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<p>Corporate Plan Output: City Planning and Development Policy</p>	

The purpose of this item is to enable discussion on the merits of reviewing the preparation of an urban development strategy for Christchurch and surrounding districts. Its inclusion on this agenda follows a resolution by the joint CRC/CCC Committee to have the matter discussed by both Councils.

BACKGROUND

In July 1995 Council officers convened a meeting of planners from surrounding districts and the Regional Council to discuss “cross boundary” urban growth issues. The meeting was prompted by concerns that the then high population growth was likely to create land shortages for development in Christchurch, with consequent effects on transport infrastructure, natural values and the environment generally, not just in Christchurch but also in Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn and Banks Peninsula Districts.

Following further investigations, each of these Councils, along with the Region, constituted a Joint Standing Committee on Urban Development. This Committee had its inaugural meeting in October 1996 and its mission statement was to develop a long term urban development strategy centred on metropolitan Christchurch. The strategy would have a 30 year focus as compared to the ten year planning horizon of the City Plan. The Committee met on two further occasions, the last time being September 1997.

The officer’s working party set up to service the Committee has met on several occasions since then with its focus on collecting and mapping information. The process has ‘slowed’ following a request from Christchurch City Council because of concerns about ‘conflicts’ with its Proposed City Plan hearing process. With the release of decisions on the City Plan, the Regional Council saw it as appropriate to raise the issue at the joint CCC/CRC meeting held on 19 May 1999.

PRESENT SITUATION

To a large extent, it could be argued that the need to prepare a ‘sub-regional’ urban development strategy has diminished. Population growth rates appear to have levelled off and new zoning proposals in the City Plan as notified by decisions, and in the other districts, should provide sufficient development land for at least the next 10 - 15 years (subject to appeals). Therefore, the need for a strategy to identify other opportunities for new development has perhaps become less urgent.

However, there are some significant development issues that the City will need to address in consultation with its neighbours. These are:

- the need for a long term transport strategy including the northern access issue, the alignment, and of any extensions to the southern arterial, and opportunities for light rail;
- the effects on Christchurch of development in Selwyn and Waimakariri Districts, particularly major settlements (eg Pegasus), expansions (Rolleston, Lincoln, Kaiapoi, Prebbleton, Templeton etc) and rural residential development;
- external changes, eg road reform, amalgamation proposals with Banks Peninsula;
- cross-boundary issues affecting recreation and open space (eg Port Hills, Grasslands Zone, Waimakariri River);
- extension of infrastructure beyond the city boundaries - sewer, water;
- the possible effects of development (rural and urban) west of the city on groundwater quality and availability;
- the costs and benefits to the city of growth in the adjoining districts - who is paying and who is benefitting?

Quite a lot of work has already been done in these areas and a seminar on the subject of urban growth would be useful for members before committing themselves to a particular course of action. (A tour of new development areas on the city is currently being arranged).

Although the involvement of Councillors in the City Plan process has been completed (except for variations) the Council is still a party to the inevitable appeals that will be lodged on urban growth issues. Although this does not preclude the Council's involvement in discussing or acting on long term urban growth issues, some care is needed to avoid any risk of compromising any position it might want to take in the appeals. A report on this issue by the Legal Services Manager, pointing to a need for caution, will be separately circulated.

CONCLUSION

The City Plan has addressed some of the immediate concerns affecting growth at the present time, for example, the shortage of housing land, adverse effects of infill development, protection of significant rural resources. It is possible that the zoning of a substantial amount of new residential land could moderate growth occurring in the neighbouring districts but this will at least, in part, depend on development opportunities provided on those areas.

There are still some important issues which the City Plan has not been able to directly address including strategic transport issues, future open space acquisition, and location of future industrial areas, all of which are affected by what happens in adjoining districts.

Whether there needs to be an urban development strategy or some other kind of collaboration is the overriding issue. To assist members in deciding on this matter, it is suggested that a seminar/workshop session be held to ensure that members are equipped with the relevant information to enable a decision to be made on an appropriate course of action.

Recommendation: That the information be received and a seminar be arranged for elected members on long-term urban growth and implications for the city.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That a seminar be held on 24 August 1999, on the implementation of a long-term urban growth strategy.