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

The purpose of this report is to seek feedback from the Community Board on the attached Draft Out of School Programme Policy.

The need for an Out of School Programme Policy was identified by Councillors, Community Board members, Council staff and community groups involved in out of school programmes. In response to this identified need and based on earlier consultation and research findings an internal advisory group is developing an Out of School Programmes Policy.

The Policy will define the roles of Council and Community Boards in Out of School Programme services. It will provide a framework against which activities and strategies can be planned and reviewed and priorities established.

The **attached** document has been drafted as a starting point for discussion. We are seeking feedback from Community Boards, programmes and service providers and Advocacy Teams on points for inclusion and exclusion in the policy. This feedback will be collated and analysed and the policy will be amended accordingly.

Community Board comments on the usefulness, or otherwise, of the draft policy and how it could be improved will be extremely valuable.

**Recommendation:** That the Board reviews the draft Out of School Programme Policy and provides feedback on its usefulness, or otherwise, and how it could be improved.

**Chairman’s Recommendation:** That the matter be referred to the Finance and Planning Committee for consideration and report back.

## **OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

The Council will work to ensure that Christchurch children have access to quality Out of School Programmes

### **Scope**

Out of School Care and Holiday Programmes (OSP) are defined as activities where groups of children of school age (5-13 years) are supervised and cared for outside of school hours by people other than their usual caregivers.

Generally, OSP refers to programmes which are available for a reasonable period of time, several days a week. There are three main times when OSP are used by parents/caregivers of primary school aged children:

- before school,
- after school and
- during school holidays.

The Council's Out of School Policy targets the following groups:

- children from lower socio-economic communities – this will primarily include programmes based at or near schools with a decile ranking of 1-4, although places may be purchased on other providers' programmes for disadvantaged children from the area.

## Strategic Direction

1. The Council and Community Boards will provide **targeted funding and support** to Out School Programmes. **Priority** will be given to OSPs which
  - a) are operated by non-profit community organisations
  - b) have meet **quality standards** as outline in the Schedule to this policy<sup>1</sup>
  - c) meet the **needs of target groups**
  - d) have **knowledge of and support from the local community**
  - e) emphasise **creative developmental opportunities** for children, with choice of activity and level of engagement and **facilitate child development and self esteem** rather than purely care or supervision
  - f) are accessible to and welcoming of **children with disabilities**
  - g) are accessible and welcoming to people/children from **different cultures**
2. The Council and Community Boards will support the **development and implementation of quality standards** for OSP including
  - a) development of appropriate national regulations
  - b) development and implementation of standards relating to the training and supervision of paid and voluntary staff
  - c) establish and maintenance of appropriate professional bodies
3. The Council and Community Boards will **provide Out of School Programmes**, in the form of holiday programmes, at its discretion.
4. The Council will assist the ongoing development and provision of quality out of school programmes by
  - a) **liaising** with funders, providers, professional bodies and users to improve co-ordination
  - b) **monitoring** provision and identifying gaps in provision
  - c) **researching** existing and future needs and trends in Out of School programmes.
  - d) **identifying specific developments** nationally and within local programmes that impact of the provision of OSP
5. The Council will **advocate to central Government** and other appropriate agencies, for adequate resources and funding and legislated standards for Out of School programmes
6. The Council and Community Boards will work in **partnership** with professional bodies and network agencies, such as OSCAR Network, to achieve the above objectives

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<sup>1</sup> Pending the development of appropriate national standards the Council and Community Boards will adopt the standards outlined in Schedule 1 to this policy.

## **Policy Benefit**

The key benefits to children and their families and to the Council of providing or facilitating school holiday programmes for children 5-13 years of age are:

### ***Personal Benefits***

- Development of children's positive self esteem
- Development of children's motor skills through play
- Development of children's inter-personal skills and life skills through play and interaction
- Encourages children to use creativity and imagination
- Development of life-long, positive leisure habits
- Increased safety and well being for children

### ***Community/Social Benefits***

- Children learn social interaction skills
- Assists in reducing family stress
- Caters for needs of working/training parents for childcare
- Can fosters ethnic and cultural understanding in children
- Builds a sense of belonging within the community (parents and children)
- Builds an awareness of local community resources and facilities (parents and children)

### ***Economic Benefit***

- Reduction in costs associated with child crime
- Assists families to maintain employment/training over school holidays
- Contributes to stable national workforce and national productivity
- Programmes provide employment/work experience for employees

### ***Environmental Benefits***

- Develops children's appreciation of natural surroundings and local community
- Develops children's conservation values

## **Principles**

Based on the Council's Strategic Statement and existing policies, such as Children's Policy , Community Development and Social Wellbeing Policy and Recreation and Sport Policy, the Council's Out of School policy is founded on the following principles

### ***Children's wellbeing is paramount***

The needs of children, including their developmental, physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs. This principle reinforces the direction of the *United National Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the 'principle of first call' identified in the 1990 World Summit for Children.

### ***Equity***

Out of School Programmes should be affordable, accessible and available for all children. Children should not be limited by race, cultural background, gender, religious beliefs, physical and intellectual characteristics or social economic status.

Ensuring equitable access to services means that the Council must seek to remove all social, economic and cultural barriers. Some families will require special provision to enable their children to take up opportunities.

### ***Empowerment***

The Council works to empower families and community groups so they can exercise choice and be effective in providing services to meet their own needs.

### ***Effectiveness***

The Council will seek to use limited resources strategically to ensure maximum impact on delivering positive services. Programmes, activities and resources will be targeted.

### ***Partnership***

There is a wide range agencies with direct and indirect involvement in OSP. A great deal of productive work already occurs in Christchurch. The Council works to support and consolidate such efforts. OSPs initiatives will be most effective when programmes, activities and services are coordinated and integrated.

### ***Treaty of Waitangi***

The Council recognises the Treaty of Waitangi and the practices of partnership in its Strategic Policy statement. The OSP policy will support this objective by recognising and responding to the OSP needs aspirations of all people, Maori and tauwi.

### ***Best Practice, Research and Information***

The Council will therefore monitor and evaluate the ongoing needs for Out of School services in Christchurch and support the development of best practice in the OSP.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Child Development**

Research identifies the effects of children being without adult supervision in out of school hours, for example lower academic achievement and substance abuse.

## **Legal Requirements**

Children up to 14 years of age are legally required to be cared for by a parent or guardian/caregiver.

## **Social Trends**

Changing social trends have increased the need for Out of School Programmes, for example changing work patterns, and the entry of large numbers of women in to the paid workforce.

The population density of 5- 12 year old children has implications for the delivery of Out of School Programme.<sup>2</sup> The needs for OSPs are greater in the northern and eastern suburbs.

## **Support and Resourcing**

Out of School Programmes are run predominantly by community non-profit organisations through schools, community centres, and churches. These programmes require support and resourcing to become established and viable. At present funding is inadequate to establish and maintain services (particularly after school programmes ).

## **Government Role**

Unlike early childhood education services and formal compulsory education, Central Government's current role is limited in terms of :

- regulations and licensing
- ensuring staff training standards.
- Central Government policies such the requirement of parents on low incomes to train or find employment have also impacted on the need for affordable OSPs.

The Government subsidy made available from the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1999 is paid directly to parents/caregivers, on low incomes, required to work or undertake training . Other "one off" small contestable funds from government have been available through the Community Funding Agency, and the Community Employment Group .

## **Council's Current Role**

The Council is currently involved in OSP provision (after-school and holiday programmes) through service delivery, funding support, advice, and resourcing in varying degrees across different Ward areas.

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<sup>2</sup> The total number of children estimated to be aged 5 to 12 years of age living in Christchurch City in 1996 was 30,699. The estimated number of children aged 5- 12 years of age are unevenly distributed across the city wards. The demographic profile indicates that more 5-12 year old children live in the north and eastern sectors of the city. The wards with the largest number of children aged 5 – 12 years in 1996 were Ferrymead (2931), Papanui (2934), Pegasus (2898) and Burwood (2794).

**Council's Current Policy**

The Children's, Community Development and Social Wellbeing Policy and Recreation and Sport Policies articulate the Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for children and the families. These policies identify roles for the Council, such as advocacy, coordination, monitoring, service provision, funding and researching. These policies also acknowledge that the Council will work in partnership with other agencies.

**Review**

The effectiveness of the policy will be assessed a year after it has been adopted. A formalised review process will be conducted three years after adoption.

Responsibility for initiating policy reviews will rest with the Children's Advocate in consultation with the Recreation and Arts Teams and advocacy Teams.