

## 2. CANTERBURY SUSTAINABLE LIVING STRATEGY

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Corporate Plan Output: City Planning and Development Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to put before Council a reply from Environment Canterbury to the City Council's request for certain assurances; and to recommend that the Council now proceed to work with Environment Canterbury and other Councils and stakeholders on the Sustainable Living Strategy.

### BACKGROUND

At the March Council meeting the Council considered a project proposal developed by the then Canterbury Regional Council and resolved as follows:

*“That the Council:*

- 1. Support a regional approach to the sustainable development of Canterbury's natural resources.*
- 2. Agree to co-operate with the Canterbury Regional Council and territorial local authorities in a regional initiative for the sustainable development of Canterbury's natural resources.*
- 3. Seek a meeting with the Canterbury Regional Council and territorial local authorities to discuss the scope of a process to address these issues and in particular to see greater emphasis on Canterbury wide development issues including the diversification of the region's productive base.*
- 4. Note that the Christchurch City Council is responsible for planning the sustainable growth and development of the Christchurch metropolitan area, including the matter of determining the urban density within Christchurch.*
- 5. Seek an assurance from the Canterbury Regional Council that it accepts the principle underlying recommendation 4.*
- 6. Recognise the contribution to the debate on sustainability of the participants in Canterbury Dialogues.*
- 7. Request the City Manager to report on the implementation of the above process (note: to be done prior to the implementation of clause 3 of the recommendation).”*

The additional report requested in (7) above was considered at the April Council meeting, where Council resolved as follows:

- “1 .That the above steps for progressing the Canterbury Sustainable Living Strategy be agreed to.*
2. *That Councillors Close, Crighton, Evans and Wells be appointed to meet with representatives of the other local authorities involved in developing the strategy to see if there is agreement to proceeding as outlined in the report, and that their proxies be Councillors Harrow and Manning, in that order.*
3. *That recommendations 1-3 inclusive [note: in practice this referred to the above recommendations, that is 1-2] be subject to the Canterbury Regional Council first giving an assurance that it accepts the principle that the Christchurch City Council is responsible for planning the sustainable growth and development of the Christchurch metropolitan area, including the matter of determining the urban density within Christchurch.”*

The “above steps” referred to in resolution 1 of the April meeting was a proposal from the Director of Policy and myself which suggested that a three-fold structure be put in place to progress the sustainable living strategy. This structure would involve a Political Steering Group, a Technical Working Party and a Stakeholder Liaison Group. The political steering group would include representatives from elected members of the local authorities in the region and would provide overall guidance to the project. I interpret that resolution 2 of the April meeting identifies those Councillors who would represent the City Council in this process. A Technical Working Party would involve key staff from:

- The constituent local authorities; government departments (for example, the Ministries of Environment, Transport, Health and Education);
- Experts from Lincoln and Canterbury Universities, and
- Canterbury Dialogues (for their expertise in community consultation and participation).

The Stakeholder Liaison Group would serve as a sounding board for the Technical Working Party and would also provide responses to the Political Steering Group. On the group would be representatives of the key commercial, industrial, farming and community groups from the study area including for example, the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association, the Council of Social Services, development interests (both urban and rural) and Federated Farmers.

The third resolution passed by the Council at its April meeting was a condition which must be fulfilled before the rest of the process could be commenced. We have now received a response from Environment Canterbury, which states (inter alia):

*“Environment Canterbury agrees and recognises that the Christchurch City Council has responsibility for planning the sustainable growth and development of Christchurch City and determining its urban density.”*

The letter goes on to clarify that Environment Canterbury also has both general and specific responsibilities whereby it,

*“also has an interest in sustainable growth and development of settlements and the built environment, including Christchurch City and nearby towns.”*

#### **COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION**

The City Council has been anxious to ensure that other streams of work neither cause confusion in the mind of the public nor produce procedural difficulties in the process of bringing the City Plan to fully operative status. This should remain an important objective for the Council. At the same time as argued in the report which Mr Fletcher and I wrote in April there are many decisions which can and should impact on achieving environmental and social sustainability for Christchurch which need to be made on an on-going basis and neither should nor will wait for the completion of the City Plan process. For instance, many of this Council’s decisions with regard to new infrastructure or new assets, many of the Regional Council’s decisions with regard to public transport levels of service, many of the Health authorities decisions as to the future pattern of service provisions will impact on the sustainability of the City.

In my view the reply from Environment Canterbury clarifies that they are fully aware of the responsibilities of the City Council for planning the sustainable growth and development of urban Christchurch including determining urban density (or at least the regulatory framework which sets parameters around what the market may achieve). The letter also appropriately reminds us that Environment Canterbury also has significant responsibilities which underlie the importance of effective partnership between the two elected bodies.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the City Council welcome the assurance from Environment Canterbury.
  2. That the Council proceed with the project in terms of resolutions 1 and 2 of its April meeting.
  3. That the Council note the success of the Redesigning Resources Conference in Christchurch, co-hosted by the Recovered Materials Foundation and the Canterbury Employers’ Chamber of Commerce.
  4. That the City Manager be asked to report on the themes and conclusions of the Redesigning Resources Conference and on processes for advancing urban sustainability in co-operation with key stakeholder groups.

5. That the City Council members of the Canterbury Sustainable Living Steering Group seek to ensure that the Canterbury Sustainable Living Strategy is developed in a way which is complementary to the Sustainable Christchurch Strategy being developed following the recent Redesigning Resources Conference.

(Note: Councillor O'Rourke requested that his vote against recommendations 4 and 5 be recorded.)