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Corporate Plan Output: Policy Advice	

The report proposes that the Council investigate the development of a Compact (agreement) to underpin the on-going relationships between the Council and the voluntary and community sector in Christchurch.¹

This proposal reflects the Council's desire to work as a partner with the voluntary and community sector in creating healthy social, cultural and economic communities. It also reflects the Council's desire to enhance opportunities for more active participation by the voluntary and community sector in local democratic governance.

BACKGROUND

The Council has recognised the critical role played by the voluntary and community sector in the city. It has acknowledged that an independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the social and political well-being of Christchurch.

At a recent seminar (June 1999) the Community Services Committee heard how many organisations are struggling due to increasing demand for services; the fluctuating and decreasing funding levels; and excessive compliance costs. The Committee **agreed** that it wanted to examine ways to enhance the partnership between the Council and the voluntary and community sector. It requested that officials report back to the Committee on ways to progress this relationship.

The Community Services Committee's position is consistent with that of the Community Governance Forum hosted by the Christchurch City Council in June 1999. The Forum identified that co-operation between the Council and the voluntary and community sector is a key to the achievement of Community Governance. The Forum identified that local government has key roles in empowering their communities and recognising and enabling the contribution of voluntary organisations. The Council is looking at ways to implement the principles of community governance and clarify the basis of its relationship with the community.

The voluntary and community sector both nationally and locally has also recognised the need to develop a co-operative working relationship with local government (CCOSS 1995, NZCOSS 1995, NZCCSS 1997, NZCCSS 1999). The three voluntary sector umbrella organisations, in consultation with community organisations, have identified key principles for a sound working relationship (NZFWO, NZCOSS and NZCCSS March 1999).

The establishment of a Compact is a positive way forward which would facilitate and underpin the Council's relationship with the sector.

¹ Compacts are being developed in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

THE COMPACT

The Compact would clarify the basis of the relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector. It would acknowledge the role the sector plays in identifying community concerns, contributing to policy development, service and programme delivery and promoting democratic and civil processes.

The Compact would acknowledge and encourage the independence of the sector as well as the diverse range of perspectives, values and reasons for being within the sector.

The Compact would:

1. Acknowledge the Council and the voluntary and community sector have common interests and distinct but complementary roles.
2. Establish the shared vision and principles that underpin the relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector.
3. Clarify respective roles in the relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector.

The essence of a partnership approach is that it rests on an understanding that each party should benefit from the relationship.

The Compact would be a memorandum concerning relations between the government and the voluntary and community sector rather than a legally binding agreement. It would need to be an evolving agreement which establishes a framework for its on-going development.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPACT

It is proposed that the Compact would be developed in partnership with the sector. A decision to adopt a trust-based, or partnership approach cannot be made in a vacuum.

The consultation process adopted should help build a sense of partnership between Council and the sector. It will need recognise the extreme diversity and complexity of the voluntary and community sector and the communities that the organisations work in. It will also recognise that organisations will need to consult their users, beneficiaries, members and stakeholders.

It is envisaged that the Compact would initially be between the Council and the voluntary social service sector. If during the consultation it became apparent that the scope should be widened it may be expanded to include other sections of the voluntary and community sector, for example the community arts and leisure sectors.

The first phase is to discuss the proposal with organisations likely to be affected by the Compact. A more formal proposal and consultation process will be proposed to the Committee if the initial feedback is positive.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

1. The Committee endorse in principle the development of a Compact between the Council and the voluntary and community sector.
2. Policy and Metropolitan Community Advisors initiate discussion with relevant agencies in the sector regarding the proposal to develop a Compact.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted