

7. AGEING TOGETHER POLICY



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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To recommend adoption of the Ageing Together Policy (Attachment One).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Work has been under way during the last twelve months to review the Council's Older Persons Policy 1998. The purpose of the review was primarily to:
 - (a) Review the Council's contribution to fulfilling the goals of the Government's New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy 2001.
 - (b) Enable the Council to anticipate and consider the needs and wellbeing of the growing number of older people in the community, as part of fulfilling its Strategic Directions and the City's Community Outcomes.
3. During 2006 staff met with numerous stakeholder groups and analysed current research and reports on the consequences of the demographic trend of an ageing population. An interim external reference group was established to provide additional information and feedback.
4. The draft revised policy was discussed by the Strong Communities Portfolio Group in August 2006 and at a Council and Community Board seminar in September 2006. The draft revised policy was approved by the Council on 19 October 2006.
5. Formal public consultation on the draft policy ran from 20 November 2006 – 28 February 2007. During this time, staff consulted again with key stakeholder groups and fulfilled one community board's request for a presentation.
6. Public feedback on the draft policy was discussed with the Strong Communities Portfolio Group in March 2007.
7. This report presents the Ageing Together Policy for adoption by the Council. The policy supersedes the Council's current Older Persons Policy 1998. Whilst much of the intent of the original policy remains, Ageing Together updates and reinforces the Council's commitment to older people.
8. The policy supports the Government's Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 by giving greater emphasis and recognition to the opportunities that 'positive ageing' can mean for individuals and communities' wellbeing. It is also mindful of the wider community implications of the Canterbury District Health Board's current and future strategic direction of 'ageing in place' whereby older people are supported in continuing independent living in their local community for longer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no direct financial implications. The policy will require Council units to continue to, and have more active regard to the needs of older people as part of their operational planning, which may impact on the future cost of service.

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

10. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

11. The revised draft policy complies with relevant legislation: Human Rights Act 1993; Health Act 1956; Local Government Act 2002.

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

12. Yes.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

13. Yes.

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

14. Yes.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

15. This report recommends the approval of the Ageing Together Policy. Its implementation will contribute to development of all Council strategies.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

16. Yes.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

17. The Ageing Together Policy has been developed in accordance with the decision-making process and other provisions of the Local Government Act 2002. This has included positive consultation with key stakeholder groups and sector organisations in the community, and an extended period of public consultation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Adopt the Ageing Together Policy (Attachment One).
- (b) Revoke and remove from the policy register the Older Persons Policy, 1998 (Attachment Three) and the Older Persons Annual Plan, 1999 (Attachment Four).

BACKGROUND ON THE AGEING TOGETHER POLICY

18. New Zealand's population is ageing. Over the next twenty years there will be a significant shift in the demographic shape of the country, largely due to the bulge of the 'baby boomer' generation reaching the traditional retirement age (60-74 age bracket). By 2026 21% of Christchurch's population will be aged over 65 years. Life expectancy for both men and women is increasing and by 2030 there will be twice as many people aged 85+ as now.
19. The Council first adopted a policy on older people in 1998. Since then, there have been some very successful initiatives and work undertaken in implementation, notably in social housing, libraries, community support and recreation and sports.
20. However, there is recognition that the Council will need to address the consequences of an ageing population with greater focus in the future; to enable it to realise its Vision, meet its Strategic Directions, the City's Community Outcomes and the goals of the Government's New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy 2001.
21. The Ageing Together policy supersedes the Council's current Older Persons Policy 1998. Whilst much of the intent of the original policy is retained, Ageing Together updates the Council's commitment to meeting the needs of older people and encouraging their full participation and wellbeing in Christchurch.
22. The policy supports the Government's Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 by giving greater emphasis and recognition to the opportunities that 'positive ageing' can bring for both individuals and communities' wellbeing. It is also mindful of the wider community implications of the Canterbury District Health Board's current and future strategic direction of 'ageing in place' whereby older people are supported in continuing independent living in their local community for longer.

CONSULTATION

23. The draft policy was made available in standard and large print type. It was promoted in Council pages in local newspapers and via a community radio station. The Metropolitan Community Adviser, Older Adults and People with Disability liaised with the Council's Disability Advisory Group to advise them about the draft policy and encourage their wider discussion.
24. Staff met with representatives from seven sector organisations, one community board and the interim external reference group during the period of public consultation. It is noted that there are very good networks operating in the health and welfare sector associated with older people and the Council liaises regularly with them. Most of the seven groups consulted represent large numbers of individuals and are a single 'voice' for numerous other welfare/sector groups and individuals.
25. Twenty-eight written submissions were received on the draft Ageing Together Policy. Public consultation ran from 20 November 2006 until 28 February. Twenty two of the submissions were from groups or organisations and six from individuals. A summary of the submissions, relating to each goal is included as Attachment Two.
26. Overall there was very positive support for the draft policy statement, scope and seven goals. The proposed policy statement was largely supported by submitters. They believe its implementation will meet the needs and expectations of the community. Submitters commented positively on the breadth of the scope and its recognition that an ageing population can encompass people of all ages, not just those aged over 65 years. Some noted a need for the Council to collaborate more in the community in order to achieve the policy statement.
27. The draft policy goals were generally supported with numerous submitters suggesting practical ways for the Council to implement them. Some submitters stressed the need for effective measuring and monitoring of the goals' attainment.

28. Other submissions included advocacy for adoption of universal design principles in facility design; greater awareness by designers of transport, public space and facilities of the mobility issues faced by some older people; caution that 'one size does not fit all' in referring to all 65+ people as older people - the needs of the often more vulnerable 85+ age group are quite different and specialised. The Council is encouraged to be an advocate for better training and remuneration for those employed in the elder care and support industry.
29. Most submissions emphasised their keenness to see the Council 'walk the talk' in implementing more positive, practical actions to improve the wellbeing of older people in need, and increase opportunities for and recognition of positive ageing principles.
30. An analysis of the submissions was presented to the Strong Communities Portfolio Group in March 2007. Their discussion stressed the need to ensure the policy is expressed simply to ensure people's understanding. Also, the policy must clearly acknowledge the very positive contribution, including economic, that older people make in many ways to their local and our wider communities.

POLICY AMENDMENTS

31. The draft policy statement has been re-phrased to give greater emphasis to the Council's acknowledgement of the positive contribution that many older people can make to individual and family life and within the wider community.
32. The draft policy scope explicitly recognises the different and fluid needs of older people as they move between the so-called 'Third Age' of positive contribution and opportunity to 'Fourth Age' of greater dependency and need for support.
33. Goal 2 recognises the importance of accessible transportation, and access to facilities and services in encouraging involvement by older people.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

34. A detailed implementation plan is being drawn up. Much of the policy's implementation work will be led by Community Support staff. However the achievement of Goals 4-7 require whole of Council commitment and will mean consideration of the policy in all relevant Council-wide organisational planning, and relevant operational planning and activity management plans.
35. Specifically, and in addition to the many focused activities already underway, key objectives for the first year of implementation include:
 - (a) Establish an external reference group for ongoing consultation and liaison on matters relating to older people's needs and views. Membership will comprise key stakeholder groups and older people.
 - (b) Run an information forum annually in each ward for community groups and individuals to gather information about relevant Council services, health and government social services and local activities.
 - (c) Offer basic awareness training for Council staff and elected members about common issues and needs faced by older people.
 - (d) Develop a print information resource for older people and their families/cares about the breadth of relevant Council services and activities.
 - (e) Investigate collaborative production of a City-wide directory of services of relevance to older people/their carers.
 - (f) Work with Community Support staff and external agencies on a proposed intergenerational venture to promote positive understanding and respect between older and younger adults.

36. Concurrently, work is underway to develop a generic process to ensure that Council-wide policies such as Ageing Together are considered in organisational and operational planning. This will include a process for monitoring Council-wide adherence to this and other policy frameworks.

CONCLUSION

37. The Council has a role to support, connect, provide, collaborate and advocate with its community to ensure that Christchurch people are positively ageing.
38. The policy's seven goals (set out below) will assist the Council in fulfilling this role.
- Access to information
 - Access to places and services
 - Opportunities for participation
 - Education
 - Understanding and promoting positive ageing
 - Advocacy
 - Collaboration
39. By Ageing Together, Christchurch can ensure that its older people are valued and respected for their contribution to the life of the City, and are cared for and supported when needed.