

7. DRAFT VISITOR STRATEGY

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to recommended a Draft Visitor Strategy (Appendix 1) in preparation for consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Throughout 2006, work has been underway to develop a Visitor Strategy for Christchurch.
3. The development of the Draft Strategy has been led by the Christchurch City Council, in partnership with Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism, the Canterbury Development Corporation and the key tourism industry stakeholders in Christchurch.
4. The Draft Strategy is based on research and analysis of the current situation and challenges, which has led to the development of a strategic vision, goals and objectives for the destination management of Christchurch.
5. The strategic goals are to:
 - Develop Christchurch into a priority destination for all visitors.
To be achieved through providing unforgettable experiences for our visitors and ongoing product development across a range of quality attractions, activities, festivals and events. These will be supported by a variety of high-quality accommodation and visitor facilities and services.
 - Build a prosperous and enduring industry.
To be achieved through increasing yield, providing infrastructure to meet demand, addressing workforce issues and consistent and targeted marketing.
 - Ensure tourism continues to benefit our communities.
To achieve this, tourism will need to grow in accord with the needs and wishes of the local communities it affects.
 - Protect and enhance our natural and built environment.
The long-term success of our tourism industry depends on the protection and enhancement of our unique natural, built and cultural environment. In attaining this goal we will live up to the expectations of both our residents and visitors, and ensure that the 'assets' on which the industry is based are safeguarded to provide the best experience for both visitors and residents on an ongoing basis.
 - Lead the development of tourism in the South Island.
Destination management is inevitably a public/private partnership. Co-ordination and leadership is required between sectors, and across local authority boundaries. Christchurch will lead by example and promote the integration and co-ordination of the visitor experience across the South Island.
6. The general contents and direction of the Draft Visitor Strategy were discussed with Councillors at seminars on 28 March and 3 October 2006.
7. This report presents a Draft Visitor Strategy for approval for consultation by the Council.
8. The Draft Visitor Strategy is being developed in accordance with the decision-making procedures set out in the Local Government Act 2002. It is appropriate that the draft is now put out for consultation, in particular with the key public and private stakeholders. The Council is not required by the Act to adopt the special consultative procedure.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The Christchurch City Council is, directly and indirectly, the largest tourism operator in Christchurch. The Council manages many of the resources on which tourism relies, provides core infrastructure and attractions such as the Botanic Gardens, facilities such as parking, and supports regional marketing and visitor information. Expenditure is spread across a number of activity management plans in the LTCCP.
10. Following consultation on the Draft Visitor Strategy, an Implementation Plan will be prepared detailing financial implications for the Council. To achieve the attached Draft Visitor Strategy there will be a need to ensure that tourism needs are considered when implementing many of the existing activity management plans in the current LTCCP. The 'cross-Council' approach to implementing the Strategy would also imply indirect costs to the organisation as staff and other resources within existing budgets would be utilised on work related to the Visitor Strategy.
11. However, implementation may also require additional or reprioritised funding. Any additional financial outputs will need to be incorporated through both the amended LTCCP in 2007 for any agreed short-term actions, and then more fully as part of the full LTCCP review in 2009. The Implementation Plan will provide a more definitive picture of the resourcing required to achieve the Strategy. However, the issue is noted here, to signal that the Council will have the opportunity to discuss this further.
12. A Council seminar has been arranged in December which will report back on the feedback from consultation and recommend an Implementation Plan (including financial implications and governance arrangements) to support it.
13. The Draft Visitor Strategy has been developed in accordance with the decision making and other provisions of the Local Government Act 2002. A period of broad consultation should now be undertaken. The decision making and other provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 which, according to the Auditor General's Office, imposes significant obligations for public participation, openness and accountability in local authority decision-making. The obligation to consult may be implied in legislation or an obligation may arise out of a "legitimate expectation" on the part of the public, which is the case for the Draft Visitor Strategy. The Strategy will need the buy-in of all the key public and private stakeholders to succeed, therefore thorough consultation is imperative.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the Draft Visitor Strategy (Appendix 1) for consultation.

BACKGROUND ON DRAFT VISITOR STRATEGY

14. Christchurch is the gateway for tourism in the South Island. Our airport, port, scenic rail and road connections bring more than nine million visitors a year into our city. In 2005 alone, these visitors accounted for nearly \$2 billion of expenditure in Christchurch, contributing to the richness and variety of services available to residents as well as the economic prosperity of the city. Tourism is the largest export industry in Christchurch and Canterbury, and employs 12% of the city workforce and more than 50% of Akaroa's workforce.
15. In 2003, Lincoln University research highlighted the need for a Visitor Strategy to provide a framework for the management of Christchurch as a destination, particularly due to the importance of tourism as an economic driver, the need to plan for growth, increasing competition from neighbouring destinations and the need for stakeholders to work together as a city.
16. As the largest 'tourism operator' in Christchurch, the City Council is a crucial player in Christchurch's tourism industry. In the 'Strategy Map' the Council identified the Visitor Strategy as a priority for development in 2006.
17. The brief for the Visitor Strategy and the current situation and challenges, were discussed with Councillors at a seminar in March 2006. Since that time staff, working with Lincoln University, have been developing the Draft Visitor Strategy. In general terms the process used has been as follows:
 - Relevant research, published articles, strategies (such as the National Tourism Strategy) and other information has formed the analysis of the current situation. Based on the current situation, eight focus groups identified the key challenges facing tourism
 - In May the Strategy Steering Group (comprising the Council, Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing and Canterbury Development Corporation, chaired by Ian Hay and subsequently Stephen Hill), agreed the strategic Vision and Goals of the Strategy.
 - In July and August four working groups comprising Christchurch City Council and industry representatives developed the objectives and specific actions of the Strategy. Their findings are recorded in separate technical reports on hard infrastructure, soft infrastructure, visitor experience and marketing.
 - In September staff drafted a Draft Visitor Strategy, presented to Councillors on 3 October 2006.
18. In the 2006–2016 Community Plan, the City Council identifies its vision for the future of Christchurch, which represents the Council's long-term focus and priorities in contributing towards achieving the Community Outcomes:

"Our future Christchurch is a world-class boutique city, where people enjoy a sustainable lifestyle, a healthy environment, a strong economic base and the diverse landscapes of the City and Peninsula.

Christchurch will be...

...a place where people enjoy living.

The Visitor Strategy will achieve the Community Plan vision by:

- ✓ Supporting a prosperous tourism industry that will provide the economic stimulus that allows activities, cafes and restaurants to develop, helping to build a vibrant City that people enjoy living in.

- ...a place of inclusive communities.* ✓ Fostering community understanding of other cultures through the visitors from around the globe that come to see Christchurch.
- ...a thriving, healthy environment.* ✓ Protecting and enhancing our most important asset – the environment – through monitoring the impacts of visitors and enhancing the experience of our unique environment for both residents and visitors.
- ...the most attractive city in New Zealand.* ✓ Ensuring our Garden City reputation is second to none, and that we provide unforgettable experiences for our visitors.
- ...a global economic destination.* ✓ Putting Christchurch on the map, as an attractive, vibrant city in which to locate business.

19. The Draft Visitor Strategy has important linkages with other Council strategies, and in particular is very closely aligned to the Draft Events Strategy and the Central City Revitalisation Strategy. Staff working on these various strategies have worked closely to ensure they are co-ordinated. The Draft Visitor Strategy has also been aligned with the draft Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy.
20. Following approval of the Draft Visitor Strategy by the Council, a process of general consultation will be undertaken. The anticipated period of consultation will overlap the Draft Events Strategy consultation. It is envisaged that the consultation on these two strategies will be dovetailed for those organisations interested in visitors and tourism to present a seamless approach in the documentation and presentation for these stakeholders.
21. Consultation on the Draft Visitor Strategy will be completed by the end of November 2006. It is intended that the Visitor Strategy will be completed by the end of January 2006.