



COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN CHRISTCHURCH
TE KAUNIHERA KAUPAPA ORANGA KI OTAUTAHI

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4 May 2006

The Planning Team
Our Community Plan
Christchurch City Council
PO Box 237
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Planning Team

Please find enclosed submissions to the LTCCP.

These submissions have been read and endorsed by the Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS), the Women's Centre and the Angel Fund, each of whom has requested that we record their support of these submissions.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Wallace Torstonson
Executive Officer

Submission to the Christchurch City Council on the Draft Long Term Council Community Plan – LTCCP

NB For the purpose of clarity the term Voluntary Sector will be used throughout this submission to describe what is variously called the Community or Community Sector, the Non Government or NGO Sector, or the Not-for Profit Sector.

Introduction

The purpose of the Council of Social Services (COSS) is to promote social equity, justice and well being by advocating on issues, empowering groups and facilitating collaboration in the social services sector.

COSS is governed by a voluntary board whose members are drawn from a range of statutory and voluntary social service providers including a Christchurch City Council staff member. Membership consists of over 140 voluntary agencies and a number of individuals as well as representatives from the State Sector and Local Government. An Executive Officer is employed to carry out the day to day activities of the organisation.

Services offered by COSS are not limited to its members. The views of COSS are drawn from and reflect its wide networks and are mandated by its broad cross sectoral membership.

It should be noted that one of the Key Objectives of the COSS Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010 is “to develop strong and productive relationships with key Central and Local Government agencies and their staff” and “to be a key partner with the Christchurch City Council in supporting and encouraging the Voluntary Sector to engage with the Community Outcomes process”

Discussion

COSS believes that Christchurch should be a city that cares for its most vulnerable. Voluntary Sector organisations contribute immeasurably to the social fabric and the general wellbeing of the citizens of Christchurch by providing a wide range of essential services and offering opportunities for participation. In the main, the recipients of these services are the city’s most vulnerable people.

It is from this stance that COSS makes the following observations and recommendations.

- COSS notes the strategic activities included in the LTCCP for Community Support and acknowledges the Council’s intention to develop a Community Development Strategy to facilitate its involvement with the Voluntary Sector.
- COSS acknowledges that Christchurch City Council has made a commitment to maintaining financial assistance to the Voluntary Sector.
- COSS notes with concern that the LTCCP’s view of the Council’s association with the sector is somewhat at variance with the view held by the sector itself, (P 97 Full Version , **How does the Council’s work contribute towards our Community Outcomes?**) It states:

1 By working with community organisations to help them support their communities, and

2 By providing funding and staff advice to community organisations.

COSS believes that the nature Voluntary Sector's relationship with the Council is somewhat more symbiotic/interdependent in nature than that expressed in the LTCCP and that to achieve the best possible outcomes for the city, neither the Council nor the Voluntary Sector can do without the other.

Mutual discussions as to the parameters of this relationship are needed urgently.

Recommendations

1. That the proposed amount of funding to be made available to the Voluntary Sector in the Draft LTCCP be maintained in the final plan.
2. That the wording in the LTCCP document is amended to reflect appropriately the interdependent nature of the relationship between the Christchurch City Council and the Voluntary Sector.
3. That in order to clarify its relationship with the Voluntary Sector, the Christchurch City Council, in consultation with the Voluntary Sector, develop a policy statement outlining its relationship with the sector. (See attached: Draft Statement of Intent Regarding the Council's Relationship with the Community and Voluntary Sectors. (Council, 28 June 2001)

COSS wishes to speak in support of this submission



Helen Gatonyi
Chair

Statement of Intent Regarding the Council's Relationship with the Community and Voluntary Sectors

That the Council approve the following Draft Statement of Intent, as amended, as an expression of the commitment of the Council to work with the voluntary sector:

Draft Proposed Statement of Intent (Summary)

This Statement of Intent is an expression of the Council's commitment to work with the voluntary sector for the betterment of the community, to champion and support voluntary activity, and to jointly influence national policy where appropriate.

The underlying philosophy of this Statement of Intent is that the voluntary sector is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive and prosperous society. Voluntary groups, as independent, not-for-profit organisations, bring distinctive value to Christchurch and fulfil a role that is distinct from both the state and the market. Voluntary organisations make major tangible and difficult to quantify contributions to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the city.

It is acknowledged that not all voluntary organisations will have an interest in seeking a relationship with the Council. Some will prefer to pursue their own objectives without reference to Council. Others may find themselves more often in opposition to Council than in collaboration. On the occasions when both the Council and the voluntary sector organisations choose to work together, this Statement of Intent sets out the principles of Council's action.

Aims

The Council aims to develop robust relationships between Council and the voluntary sector so we can build a better future for the people of Christchurch.

It is acknowledged that the voluntary sector and Council have their own spheres of action with different roles, responsibilities and resources. This Statement clarifies Council's view of the respective roles and responsibilities and identifies the Council's commitments to the voluntary sector.

Actions

This Statement is not viewed as an end in itself. Specific actions will be developed setting out how the Council will put these values and commitments into practice, with target dates where appropriate.

Values

The Council's dealing with the voluntary sector are based on the following values:

Active Citizenship - participation of people in society through community involvement, and engagement in decision making and policy implementation processes.

Democratic society - which acknowledges the value of voluntary sector activity and upholds the right of citizens to associate freely with another in pursuit of common purposes. A society that enables all its citizens to participate, to share rights and responsibilities, and which incorporates an independent voluntary sector

Diversity - which welcomes the diversity of identities, interests and abilities within Christchurch and upholds the right of each interest group to speak on its own behalf.

Effectiveness - using limited resources so as to maximise positive change for people. This reflects a resolve to carefully select the issues to jointly work on, to specifically target programmes, and projects, and to focus on the structural forces in society that keep people in poverty or disadvantage.

Equity - a fair and equitable distribution of power and resources, recognising that reducing inequality offers the prospect of greater social wellbeing.

Social Justice - through the pursuit of fairness, tolerance and social cohesion, opposing all forms of discrimination and ensuring the participation of those who are marginalised

Sustainable Development - that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Treaty of Waitangi - honouring the Treaty of Waitangi and working to support the practices of partnership.

Commitments

In working with voluntary organisations, volunteers and community development groups, the Council makes the following commitments:

Respect - The Council values the contribution the voluntary sector makes to the social, economic, environmental and cultural life of the city. It will respect and champion the independence of the sector, including the right of voluntary organisations to determine their own priorities, manage their own affairs, develop their own models of good practice and comment on and challenge Council and Government policy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist.

Representation - The Council recognises that meaningful representation improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of programmes. It will support and extend opportunities for the sector to articulate local needs and priorities to central, regional and local governments, private sector agencies, service providers and other agencies. It will involve the sector in the process of developing and monitoring policies, strategies and programmes.

Resourcing - The Council acknowledges that the provision of funding and other forms of support is an important means of enhancing the sector's ability to contribute to the wellbeing of the city. The Council will develop and follow best practice in funding and resourcing of the sector.

Relationships - The Council recognises that the Council and the sector have distinct yet complementary roles and that there is added value in working in co-operatively towards common aims. It will promote effective collaborations based

on openness, trust and mutual recognition. The Council will work to honour the specific Treaty relationship between iwi/Maori and the crown

Expectations - The Council has a responsibility to be publicly accountable for resources. While the Council is committed to reducing undue accountability costs on the sector, it expects voluntary organisations to account for any public funds received in such ways as to command public confidence. This includes meeting reporting and accountability obligations, and evaluation of programme effectiveness.

Council
28 June 2001

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Discussion

The Local Government Act 2002; Part 6, Section 81 titled Contributions to decision-making processes by Maori, states:

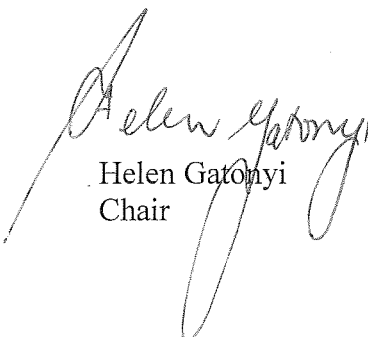
1 A local authority must-

(a) establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Maori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and

(b) consider ways in which it may foster the development of Maori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and

(c) provide relevant information to Maori for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b) etc

COSS wishes to inquire how the Christchurch City Council intends giving effect to this requirement. Page 289 in the Draft LTCCP (Full Version) does not provide adequate information as to how the Council intends to proceed.



Helen Gatonyi
Chair