

## 9. REPORT ON POVERTY TASKFORCE

Dr Dalziel (Head of Economic Department, University of Canterbury) and Policy Analyst, Mary Richardson, spoke on the progress of the Mayoral Taskforce on Poverty.

The Council established the Taskforce on Poverty to identify and advocate for solutions to poverty. Its focus was on finding solutions that addressed the causes of poverty, not just its symptoms. The terms of reference were:

- To develop strategies to strengthen responses to poverty in Christchurch.
- To review and make recommendations on the Council's programmes and policies with respect to their impacts on those on low incomes in Christchurch.
- To recommend to the Council, central government and other bodies action to reduce the level of poverty in the different communities, including policy development and review.
- To build and maintain relationships among key government and non-government agencies and organisations with responsibilities for addressing the causes and effects of poverty.
- To develop and report on performance measures of actions taken by the Taskforce.

Community forums have been sponsored by the Taskforce through February, March and April. These forums focused on identifying participants perspectives on effective strategies for the Council to consider in addressing issues relating to poverty.

The Poverty Taskforce also has a short questionnaire in the latest City Scene to get feedback from the public on what they consider are issues relating to poverty and on what they feel the Council's role should be.

Research on Employer Demand for Employees (supervised by Dr Paul Dalziel, Head of Department, Department of Economics, and Dr Jane Higgins, Sociology Department, University of Canterbury) has been completed. This initially focused on investigating why employers were reporting difficulty in filling vacancies arising from the recent increase in jobs in the Canterbury area. The findings are interesting and point to an apparent employer priority when recruiting for (i) previous relevant experience, and (ii) a mix of experience and qualification, in that priority order. A third point identifies a possible "shortage, but not a severe shortage, of qualification and experience in Canterbury. The full report was completed in April and tabled at the meeting.

The Taskforce has also highlighted issues relating to poverty and featured community initiatives that address issues related to poverty through a series of articles in the City Scene and other media.

A review of Council spending was also undertaken. The review was intended as a scoping study of the service provision by Business Units relative to the needs of low income citizens.

The total Council response to poverty and hardship is difficult to quantify as it is both in the form of universal provision and targeted provision. A full analysis will be under taken later this year.

The Committee **received** the information.