

Submission to the CCC draft 2007 Amendments to the LTTCP 2006-16 and Annual Plan 2007-08

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Submission

Introduction

I would like to thank and compliment the council for using the NASA photograph of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula for the cover of the draft plans. It is a vast improvement from last year because it is inclusive of the Peninsula. It also shows the diversity of the area which CCC administers. Well done.

I made a written and oral submission to last year's LTTCP. I have tried to get a response for 12 months to the various points raised in my submission. After great effort I managed to get a response to one point regarding the BP Meats site which is council owned land in Akaroa. I must admit that my confidence is limited in terms of how public submissions are handled and wonder if it is worth the time and effort to make submissions given the current council.

Development Contributions

Leisure facilities – Akaroa and the outer bays

In my LTTCP submission last year I highlighted a need for an indoor heated swimming pool for the Akaroa area. I did so because I was well aware of the long term cost of such a facility and that planning and preparations take years of work. Nothing came of my comments. As a person with a disability, I have driven into Christchurch for 12 years to access an indoor heated swimming pool so I have a vested interest in this regard.

I attended the public meeting in Akaroa about the draft plans several weeks ago and again raised the matter of an indoor swimming pool for the area. Diane Brandish commented that this would take years of planning and that it be appropriate to address the matter in two years time when the LTTCP is next reviewed.

I find this extremely frustrating in that had council taken my submission with any degree of seriousness, at the very least funds could have been allocated to initiate a study for such a facility.

Decision sought:

Allocate basic funding to underwrite a study into building an indoor swimming pool/leisure facility for the Akaroa-outer bays area so that an informed viewpoint may be considered in the next LTTCP review.

Maintaining Levels of Service

The MOU between CCC and the former BPDC promised the level of service would remain the same for 5 years and that CCC would adopt a business as usual approach with regards to Banks Peninsula.

I understand that CCC proposes to delete secretarial jobs for community boards and that newly created positions will be required to circulate through various service centres. If this is allowed to happen, it will further complicate an already complex administrative process. It will also fragment the “corporate memory” by which I mean the continuity, the degree of understanding and depth of knowledge that an individual develops over an extended period of time based on their experience in a particular area.

To significantly alter the role of the secretary/service centre manager in Akaroa would be contrary to the terms of the MOU. The level of service currently enjoyed by ratepayers will not be maintained. Destabilising this key position will decrease the level of service in Akaroa.

Decision sought:

Retain the existing position of service centre manager in Akaroa. I am aware this is a personnel matter and elected representatives are not to interfere with management issues but councillors, through the Mayor and Chief Executive Manager, must state concerns on behalf of ratepayers when such situations arise.

Reserve/Endowment Land

The matter of formally protecting the land at Green’s Point, Akaroa, has been before the council for well over a year. It was a focal point of my submission last year as well as that of the Akaroa Civic Trust yet the area remains unprotected. The site has a long and detailed history which is important to the Canterbury region and to the nation. It also has a chequered past because it is endowment land.

I read in the draft amendments “that CCC intends to sell endowment property and reinvest the proceeds for the benefit of the city”. This is not reassuring information.

CCC accepted the BPDC 2005-2006 Annual Plan which stated “This land is of great importance to a number of ratepayers for its historical links. Council’s intention is to seek the designation of Green Point as a national historic reserve”. Just prior to its abolition BPDC instructed staff to initiate the making of Green Point into an Historic Reserve and to change the classification of Takapuneke Reserve to that of an Historic Reserve as is the adjacent Britomart Reserve.

In addition, all three Historic Reserve areas were to be unified under an Order in Council to make Green Point, Takapuneke Reserve and the Britomart Reserve into a National Reserve and a management plan was to be prepared for the three Historic reserves.

Clearly the intent and wish of the former BPDC and Peninsula residents was that the site be protected as an Historic Reserve.

Decision sought:

Complete the gazetting and protection of Green's Point and Takapuneke as promised and as quickly as possible.

Jade Stadium Development

I enjoy watching rugby on TV but I must question the use of ratepayers money to upgrade of Jade Stadium for the World Cup. The stadium is used on an occasional basis, it is not, to my knowledge, in use daily. Landscaping the area would be nice but it is not essential. Developing various shelf companies to move money from A to B is creative accounting and little more, nor am I reassured by the confidence expressed by the Vbase chief executive and CCC's corporate services manager regarding the proposal.

Decision sought:

No use of ratepayers funds for this proposal.

New Council Offices

I must express concern regarding the increasing amount of money that it will take to properly house council staff. I have no doubt that the current offices are inadequate but it would seem that CCC could, if it chose to do so, be leaders by taking the present building and site and adapting it to meet the requirements of the staff. It is a building of merit and ratepayers money could be saved by the adaptive reuse of the present structure.

Unfortunately, reusing the existing council building would not present the same wow factor so beloved by the Mayor nor would it probably be his preferred legacy as he prepares to leave office.

Decision sought:

Investigate the adaptive reuse of the present council structure to meet the requirements of staff for the foreseeable future.

Becoming World Class

Becoming world class, according to the council's printed material, appears to include a sound LTTCP plan which is CCC's contract with the community. It also has to do with balanced budgets and the Council's vision for the organisation of making Christchurch world class. It is business as usual for the next year. Or words to that affect from the promo put out by CCC.

I beg to differ.

If becoming world class means the demolition of numerous historic buildings and sites in the greater Christchurch area, please count me out.

Becoming world class actually requires being responsible. The city and its residents must value their history and past. By doing so, the city's historic character and growing culture become recognised and protected. These are the vital selling points when it comes to marketing and promoting the regions attributes to visitors both within New Zealand and to an expanding international clientele. If the city centre and sprawling suburbs have the same appearance of any place else with its generic concrete construction then the city quickly loses its uniqueness in terms of being different from other vast, urban cities. A blandness sets in and people figure why pay money to visit a place that looks like the one they just left? Why hasn't the tourism and economic development team figured this out?

Christchurch has a vast wealth of architectural heritage which the council seems determined to destroy to make way for new development. CCC has everything necessary to adequately protect the heritage of the area through the policies and objectives of the district plan and the RMA.

The problem appears to be that it lacks the will and inclination to do so. Council staff prepare reports based on selective information which is gleaned from the same handful of so called experts in their respective fields of architecture and conservation. Sites become isolated through the incremental demolition of adjacent structures and sites so they no longer have important historic associations. Once this fragmentation takes place it may be said, by the hand picked experts, that there is little or no historic merit remaining so demolition may proceed. It is then left to a handful of volunteers to work to save listed buildings but often they are not informed in a timely manner nor are they usually given detailed and up to date information.

Becoming world class actually means that CCC must be held accountable. It must also properly administer the district plan and RMA and it must seek advice from a broader field of experts before presenting staff reports to councillors who then make decisions on behalf of ratepayers whom they were elected to serve.

Decision sought:

Do a much better job of conserving the City's historic heritage.

Thank you for considering the above comments.

Victoria Andrews
11 May 2007