

7. SUSTAINABLE CHRISTCHURCH - UPDATE

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Corporate Plan Output: Public Accountability	

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the “Sustainable Christchurch” initiative and seek approval for selected projects outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

In August 2000 the Council adopted recommendations in a report, “Lets Dream a Little – Building a Sustainable Christchurch” to take Christchurch towards being one of the world’s leading sustainable cities, socially, environmentally and economically. The Council adopted a way forward with the following two parallel courses of action:

1. **Get our own house in order**, i.e. improve Christchurch City Council operations to become an exemplary example of how an organisation can contribute to a sustainable Christchurch, with particular emphasis on this initially;
2. **Facilitating improvements in Christchurch** by:
 - Leading development of a community vision for Christchurch;
 - Better co-ordinating existing and implementing new Council initiatives;
 - Encouraging other leading businesses and organisations to join the Christchurch City Council in becoming case studies for sustainable practices.

Some key achievements since then include:

Getting our own house in order:

- A fulltime Sustainable Christchurch facilitator position has been created in the Policy Directorate and Eric Park has been seconded to this position from the Waste Management Unit.
- A Steering Group, chaired by the City Manager, has been established.
- A forum to promote the Sustainable Christchurch initiative, with an open invitation to Councillors and staff, was held on 1 September 2000, chaired by the City Manager, addressed by the Mayor and the Chairman of the Strategy Resources Committee and attended by over 130 staff and Councillors. At this forum 120 compact fluorescent (energy efficient) light bulbs were given away for attendees to try in their own homes and prompt them also to make other improvements.
- A Sustainable Christchurch website has been established on the Council’s intranet at <http://wwwlocal.ccc.govt.nz/WhatsOn/SustainableChristchurch>.
- A formal partnership is being developed with Landcare Research to share staff resources and experiences on ‘getting our own house in order’ and Sustainable Christchurch initiatives, following a meeting between the Director of Policy and the Chief Executive of Landcare Research and others.
- A high level input/output analysis for Christchurch City Council operations has been completed. This shows that Council operations consumed \$95 million in the 1999/2000 financial year for internal costs such as staff, energy, paper, computers and vehicles and \$150 million for external contracts, service delivery and depreciation. The depreciation component included in operational expenditure reflects the annual consumption of capital assets and infrastructure over their useful life. The Council’s capital expenditure in 1999/2000 was \$108 million. These operations also produced 1,170 tonnes of carbon dioxide, 6,900 tonnes of mixed waste and 616 tonnes of green waste.
- Work has commenced on establishing a “triple bottom line” assessment system for Council.
- The Council’s Long Term Financial Strategy, which is required under the Local Government Amendment Act No. 3 to be updated every three years, is about to be revised and is likely to reflect the Council’s vision for a Sustainable Christchurch.

FACILITATING IMPROVEMENTS IN CHRISTCHURCH

- The Mayor and the City Manager met with the Presidents and Chief Executives of the Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce, the Canterbury Manufacturers Association, the New Zealand Institute of Management and the Retail Merchants Association of New Zealand, in August 2000 to explore ways to work together to improve the sustainability of Christchurch through their respective organisations. The meeting found a shared interest in environmental and social issues and a common desire to work together seeking methods to address these issues.
- The Mayor and the City Manager have met with representatives of the business and research sectors to explore likely future energy options and methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide.
- Canterbury Dialogues has been formally requested to consider whether it would be an appropriate body to take a proactive role in developing or promoting initiatives to improve the sustainability of Christchurch and or Canterbury, in conjunction with Community Boards, as requested by the Council in August 2000.
- The Community Advocates have developed a proposal to increase Advocacy Team resources in order to engage local communities at a local level to promote sustainability across all aspects of life including social sustainability. Focussing on sustainability in terms of finite resources without addressing social sustainability would not fulfil the Council's drive to triple bottom line reporting. How the Council delivers its services and programmes, and how it derives and spends its income, and who it advocates for, is crucial to building social sustainability.
- The Ecovillage subcommittee of the Burwood Pegasus Community Board has developed some concept plans for the Owles Terrace site and is planning a seminar for Councillors on the concept of developing an Eco village type development at one or more other sites in the City.

KEY INITIATIVES TO GET OUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER

All ideas for "getting our own house in order" received by the Sustainable Christchurch Facilitator following the Redesigning Resources conference earlier this year have been collated. From these ideas the following initiatives have been selected because they are expected to be relatively quick and easy to implement, achieve some triple bottom line benefits and provide high profile examples of concrete steps which can be taken to promote sustainability.

1. **Measuring to Manage(M2M)** : Establish a system for measuring and reporting / disseminating information on resources consumed by Council's "internal operations. This might include for example transport fuel, staff travel, stationery, printing and copying which together represent an expenditure of \$2.2 million and production of an estimated 1351 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. The system will provide monthly or quarterly measurement of these key items used across the organisation to raise awareness of the scale and impact of consumption.
2. **Internal (Council operations only) Resource "tax"**. The Director of Finance is reporting separately on the establishment of a catalyst fund for sustainability initiatives. A suggestion has been made that this could be boosted by creating an internal "tax" on resources consumed but this needs considerably more analysis before it can be approved.
3. **Target Zero at Council facilities** – Six to twelve Council sites/facilities, such as the QEII swimming pool, Civic offices, Sockburn Service Centre and Pioneer Stadium will be selected, based on the desire of staff to be involved and the environmental impact of activities at each site. The selected sites/facilities will be involved in a Target Zero/Business Care programme which will include an environmental audit, and a structured programme to help staff improve the triple bottom line, especially, environmental performance. A sum of \$20,000 has been allocated from the Commercial Waste Minimisation budget for this work in the 2000/01 financial year.

4. **Long Term Financial Strategy** – The revision of the Long Term Financial Strategy will take account of the Sustainable Christchurch initiative, in accordance with the available resources and other priorities.

Corporate Bicycle Fleet: Staff and Councillors will be encouraged to walk, scooter or cycle to meetings where practical. To help facilitate this, a pool of “corporate bikes/scooters” could be provided in a very convenient position close to the offices, complete with council helmet, lights and lock etc, for use on Council business wherever practical. The recent Council change proposal included the establishment of a centralised civic offices car pool. In essence this pool will reduce vehicle numbers and encourage more efficient vehicle usage patterns with taxis being used to cover peak periods. This pool would provide the ideal environment for trialing bicycle and/or scooter use and it is proposed to begin this trial as soon as practicable. Also as low emission vehicles such as electric, hybrid and compressed air cars come on the market this car pool could provide a system for trialing these new vehicle types. Meeting organisers will also be encouraged to take some responsibility for the logistics of people coming to meetings, for example arranging car pooling for attendees.

5. **Sharing Resources:** Surplus Council resources, including computers which are not leased, furniture, equipment etc could be offered first to other units of the Council, as currently, but then to charitable institutions such schools/community learning centres/churches with social outreach programmes before they are offered for public auction. The process would be similar to that used for Mackintosh computers which are already offered by tender to a selected list of charitable institutions.
6. **Worm Composting in the Office:** Worm composting in two small bins has previously been used successfully to compost food scraps in the Civic offices and could be re-established. To maximise the educational benefit two worm composting bins could perhaps be trialed in high profile locations. The worm bins would initially be managed by the Compost Plant Manager and her staff on a trial basis. Once proven successful, worm composting of food waste could be expanded to other Council offices/sites by contracting a company such as “Greenwaste” which has been established recently in Christchurch to provide such a service for worm composting bins in people’s homes or businesses and generate employment.
7. **Double Sided Printing and Photocopying:** All photocopiers supplied to the Council are factory set to operate on duplex mode (double side) but are specifically altered to default to single sided when they are brought into New Zealand. The Council’s supplier has been asked to submit a proposal to set all photocopiers back to duplexing as a default. The Council’s supplier of printers has also been asked to submit a proposal to make all Council printers duplex by default, immediately where practical or otherwise when next upgraded. The potential for all printers and photocopiers to default to use of recycled paper is also being investigated by the Corporate Services Manager, Merv Altmans.

In addition the following **processes** have been commenced to assist in the ongoing implementation of Sustainable Christchurch initiatives.

8. **Triple bottom line/sustainability indicators** are being researched by staff. The Environment Committee is also considering setting up a subcommittee to help develop and promote the use of such indicators.
9. Staff reporting to Community Boards, Standing Committees and the Council could be encouraged whenever they considered it appropriate to **highlight** how the reported initiative synergistically meets or contributes to the Council’s **triple bottom line** objectives. The way this is highlighted would initially be up to each staff member/unit in order to encourage suggestions and ideas on the best system to use. However, in the absence of any other system, the Natural Step framework could be used, as on this report. The **Natural Step Assessment** method has been used on Solid Waste Section reports for the last year. To facilitate this the Sustainable Christchurch Facilitator will present the Natural Step Assessment to Directors, Unit Managers and Community advocates as a template for their possible use. Discussion with these groups, and other staff teams, will establish the extent of any need for staff training in the Natural Step framework or other triple bottom line assessment methods. The Natural Step system could perhaps be adapted to ensure it accounted for social and economic impacts to fulfil the Council’s triple bottom line objective.

10. The description of every significant activity in the 2001 edition of the Council's **Annual Plan** could include both **social and environmental performance indicators**. Development of these key performance indicators would help to shape the 2001/02 Annual Plan in a way that enables a triple bottom line Council Annual Report to be produced for the year 2002/03, a target set by the Council in August. The Waterways and Wetlands and Solid Waste Community Gardens projects have already begun to develop such triple bottom line indicators and can act as pilot examples for other Units of Council as appropriate.

FUNDING

A small amount of funding has been re-allocated to the above initiatives to allow some progress on the Sustainable Christchurch initiatives most likely to return significant short term benefits. It is possible that further funding could be available depending on the results of the Council's six month review/financial report.

The Director of Finance has been requested to provide a separate report on the establishment of a "catalyst fund" for Sustainable Christchurch initiatives as soon as practically possible.

Funding for the 2001/02 financial year will need to be allocated to ensure existing and new initiatives are able to continue. Some funding could be available from the Waste Minimisation Fee levied on waste received at the Burwood Landfill. The Waste Manager is working with the Compost Committee and Director of Finance on the possibility of setting up a Waste Minimisation Fund to use for the initiatives to assist Council achieve its goal of zero waste to landfill by 2020. This will be discussed further in a report to the November meeting of Council about future refuse and greenwaste charges and revenue.

NATURAL STEP ASSESSMENT

The Council resolved, on 22 July 1999, to use the Natural Step to guide an assessment of the sustainability of activities in the City. The assessment for this initiative is as follows.

The Natural Step Assessment				
Conditions:	. Reduce mining and fossil fuel use (extraction rate not greater than redeposit rate to earth's crust)	. Eliminate hazardous substances (production rate not greater than treatment rate)	. Protect biodiversity and ecosystems	. Efficient and equitable resource use
Meets condition	✓	✓	✓	✓
How it helps meet condition	Several projects which actively reduce need for fossil fuel usage, eg walking/corporate bicycle fleet.	Several projects which actively reduce need for generation of hazardous substances.	Duplexing and promotion of worm composting will help enhance biodiversity.	Sharing resources and promoting triple bottom line assessment of initiatives will enhance equity and resource use.

SUMMARY

The Sustainable Christchurch initiative is in its formative stages with much interest amongst staff and Councillors but few new initiatives to demonstrate any tangible progress. Some key initiatives which are expected to be relatively quick and easy to implement, achieve some triple bottom line benefits and provide high profile examples of concrete steps which can be taken to promote sustainability have been identified. These include measuring key resource flows, implementing an internal resource tax, establishing a corporate bicycle/scooter fleet, defaulting all copiers and printers to double sided copying/printing and evaluating all new initiatives against the Natural Step or a similar framework. These initiatives, outlined above, are expected to be cost effective and provide a springboard for further initiatives both internally in Council operations and in the wider community. Further work is required to incorporate social wellbeing policy, including social and economic costs/benefits within the sustainability framework.

Recommendation:

1. That the Council endorse the internal Measure to Manage (M2M) programme to provide measurements and incentives for improving the sustainability of the Council's own operations.
2. That the Council approve the increased emphasis on "getting our own house in order" for the Target Zero/Business programme in the 2000/01 financial year, reflected in the allocation of \$20,000 to programmes at Council facilities/sites.
3. That revision of the Long Term Financial Strategy take account of the Council's recent commitment to leading a process to build a sustainable Christchurch.
4. That a trial of bicycles and scooters be undertaken once the central car pool is established.
5. That the Corporate Services Manager be asked to offer surplus Council resources, including computers which are not leased, furniture, equipment etc first to other Council units, second to charitable institutions and third to the public by auction, and that the council Policy register be amended accordingly.
6. That two worm composting bins be established in suitable locations in the Civic offices on a trial basis, as outlined above.
7. That the Council endorse the Corporate Services Manager's efforts to ensure all Council photocopiers and printers default automatically to double sided printing and photocopying as soon as practical.
8. That staff be encouraged to highlight how reported initiatives synergistically meet or contribute to the Council's triple bottom line objectives.
9. That the Community Relations Manager prepare proposals for consideration by the Annual Plan Working Party on funding of community initiatives to promote social sustainability.
10. That further work be undertaken to ensure the social wellbeing policy is incorporated within the sustainability framework.
11. That progress on the Council initiatives outlined in this report be reported back to this Committee following the 1 December 2000 forum.