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Corporate Plan Output: Public Accountability – Community Boards 3.1 text 4	

The purpose of this report is to advise Community Board Members of progress on the Strengthening Community Action Plans. This report seeks endorsement for the further development of the Action Plans as outlined below.

INTRODUCTION

The Christchurch City Council is developing Strengthening Community Action Plans as one means through which Community Boards, collectively with their communities, can work to make communities a “healthier” place to live. The Action Plans will identify the priorities and the projects that the Council and the Community Boards will support in order to achieve social well-being and community safety.

BACKGROUND

Community development and personal safety are clearly articulated in the Council’s vision and strategic objectives. The Community Development and Social Well-being Policy was adopted by the Council in 1996. It articulates the Council’s commitment to “promoting a healthy social, cultural and economic community, and self help, self determination and progressive social change through the empowerment of its residents”. Central to this Policy is the development of strong nurturing communities in which people feel valued and safe and feel a sense of belonging.

It is therefore of concern to the Council that a high proportion of residents do not feel safe, for example 61% of respondents in the Residents Survey reported feeling unsafe in the city centre after dark, and overall, safety was the second most common issue of concern to participants in that survey. Recent studies and surveys provide evidence that Christchurch residents see crime, anti social behaviour and the fear of being the victim of such behaviour as matters of serious concern: 25% raised issues of crime in The Press survey 1998, community safety was rated as very important by 71.5% of respondents in the Spreydon/Heathcote community survey (1996) and in the Riccarton/Wigram survey (1998) safety from crime was the highest ranking concern being ranked very important by 75.5% (Fletcher 1998).

The Christchurch City Council is proposing Strengthening Community Action Plans in order to achieve the outcomes of both the Social Well-being Community Development and the Personal and Community Safety Strategic Objectives.

AIMS

The aims of the Strengthening Community Action Plans are:

- To improve people’s sense of belonging to and being part of the community.
- To reduce crime and people’s fear of being the victims of crime.
- To support people, communities and neighbourhoods to identify and achieve their own aims

The project has been developed on the understanding that each Community Board will develop its own Action Plan. There is no single solution, blueprint or model as priorities and issues will vary between Boards and communities.

Each Board has a different starting point: some have completed comprehensive needs analysis; have strong community networks; will be able to get together more quickly and work together and some have access to more resources. Other communities may need more support.

It is envisaged that plans will incorporate the varying levels and understanding of “community”: community as a network of relationships based on a common identity, interest or purpose and community as a territory or place where people interact. The plans will be one of many ways which communities can and will work to address issues of community wellbeing.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

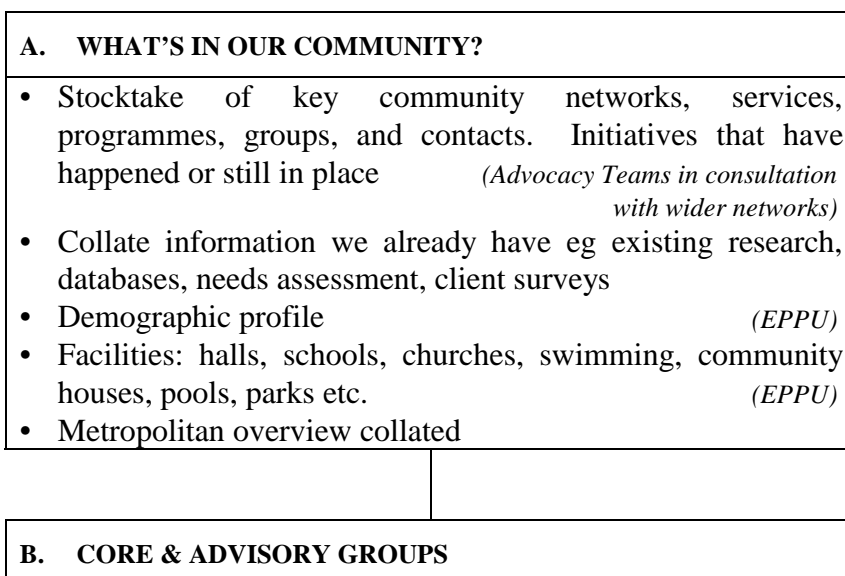
The success of the Action Plans will hinge on Community Board’s ability to engage communities, create cooperation and maintain community interest and involvement. Community engagement involves sustained and continuing processes of decision making and policy implementation - in different ways at all stages of decision making and planning. Plans should support communities to find cooperative and constructive ways to discuss issues, resolve differences, determine what is desirable and fair and identify the types of activities that would enhance their community.

The Council’s and Community Board’s roles will be to:

- encourage and support communities to do things for themselves,
- find and support community organisations, groups or structures which provide (or have the potential to provide) community based responses,
- strengthen relationships and encourage people to use their resources and energies more effectively,
- provide leadership when needed,
- facilitate collaborative approach by range of agencies, groups and individuals.

PROCESS

It is proposed that the process by which Action Plans will be developed is as follows



Form Core Group comprising (approx. 8-10 people)

- Community Advocacy team members
- Community Board reps
- Police (Inspector in Charge of local area)
- Key Community contacts

Form Advisory Group comprising key community contacts, for example, community and youth workers and representatives of Liaison Group, Neighbourhood Groups, Residents' Groups etc.

C. REPORT TO EACH BOARD & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

D. FUNDING INTRODUCED BY ANNUAL PLAN WORKING PARTY

E. WHAT WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE IDENTIFIED OUTCOMES ?

- ie Greater Participation, Safer Communities and Supporting Community Action
- Core Group to identify, in consultation with community networks

F. PROJECTS PRIORITISED

Projects prioritised having regard to

- Greater participation
- Safer Communities
- Supporting Community Action

And

- Volunteer input
- Partnership possibilities
- Funding available
- Making measurable differences

Plan costed

G. BOARDS CONSIDER DRAFT PLANS & SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

H. INFORMATION SHARING

- Workshop facilitation by Community Development Planning Team
- Community Boards present outline of proposals to each other to assist in identifying common issues and opportunities for partnerships between Boards.

I. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

Including allocation of proposed Strengthening Community Action Plans discretionary funds

J. IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Ongoing development and modifications

K. REVIEW and IMPROVE

- Core Group to identify process for evaluation
- Annual redevelopment

RESOURCING

It is anticipated that that each Board will be allocated significant funding (possibly of the order of \$100,000) to implement of their plans, along with a metropolitan fund.

Some communities may need more support. Communities of low economic status, which lack adequate money and resources, are hindered from participating in formal and voluntary organisations and therefore suffer from a weaker organisational base. There is strong evidence that low socio-economic status seriously affects communities' ability to form a strong organisational basis (Shaw and McKay 1942, Tumin 1953, Kornhauser 1978).

It is therefore suggested that a discretionary fund be available.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the report is received and that the Board endorse the preparation of Strengthening Community Action Plans as outlined above.
 2. That the Chairperson and two members be appointed to represent the Board on the Burwood/Pegasus Core Group.

Chairperson's

- Recommendation:**
1. That the above recommendations be adopted.
 2. That the members of the Board be appointed to the Burwood/Pegasus Core Group.