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Corporate Plan Output: Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee on the recent review of the Council services and programmes as they relate to the Older Persons' Policy, as background to the forthcoming seminar.

BACKGROUND

In line with national trends Christchurch's population is progressively aging. The 1996 Census identified that there were 53,580 residents aged 60 and over, comprising 17.3 per cent of the city's population.¹ The older population of Christchurch are a diverse group, ranging from the fit and fully employed or leisure seeking to the frail and people with special physical and mental health needs or serious financial disadvantage.

The need to focus on this growing group of residents was recognised by the Council in 1998. At its meeting on 8 June 1998, the Community Services Committee endorsed a process for reviewing the Elderly Persons' Policy. The then existing Policy was eight years old and considered to have too great an emphasis on service delivery and be inconsistent with the other policies developed at that time.

The development of a new policy was to be the first step in a two-stage process. The Policy was to provide a policy framework or criteria against which Council activities and strategies could be planned and reviewed, consistency ensured and priorities established.

The second stage was to be a comprehensive review of Council strategies, services and programmes as they affect older people. During this stage specific functions and cost implications were to be determined.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

External consultants conducted the policy development process from July 1998 to September 1998.

¹ "The number of people aged over 75 years is projected to grow by about 23% over the next ten years, although the total population of the region [Canterbury, Westcoast, Otago, Southland] is expected to increase by only 3% in that time. . This means we can expect increased demand on health and disability services in the next ten to twenty years just from the increase in the numbers of people in the age group which has most need of health services (SRHA. 1998. The Region and Its People. Draft Report. 15 May p9)

The process involved:

- Research, including demographics trends in Christchurch and New Zealand, a literature review and appraisal of central government policy and activity
- Consultation with key informants such as Age Concern and Mature Employment Service
- Staff consultation by way of focus group meeting
- Public submission sought through media publicity
- A community consultation workshop with sixty community leaders
- An elected members questionnaire
- An elected members workshop

Key Findings in policy development process

The issues of greatest concern to consultation participants were:

- independence
- healthcare
- discrimination
- adequate income and resources
- the valuing and respect of older people
- opportunities for participation and contribution and
- safety (both actual and perceived).

Other issues included housing and heating, loneliness and isolation and the aging workforce.

The independence, participation and engagement of older people were considered to be important principles. Initiatives that allow older people to make positive choices, including the ability to choose to stay in their own neighborhoods and social networks, were seen as essential. Recognition of diversity in culture, experience, ability, skill and expectations were also seen as vital.

Widespread support for the roles already taken by the Christchurch City Council in relation to older people (including the provision of excellent services and facilities) was evident in the community consultation. However, participants felt that:

- Although the Council provided excellent services and facilities for older people many of these were poorly publicised.
- Greater coordination and use of partnership approaches between the Council and other agencies were considered to be important.
- The Council should encourage the interaction between generations.
- The Council should act as a role model in countering discrimination.

Based on the review an Older Persons' Policy Statement was prepared. This statement was adopted by Council in 1998

OLDER PERSONS' POLICY

The Older Persons' Policy specifies the vision for older people in Christchurch, the desired values and outcomes for older people in Christchurch and roles which the Council will undertake in order to work towards these outcomes. A copy of this policy is attached to this report.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRATEGIES, SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

An initial review of Council strategies was conducted in April 1999. This review examined Council activities in relation to the Roles identified in the Older Persons' Policy:

- Ensuring the views of older people are heard
- Providing services
- Resourcing, supporting and collaborating with other organisations working with older people
- Working in partnership with older people, their families/whanau, neighbourhoods, iwi, ethnic communities and other networks
- Encouraging and supporting the sharing of information and other resources
- Supporting, undertaking and disseminating the results of research

Findings of the Review

The review identified that Council Units are actively engaged in service provision. Units provide a range of services and activities that both target and/or cater for older residents.

Units are also involved in resourcing, supporting and collaborating with other organisations. Some Units have developed ongoing relationships or partnerships with community agencies that work with older people.

By and large these activities, services and relationships existed prior to the new Older Persons' Policy. To date the policy statement appears to have had little impact on Unit planning and delivery of services.

FUTURE DIRECTION

Clearly the Council needs to identify a strategy for ensuring the advancement and implementation of its reviewed Older Persons' Policy.

At the Chairperson's request a Community Services Committee seminar is planned for the 17 August 1999 to examine possible ways in which the Council can advance its responsiveness to older residents.

The seminar will be hosted by Aged Concern at its building and will involve representatives from a number of key agencies working with older people, including CDC's newly appointed Third Age Advocate.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Receive the report.

2. Defer discussion on this report to the August Seminar.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.