to the following:
    - (a) That there be a central community area and that its representation comprise two councillors and four community board members.
    - (b) That there be five suburban community areas each with equal Council representation (4) and community board representation (6).
    - (c) That because of national electorate and regional council constituency boundaries and names no geographic names (north, south etc) be used for naming Christchurch City community areas or wards.

**26. 8. 99**

**1 Cont'd**

- (d) That the names of community areas be confirmed except that "Papanui" be renamed "Waimairi" and "Sockburn" be renamed "Paparua".
  - (e) That the ward names in the reports be confirmed except that "Northcote" be called "Papanui".
2. That the local Commissioners' reports along with this report and copies of the attached submissions be forwarded to the Local Government Commission to provide background and assist in its determination.

**CONSIDERED THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 1999**

**MAYOR**