

## 1. CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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The purpose of this report is to update elected members on initiatives under way with key business, educational, research and development agencies building on the Knowledge Wave conferences sponsored by central government and the "Business Friendly" report to Council in December 2002.

### BACKGROUND

Over the last nine months the Mayor and Director of Business Projects, and more recently the Chief Executive Officer, have been working with a small group from the Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC), Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce (CECC), University of Canterbury, Industry New Zealand and independent business people to engage them as key stakeholders in the development of a vision and strategy needed to drive the city's economic and consequent employment growth opportunities over the next 4-5 years.

It was agreed that a "quantum leap" is required if we are to achieve the Council sustainability vision for the city in the medium to long term. The team also agreed that economic issues need to be dealt with in an "holistic" way with key requirements that must permeate all strategies and activities:

- A commitment to leverage our advantages as a city.
- A willingness to work collaboratively across organisations and all sectors.
- A concerted effort to encourage positive attitudes to business and success, to education training and employment.

The group considers that enhanced economic activity leading to high quality jobs will underpin and support the city's sustainability vision. The Council has a leadership role to play in facilitating and participating in economic initiatives developed around the "family" in partnership with other organisations to ensure Christchurch and the surrounding area reach their economic, as well as environmental, social and cultural potential. This collaborative approach was envisaged in the Local Government Act 2002 and will be reflected and reinforced in the Council Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) currently under development.

### Recent Work Undertaken by the Group

Over the last three months the group has been working with Liz Henderson, a strategic planning consultant, to bring together some initial thoughts, to capture projects already in train and to agree a way forward. It is also now appropriate to share with other stakeholders these initial thoughts and ideas.

### Key Concepts Developed to Date

Christchurch will be:

- A great place to bring up a family, to play, to live, to learn and to do business.
- A place where people want to live.
- Sustainable – raising the standard of living without compromising the quality of life for future generations.
- A city with a heart.
- A place of opportunities.
- Have infrastructure that allows conversion of opportunities.
- A community that recognises the goal of business.
- A well-endowed community.
- A community that works together.
- A city with a social conscience (and the ability to afford one).
- A society that can afford to deal with its issues.
- A place where all cultures are welcomed.
- A society that supports and promotes a balanced lifestyle.
- An accessible, safe city for residents and visitors.
- A city that attracts and retains good people, good business and good investment.
- The hub or nucleus of the South Island.

## **Comparative Advantage Christchurch has**

- It is a great place to raise a family.
- Is responsive to change.
- Has a forward thinking Council and great collaboration between sectors.
- Promotes a balanced lifestyle.
- Is accessible.
- Has a unique location.
- Has a good climate.
- Is a good size and has excellent infrastructure. (Is manageable and retains a community atmosphere.)

## **Challenges Identified**

Some barriers to economic development have also been identified and need to be addressed within the strategy framework:

- Fragmentation of services and activities.
- Lack of broadband capability.
- Endemic, cyclical electricity shortages.
- Mismatch of unemployed with skill shortages.
- Under-representation of minority communities among business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Weak management skills in many small and medium enterprises (SME).
- Lack of international trade and export knowledge in SME.
- East side of central city underdeveloped.
- Limited availability of venture capital in New Zealand compared to overseas.
- Limited understanding by many SME of how to attract venture capital funding.
- Student debt encouraging flight of talent from the city.

## **Next Steps**

Four significant projects have been identified by the group as appropriate to collaborate on to get the initiative underway. The projects' aims and outcomes are attached (Appendix 1). Essentially these bring together in a focussed and structured way some of the work streams and initiatives already under way within these organisations and will ensure a co-ordinated approach to maximising economic opportunities and development. The CDC will play a lead role in the projects as appropriate on behalf of the Council, but the Council has a key role to play in facilitation.

The consensus of the group is that to lift our game significantly we need to commit to enhancing and broadening the already very good working relationships between the Council, business and other key stakeholders. Christchurch is uniquely placed to make a difference by actively working together in partnership.

The initial group recognised the Steering Committee needs to be expanded to incorporate other organisations who will contribute to and influence future economic activity in the city if we are to achieve the vision of growing at a faster rate than the rest of New Zealand. A proposed structure has been developed and is attached as Appendix 2.

As a city and province we need to share a vision and work pro-actively at all levels to ensure alignment if we are to achieve these initial goals and other initiatives/goals that follow.

## **CONCLUSION**

This framework and series of projects will fit well within the focus on partnerships and the LTCCP that is currently under development. The key agencies and organisations are ready to commit resources and some seed funding to progress this initiative now. Council involvement will include some staff time and a small financial contribution along with the other parties for external advice as required. This can be funded from current budgets so no new funding is required at this stage.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council endorse these initiatives and that they be incorporated in the economic strategy in the LTCCP as it is developed.
  2. That the Council through the Mayor and appropriate staff take an active role in the leadership and facilitation of this initiative.