

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING PARTY

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to establish a working party to assist with the development of the Council's Sustainability Policy and Climate Change Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. This report seeks to action the following 22 February 2007 Council resolution.

That staff be requested to report back to the Council on the proposal to appoint a Council working party to address Councillor input into the Christchurch City Council's sustainability policy and climate change strategy initiatives.

3. As part of the Council's adopted Strategy Map, the Council has already committed to a Sustainability Policy. The intention of the policy is to embed sustainability into all areas of the Council by having an over-arching policy to be given effect through the various Council strategies, plans and actions and against which future Council actions can be tested and evaluated. The establishment of the working party will provide a framework to complete this policy obligation.
4. In contrast, there is no commitment in the Council's Strategy Map to addressing Climate Change, though the Council has previously (22 August 2003) resolved:
 - *That the Council acknowledge that climate change is occurring and adopt a precautionary approach when planning for future activities and works.*
 - *The Council when developing new policies and projects, take into account the effects of climate change where this is appropriate. Policies that initiate or support activities that counter the causes and effects of those changes, are to be preferred.*
 - *That the Council's response to climate change combine the limitation and adaptation approaches.*
5. Although existing and draft strategies may respond to the impacts of climate change, directly or indirectly, there is currently no formal framework to do this within. Similarly the Council has not established nor sought a mandate from the community to actively address Climate Change across the city. A formally adopted Climate Change Strategy would overcome this. Officers support the development of a Climate Change Strategy given:
 - the public concern (70% of New Zealanders consider it to be the most pressing environmental issue in a recent Lincoln University Study);
 - the clear direction from central government for New Zealand to become carbon neutral and for the public sector to lead by example;
 - the apparent urgency for a response to the issue (current understanding would suggest that we have less than 20 years to avoid passing potentially catastrophic tipping points);
 - Christchurch is one of the most vulnerable communities in relation to the impacts of climate change in New Zealand (susceptible to the impacts of drought, flood and sea level rise);
 - Climate change requires an all of Council and community-wide response; and
 - It is also likely that the Sustainability Policy will signal climate change as a priority issue for the Council to address.

If the Council adopts the recommendation of this report it is proposed that the Strategy Map be updated to include Climate Change as a strategy under the Healthy Environment Programme.

6. To formally establish a Sustainability Working Party, the Council will also need to approve of Terms Of Reference (TOR) for that group and appoint representatives. Accordingly, a draft TOR for the Council to consider is also attached (Attachment 1).

7. As stated in the Draft TOR the primary goals of this group are:
 - To recommend a Proposed Sustainability Policy and implementation plan to the Council by October 2007.
 - To recommend a Proposed Climate Change Strategy by September 2008.
8. The establishment of a Working Party to address these issues should be considered in two phases: the development of the policy and strategy, and an ongoing role in supporting their respective implementation. As the latter roles will only emerge from the work done during the development phase, this report focuses on establishing a working party to develop and ultimately present both the policy and strategy to the Council for adoption.
9. It is envisaged that in addition to the inclusion of Councillors on the working party, that the working party be able to appoint, on an as required basis, industry and stakeholder representatives to the working party, and to conduct consultation with stakeholders and the community. The role of the working party will be to scope, develop, test and ultimately recommend back to the Council a Sustainability Policy, and Climate Change Strategy for adoption.
10. While the Sustainability Policy is within current resource planning, the development of a Climate Change Strategy will have budgetary and resourcing issues for the Strategy and Planning Group. It is anticipated that a budget of \$40,000 is required to prepare the strategy; being \$20,000 in 2007/08 and \$20,000 in 2008/09, and that funding be approved through the consideration and option of the proposed 2007/08 Annual Plan. Any future implementation funding will be considered as part of the 2009/19 LTCCP. Officers recommend that the Council approve the establishment of the Sustainability and Climate Change Working Party, the adoption of the Terms of Reference (attached) and appoint representatives to this group.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The establishment of the working party and the addition of the Climate Change Strategy has identified additional costs of \$40,000 not currently budgeted within Strategy and Planning. Funding of this amount spread over the 2007/08–2008/09 financial years will need to be approved.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

11. Funding for the development of a Sustainability Policy is contained within the LTCCP budget. Funds for the development of a Climate Change Strategy will require additional funding.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

12. The Council is not legally required to have a Sustainability Policy or a Strategy on Climate Change.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

13. The development of a Sustainability Policy will help the Council meet its legal requirements under the Local Government Act 2002 in terms of taking a “sustainable development approach” (Part 2, Section 14) and in considering present and future, social, environmental and economic wellbeing etc (Part 2, Section 10).
14. There is a legal requirement to consider the impacts of Climate Change contained in the Resource Management (Energy and Climate Change) Amendment Act 2004 and indirectly by requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 and the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

15. Outcomes from both the Policy and Strategy may influence Council activities and level of service.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

16. Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

17. The working party will help to develop a Sustainability Policy and Climate Change Strategy which will be aligned with the Council's Strategic Directions and integrated with existing and draft strategies.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

18. Yes, the recommendations align with for example Sustainable Energy Strategy, Water Supply and Surface Water Strategies, Waste Management Plan and Urban Development Strategy.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

19. Consultation will be undertaken as part of the policy/strategy development process.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended:

- (a) That the Council approve the establishment of a Sustainability and Climate Change Working Party and that Councillors (to be named) be appointed to it.
- (b) That the Terms of Reference for the Working Party (as attached) be approved.
- (c) That the Council's Strategy Map be amended to recognise the addition of the Climate Change Strategy, within the Healthy Environment Programme.
- (d) That additional funding of \$20,000 in 2007/08, and \$20,000 in 2008/09 financial years to develop the Climate Change Strategy be included in the Omnibus Report for final approval during the Annual Plan process.