

INTRODUCTION

The Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce is a membership driven, not-for-profit business service organisation with membership in excess of 3,000. Its primary role is to assist members' enterprises to be successful as possible with the ultimate objective of ensuring that Canterbury becomes the most desired place in New Zealand to do business.

The Employers' Chamber is the largest business support agency in the South Island and with its regional Chamber affiliations has influence on membership of approximately 3,900 enterprises in the top half of the South Island.

The Employers' Chamber works closely with the Christchurch City Council and has been actively and directly involved in various initiatives in the recent past, including the marketing and promotion of the central city; participation in the Central City Streets Committee; participation in assessing waste water options; an active involvement in the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy; participation in the Canterbury Regional Transport Strategy; involvement in the Canterbury Strategic Water Study Committee; participation with the Canterbury Area Committee, and many other initiatives on a case-by-case basis – all with the intent of serving the interests of our members and ensuring that we are actively involved in promoting an environment conducive to business success.

SUBMISSION ON 2005 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN

Last year the Employers' Chamber made a brief submission covering three areas, in which we expressed concern:

- The level of rate increases, although we submitted that last year's 3.49% was acceptable but at the top level of a rate increase threshold.
- The long-term financial projections of the Council, particularly with respect to major capital expenditure that is currently being considered in various areas of Council activity. We note that our concerns have come to fruition in the context of the content of the draft LTCCP under review but we made the point that it made good sense to have a 'no surprises' policy with regard to long-term funding requirements. This year we have been surprised.

- We presented the Council with a 'scorecard', a copy of which is attached to this document, as a self-check for Councillors. In summary we would note that good progress has been made with regard to the general promotion of the central city, Christchurch being increasingly recognised as a city with a good quality of life, and there have been some measurable steps forward with respect to the development of the Urban Development Strategy. However, there is a lot of work to do with respect to other city infrastructure as identified in the scorecard. We also look forward to learning of the Council's own performance targets with respect to building consent timings, customer service and land use and sub-division consent timings. Our scorecard was modified slightly by Lesley McTurk and her version is also attached for information.

The involvement between the Employers' Chamber and the Council is generally positive and ongoing. For that reason we see this submission as just one other mechanism in the context of building and nurturing that relationship. Ongoing activity throughout the year, and interaction at both a Councillor and Management level continues to ensure that the submission process is just part of a useful and developing relationship between local Government and the business community.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL LTCCP 2006 TO 2016

1. Introduction

We wish to congratulate the Council on the quality, layout and presentation of the information relating to the LTCCP. The information is clear and well presented and is a significant step forward in the context of the Council meeting its obligations to the community in the context of the LTCCP. We note that in our submission in 2004, we suggested that it would make good sense for a concise, easy to read executive summary to be published, which would cover the key issues relating to changes in rates and any other significant changes in the direction or intention of Council in the forthcoming years. We are very pleased to see a 24-page draft summary which covers the salient issues. This represents a major step forward in the context of ensuring the community understands the content of the LTCCP.

We are also very grateful to the Chief Executive, Dr Lesley McTurk, and members of her management team, particularly Roy Baker and Stephen Hill, for making time available to present to our members and being available to respond to queries with respect to the content of the LTCCP.

2. Rate Increases

We recognise that the Council is facing some major issues with respect to its current and projected funding. We understand that this is in part due to commitments being pushed further out in the context of the LTCCP and the community now having to bite the bullet – the combination of major capital expenditure items that simply cannot be delayed any further and a fundamental 'mid-course correction' in terms of the activities of the Council.

We are, however, very concerned that the community is facing rate increases of 8.55% for 2006/7, 7.03% for 2007/8 and 10.75% for 2008/9. While we see the inevitability of some rate increase we believe that the Council must continually work towards getting rate increases back in line with community expectations [closer to CPI], work very hard to further restrict its activities to core services, and continue to save wherever it can on operating costs.

3. Capital Expenditure

We note that capital expenditure of \$1.6 billion is projected over the next ten years, averaging \$200 million per annum. We note further that this is a combination of renewal and core projects. We recognise the need for solid efficient infrastructure, particularly in the areas of water, roading and sewage.

We will be involved in actively monitoring progress in these areas to ensure that investment is strategic, appropriate and cost-effective.

4. Water

The Employers' Chamber has for some years been requesting that the Council consider charging for the domestic consumption of water by volume used. We see this as potentially resulting in a saving of up to 30% on water consumption, if overseas evidence is taken into account. With water issues becoming increasingly important and water being recognised as much more of a finite resource and with the precious aquifers that services Christchurch city being increasingly under threat, we believe that it is time that consumers pay for water by volume.

We understand that metering is in place and that meters are currently read – it is a small step to introduce user-pay charges, which we believe the community will accept in the interests of protecting a vital and precious resource.

5. Central City

The Employers' Chamber is contracted to the Council to market and promote the central city. This is a three-year agreement, which runs through to June 2007. A separate submission on the central city has been made by the Central City Business Group, under the umbrella of the Employers' Chamber.

Suffice to say in the context of this submission that we support the context of the submission on the LTCCP by the Central City Business Group.

6. Targeted Rate

Although the issue of the targeted rate is covered in the Central City Business Group submission, we wish to reinforce that we believe the targeted rate to partially fund the upgrade of the City Mall

is bad policy and simply not appropriate. We are very conscious that targeted rates must accrue private benefit to those people targeted. The City Mall is the most publicly used location in the central city and is an essential piece of city infrastructure. Those businesses that are intended to be targeted will not in the vast majority of cases accrue private benefit from the targeted rate. This alone makes such a rate inappropriate, however, further than that we are worried by the precedent that this sets and the inconsistencies resulting from such policy.

We strongly recommend that the Council dispense with the concept of a targeted rate and include the cost of upgrading the City Mall in its general rate funding.

7. Changes to Staffing and Management

There has been much media coverage with respect to management changes and staff upheavals within the Council. We are also well aware of the publicity surrounding Councillors and the apparent disharmony at Councillor level.

From the Employers' Chamber perspective we strongly support the Chief Executive in her quest to reconfigure the management of the Council. We firmly believe that the clear split between governance and management must be maintained to ensure an efficient operation and we strongly believe in the need for Councillors to demonstrate cohesive leadership at a governance level to drive this city forward.

8. Events Funding

There has been significant public debate about the merits of the Council being involved in various events through financial support. We do see the Council having a role in this area but believe it should be supportive of events that accrue significant measurable economic benefit to this city, that are demonstrably well-structured, well-governed, and well-managed and are events that could not reasonably be provided by the private sector. There are key components of our community, particularly in the arts and culture side of the city, that require ongoing support, which we believe a legitimate role for Council.

There are also significant events throughout the year that draw local, domestic and international visitors to Christchurch that need to be nurtured and support. We are happy to work with the Council on the detail of this on a case-by-case basis.

9. Size of the Christchurch City Council

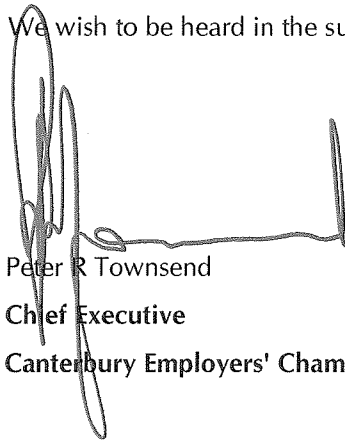
The Employers' Chamber was strongly supportive of the reduction of Council, from its previous size of 24. Our original suggestion was 16 but we support the reduction to a Council size of 12, plus one with the absorption of Banks Peninsula. We have noted comments in the media about Councillors being over worked and the need to expand the size of Council. We do not support

this, as we believe the Councillors need to continue to concentrate on issues of governance and configure the time commitments they make to the Council at this high level to ensure that we have a relatively small, efficient governance team.

CONCLUSION

We thank the Christchurch City Council for the opportunity to present this submission. We look forward to working closely with the Council as a key stakeholder in the community and to assist the Council to satisfy its obligations in the Long Term Council Community Plan process.

We wish to be heard in the support of this submission and thank you for your consideration.



Peter R Townsend

Chief Executive

Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce

Friday 5th May 2006

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL SCORECARD

ENVIRONMENT

KEY OBJECTIVE	TIMING	KPI
Christchurch city recognised as a business friendly city	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local businesses have no legitimate complaints about the Christchurch City Council's role in the context of sustainable business activity. - Any concerns are dealt with within five working days to the satisfaction of the complainant. - No instances of Council funding activities in competition with the private sector.
General promotion of the city is effective and has a measurable input on increased activities in the central city.	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All performance measurements in the Christchurch City Council/Employers' Chamber contract are achieved and the Council and central city businesses continue to support the programme. - Christchurch recognised as one of New Zealand's leading cultural centres by survey. - Christchurch recognised as a leading city in New Zealand for hosting conventions [number of international conventions held].
Christchurch city recognised nationally and internationally for quality of life, and as a learning city. It will be regarded as a city that supports a healthy and participative population.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National surveys in New Zealand and locally and by feedback from actual arrivals into the city, who have move to Christchurch for lifestyle reasons. - Higher rates of participation in the workforce than any other cities in New Zealand [unemployment rate for Canterbury 3.5% or below]. - Residents rate Christchurch city as a good or very good place to live [target 80%].

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL SCORECARD

INFRASTRUCTURE

KEY OBJECTIVE	TIMING	KPI
Central Traffic Flows	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comprehensive study including one way street issues agreed and in place, covering central city roads, pedestrian access, public transport and service vehicle access. Also take into account direct feedback from those businesses affected or will be affected by proposed changes to one-way systems.
Carparking	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-hour free parking protected. - Carparking status electronically conveyed to parkers. - Provision of car parks in city is in harmony with promoting activity in central city.
Arterial Roads into City	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive structure for overcoming congestion in arterial roads [Ferry, Blenheim, Papanui and Riccarton Roads, and Rossall Street] - Greater than 80% of residents are satisfied with the quality of traffic signs and markings
Water	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full assessment of demand/supply options for fresh water supply to the city and customer satisfaction with water quality and taste. - Reconsideration of user pays. - Residents believe waterways, drains and wetlands are well looked after [target 70%].
Urban Development Strategy	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreed structure for growth in and around Christchurch that will support sustainable economic growth and population growth in the city, based on upper quartile population growth projections.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL SCORECARD

PROCESSES

KEY OBJECTIVE	TIMING	KPI
Building Consent Timings	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process 100% of stand-alone project information memoranda (PIMs) within eight working days. - Show an improvement in customer satisfaction [compared to base research results obtained in November 2003]. - 80% of responses to complaints or requests for investigations are completed within five working days [simple category] or 40 working days [complex category].
Customer Service	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 85% of all walk-in and phone-in customers are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service provided.
Land Use and Subdivision Consent Timings	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show an improvement in customer satisfaction compared to November 2000. An average score of 7.0 for commercial applicants and 7.1 for private applicants where 1 is the lowest. - Process 100% of non-notified land use consents, which do not require a hearing, within 20 working days. - Process 100% of subdivision applications within 20 working days. - 88% of residents believe that building or land development has not made their area worse.

Ex CEO, CCC.

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
Christchurch recognised as a business friendly city	Local businesses have no legitimate complaints about the City Council's role in the context of sustainable business activity.		
	Any concerns are addressed within 5 working days to the satisfaction of the complainant.		
	No instances of Council funding in competition with the private sector		
General promotion of the City is effective and has a measurable input on increased activities in the Central City	All performance measures in the CCC / ECOC contract are achieved and the Council and central city businesses continue to support the programme		LTCCP measures include growth in international visitor numbers, international visitor duration and international visitor spend (achieve or exceed national rates in all categories)
	Christchurch recognised as one of New Zealand's leading cultural centres by survey		
	Christchurch recognised as a leading city in New Zealand for hosting conventions [number of international conventions held]		

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
Christchurch City recognised nationally and internationally for quality of life, and as a learning city. It will be regarded as a city that supports a healthy and participative population	National surveys in New Zealand and locally and by feedback from arrivals into the city, who have moved to Christchurch for lifestyle reasons.		
	Higher rates of participation in the workforce than any other cities in New Zealand		
	Residents rate Christchurch as a good or very good place to live [80%].		Annual residents survey – 2005 results 97%

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
Central Traffic Flows	A comprehensive study including one way street issues agreed and in place, covering central city roads, pedestrian access, public transport and service vehicle access. All take into account direct feedback from those businesses affected or will be affected by proposed changes to one-way systems		
Car Parking	One-hour free-parking protected.		
	Car parking status conveyed electronically to parkers		
	Provision of car parks in the City is in harmony with promoting activity in central city		
Arterial Roads into the City	Comprehensive structure for overcoming congestion in arterial roads[Ferry, Blenheim, Papanui and Riccarton Roads, and Rossall Street]	Congestion KPIs being developed by Streets and Transport for LTCCP	

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
	Greater than 80% of residents are satisfied with the quality of traffic signs and markings		LTCCP Measure - Resident satisfaction with finding their way around Christchurch. Targets to be established.
Water	Full assessment of demand / supply options for fresh water supply to the City	Done and adopted by Council. Summary to be published in 06-16 LTCCP	
	Customer satisfaction with water quality and taste	LTCCP 90%	Annual residents survey 2005 – 95%
	Re-consideration of user-pays		
	Residents believe waterways, drains and wetlands are well looked after [target 70%]		LTCCP measure -99% of properties do not flood Annual residents survey 2005 – 73%
Urban Development Strategy	Agreed structure for growth in and around Christchurch that will support sustainable economic growth and population growth in the city, based on upper quartile population growth projections		
Building consent timings	Process 100% of standalone project information memoranda within eight working days	LTCCP - 100% building consents and PIMs within 20 working days	

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
	Show improvement in customer satisfaction [compared to base research results obtained in November 2003]		
	80% of responses to complaints or requests for investigations are completed within 5 working days [simple category] or 40 working days [complex category]	LTCCP – 100% simple requests in 10 working days, 80% complex requests in 60 working days	
Customer Service	More than 85% if all walk-in and phone-in customers are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service provided		"Customer Service" is regarded as an internal activity and not reported in the LTCCP. Current surveys show satisfaction in excess of 90%
Land Use and Subdivision Consent Timings	Show an improvement in customer satisfaction compared to November 2000. An average score of 7.0 for commercial applicants and 7.1 for private applicants.		
	Process 100% of non-notified land use consents, which do not require a hearing, within 20 working days		

Employers' Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)		Briefing Notes	
Key Objective	Suggested KPIs	Current Status	Comments
	Process 100% of subdivision applications with 20 working days		
	88% of residents believe that building or land development has not made their area worse	LTCCP – 80%	Annual residents survey 2005 – 80% of those aware of building alterations thought their area was not worse.