

DRAFT CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL LONG TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2006 TO 2016

SUBMISSION OF THE SPREYDON/HEATHCOTE COMMUNITY BOARD

The Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board makes the following comments on the draft Christchurch City Council *Our Community Plan Christchurch O-Tautahi 2006/16* ("LTCCP").

GENERAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

(a) Projected rates increases

The Board generally accepts the need for the projected rate increases in 2006/07 and subsequent years. Given some of the projects that the Board supports, an increased rate take could be supported. The Board wishes to ensure that there are no reductions in local service levels and standards.

(b) Council's Vision/Strategic Directions/Community Outcomes

These do not "knit" together well. The Council's Vision should better reflect what the Community Outcomes are intended to achieve, i.e. there should be a better linkage between them.

(c) Communications issues

An enhanced communications strategy should be a priority for the Council. This should not require any additional funding; only the more effective use of existing funding. The Council should explore new, more efficient and bolder ways of targeting the community in order to ensure greater awareness of issues amongst the community, and a greater interest in participating in the Council's decision-making processes. For example, this could include e-democracy, or the reintroduction of the former Community Plans (to tie in with capital programme planning cycles) that used to be compiled for each ward.

(d) Depreciation

The Council's current rationale/methodology for the accounting of depreciation should be reviewed to ensure there is no "double-counting".

(e) Detail on capital works programme

The ward-based maps providing the capital works programme details for the next three years, recently circulated to Community Boards, should form a supplementary document to the LTCCP (or be included in the final version), as many within the community will be interested in this level of detail.

(f) Partnerships with other local authorities

- (i) There are frequent references in the draft LTCCP to important partnerships with Environment Canterbury, e.g. Stormwater (p216) and the Cashmere Stream (p75). The Board supports such partnerships.

- (ii) It is contradictory to give these signals in the draft LTCCP on one hand, and then have a Council resolution to request staff to investigate the possible formation of a unitary authority in place of both Environment Canterbury and the City Council. The Board is against such a possibility, and requests the City Council to sort out its own planning and co-operation with Environment Canterbury as a well-run part of the region's local government.

(Note: Sue Wells and Barry Corbett did not support the point in f(ii) above).

(g) Population growth projections

The projected rate of 2.3% per annum over the next 10 years is not being matched by programme and projects provision. The current rapidly escalating costs of transport, housing etc does not appear to be acknowledged or provided for in the draft plan. Growth in the older population and apparent gaps in demographic data, and some of the related assumptions, need addressing. For example, a growing demand for housing an increased ageing population.

(h) Policy on Determining Significance (p291-295)

- (i) The Board opposes the removal of City Care and Red Bus from the Council's strategic asset list (p291). Not having these assets on the strategic assets list allows them to be sold or significantly changed without a special consultative procedure. These assets belong to the citizens and their removal should not occur without consultation with the citizens of Christchurch.

There is no transport operation that could not be achieved by Redbus remaining a strategic asset under CCHL. Having utilities owned by the city allows a clear standard to be set for other contractors.

With regard to City Care, the city's water supply, sewerage and stormwater drainage and the organisation of this infrastructure, needs to be run by the Council as core services. In the event of a flood or earthquake disaster, it would be essential for Christchurch to have its own public works company, and it would not be in the public interest to rely only on external contractors.

The Board also requests that the LTCCP refers to the Council's equity in strategic assets, and not just a controlling interest as written (p294).

(Note: Sue Wells and Barry Corbett did not support the points in h(i) above)

- (ii) The Board notes the omission of City Housing from the list of "Strategic Assets" (p294), and seeks an assurance that it will be returned to this list. The assets of City Housing, as the second largest landlord in New Zealand, belong to the citizens of Christchurch. City Housing has a history of providing affordable rental housing to people on low incomes including those with a long term illness.
- (iii) With regard to this policy, the Board seeks a return to the previous trigger of \$500,000 expenditure, rather than \$1 million quoted (p292).

(i) The Council as a Good Employer

Having regard to the Council's statutory duty to be a good employer (Section 38, LGA) and several of the identified Community Outcomes, the LTCCP should include meaningful performance measures to enable the community to judge the Council's performance in this important area.

COMMENTS ON MAJOR PROJECTS

In terms of the projects listed in the draft LTCCP as "Discretionary projects: priority":

(a) Strategic Land Purchases (p72)

The Board is supportive in principle of these land purchases. As there is no detail in the LTCCP on where those purchases will take place, the Board seeks an assurance that consultation will occur on such purchases where possible (e.g. through the next and subsequent Annual Plan processes).

The acquisition of reserve land on the Port Hills is a priority to meet the needs of a growing population, and to control further unwanted development and potential adverse effects.

(b) New leisure centres (p73)

The Board strongly supports and endorses the proposed new Learn to Swim pool at the Pioneer Leisure Centre, and understands this proposal also has the full support of local school principals.

(c) Streets and transport improvements (p73)

The Board supports the proposed expenditure to deliver the objectives of the Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Strategy (MCTS), although it is not satisfied that the mix of projects within that strategy is exactly as the Board would have chosen.

In terms of the projects listed as "Discretionary projects: non-priority" and as such are therefore not included for funding:

(d) Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust Development (p74)

The Board supports its inclusion in the LTCCP as a priority project for funding.

(e) Cashmere Stream (p75)

The Board submits that this project should be returned to the LTCCP as a priority project for funding. The Council should also work more closely with Environment Canterbury on this issue.

(f) Water re-use

The funding required for the feasibility studies is minimal, and the Board believes this should be included as a priority discretionary project for funding.

In terms of the projects listed as "outside the criteria for inclusion" in the LTCCP:

(g) Mid-Heathcote vision (p79)

This should be returned as a priority discretionary project, given the river's significance to the city, and the ecological and environmental benefits of this project. This project is of fundamental importance to the city. It supports many of the Community Outcomes that the Council purports to desire. It is not a discretionary project. It is core business for the Council, and a major objective and priority for this Community Board.

(h) E-democracy (p78)

This is an important project that should be funded. Providing targeted information to citizens will assist with increasing community involvement in Council affairs and decision making.

(i) Former Hillmorton Hospital Administration Building

As was indicated to the Council in 2005, the administration building on the former Hillmorton Hospital site is, in the Board's view, worthy of retention and restoration. Funding provided by the Board has resulted in the recent completion of a Conservation Plan for the building.

COMMENTS ON ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

(a) Council payment outlets at service centres (p86)

The Board does not support the proposal for New Zealand Post to be used for all Council payments. This service should be retained, as service centres are the "community face" of the Council. If the service is removed, it would downgrade the overall service provided by the service centres. The Board supports continued enhancement of services provided by the Council, not the downgrading of the service centre network as proposed.

(b) Mobile library (p86)

The Board does not support the removal of this service as a cost-cutting measure. Its loss would be contrary to the achievement of the Council's Community Outcomes. Other funding options should be explored to retain the service such as sponsorships or joint ventures.

(c) Spreydon Library (p86)

The Board does not support closure of this library. Libraries foster a sense of community. The Board reminds the Council that on opening of the South Library in 2003, a commitment was given by the Council to retain the Spreydon Library for at least 10 years.

(d) Rationalisation of community facilities (p86)

The Board acknowledges that reviews are appropriate to ensure facilities remain relevant - these should involve local service users and the relevant Community Board. The Board notes that it has already been involved in rationalising facilities in the Spreydon/Heathcote area in recent years, and questions whether further rationalisation is required in the Board's area.

(e) South Library

The Board fully supports continued funding being provided for the community use of the South Learning Centre. The Board also requests that the Council should advocate to central government for the continuation of funding for such valued facilities.

(f) Democracy and Governance

- (i) **Decision-making and Consultation** – the Council needs to consider how improvements can be made on the current performance of only 47% of residents being satisfied with the way the Council involves the public in decision-making (p111). Key to such improvements will be the ability to overcome community cynicism around the Council's consultation processes. The purpose of these processes needs to be clarified for residents - the term "consultation" is often used when the real intent is only to inform, and residents often find their views disregarded. Also, there can be times when consultation occurs for a project but budgetary constraints prevent that project from proceeding, thus leading to disappointment and perceptions of wasted effort from residents that have provided their views. Consultation should be planned and budgeted for appropriately, so that it is meaningful, not a token action at the end of a planning process (the Board's submission above on e-democracy is relevant to this view).
- (ii) **Resources/Support for Community Boards** – Advocacy and engagement underpin all that the Council does. The preservation of community boards in Christchurch is the key to successful local democracy. The Local Government Commission's decision in reducing the size of the Council to 12 members was in part recognised by the role of community boards and an expectation that they will continue to provide a strong linkage between the Council and local communities. More resources are needed for Community Boards to be more effective in dealing with community issues and aspirations. Specifically, one Community Engagement Advisor and one Community Engagement Assistant to cover two Community Board areas, with a combined population equivalent to a city the size of Dunedin, are insufficient.
- (iii) **New Civic Offices** – the Board submits that the funding provision of this building should, for reasons of transparency, be shown in the final LTCCP.

The Board seeks to be heard in support of this submission.

Phil Clearwater

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Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board

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