

6. FUTURE ROLE OF CITY CENTRE MARKETING

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Corporate Plan Output: City Centre Marketing	

The purpose of this report is to bring to the Council a recommendation for the role of city centre marketing in the future. The Strategy and Resources Committee, during its review of the Community Relations Unit 1999/2000 monitoring report, requested this report.

BACKGROUND

The output of "City Centre Marketing" commenced in 1995. The responsibility of the co-ordinators (of which there were initially two) has been to market the central city to the people of Christchurch as a destination for shopping and entertainment. This has involved working closely with other Council business units, retailer groups, and commerce and business groups to develop an agreed strategy under which the marketing has been carried out. The strategy has not only been about promotion of the city centre, but also about improving the management and co-ordination of the central city.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE?

The mission for city centre marketing is "To create a vibrant and unique experience for people coming into the City centre". City centre marketing has achieved some significant success. Successes include the co-ordination of opening hours, the parking scheme, development of entertainment in the city centre, and developing close links with retail groups.

Communication is a large part of the role. The City Centre Marketing Coordinator facilitates communication in three ways – Council to retailers, retailers to retailers, and within the Council business units which have responsibility within the City Centre. As part of communication, a bi-monthly newsletter "StreetTalk" is produced to help facilitate communication across the three key stakeholders.

Prior to the implementation of City Centre Marketing, output individual businesses in the City Centre promoted themselves. However, the overall benefits of the City Centre were not addressed. City Centre Marketing provides a generic promotional campaign to highlight the City Centre's strengths as a shopping and entertainment destination.

City Centre Marketing runs seasonal promotions to support special dates, festivals and events. These include promotions for Christmas and the Christmas opening hours, Showtime Canterbury, Buskers' Festival, etc. Recently the City Centre Marketing Coordinator was responsible for the public event at the opening of The Bus Xchange.

City Centre Marketing has produced a series of promotional booklets, maps and posters, all of which have assisted the promotion of the city centre. The latest of these is the Z-card, incorporating a map of the city centre on one side and the list of retailers on the other. Other publications have included the City Centre Guide, Walks brochure guides on bars and restaurants, gifts and fashion and postcards.

The City Centre Marketing Coordinator has also co-ordinated the installation of Christmas decorations in the city centre for the last four years.

CENTRAL CITY FORUM

The City Centre Marketing Co-ordinator is actively involved within the Mayoral Forum, both as a member of the core team and working with retailers. At a recent retail meeting, retailers were invited to have input into a retail strategy as part of the Central City Revitalisation programme. A sub-group of retailers has been developed to consider a draft strategy and also determine the best management structure to enable a new strategy to move forward. This retail group will meet twice before Christmas. Recommendations of the group will be fed to Council through the Central City Forum process.

NEED TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY

Given the Council's support for central city retail, it would seem appropriate that funding be retained to help ensure the momentum gathered by the City Centre Marketing project over the last five years is not lost. Regardless of style of management structure for City Centre Marketing that might be agreed under the Central City Revitalisation Programme in the future, funds should be set aside to assist the on-going marketing of the central city.

BUDGET PROVISION

When the City Centre Marketing output was established (1995/96) the budget was \$350,000. In 1999 the Council reviewed the output and passed the following resolutions:

1. That the City Centre Marketing budget be reduced in 1999/2000 to \$200,000 and to \$135,000 in 200/01.
2. That the existing programme be phased out by 2001/2002.
3. That new initiatives be developed more closely related to the Council's central city objectives.

At that time comment was made that developments such as the Inner City Shuttle and the proposed Bus Exchange would in themselves help market the City Centre. Subsequently the Council has initiated the Central City Revitalisation project.

The question now arises as to whether the Council wishes to:

- (a) Confirm its earlier decision to delete City Centre Marketing from the 2001 budget.
- (b) Retain the current level of funding for this activity in its present form or a variation following a report from the Mayoral Forum.
- (c) Transfer the funds as seeding funds to establish a new retail marketing body.

The draft budget for outputs to be delivered by Community Relations Unit for 2001/02 reflects the Council's decision and the funding allocated to Central City Marketing has been deleted. The budget for the 2000/01 financial year is \$135,000.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Community Relations Unit include the current resource and operational funding for City Centre Marketing into the Community Relations Unit draft 2001/02 budget.
 2. That, when the long-term future of Council's involvement in the marketing of the central city is determined, the budget be deleted or transferred accordingly.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:**
- That, in view of the need to maintain impetus in the Central City revitalisation process, funding of \$135,000 for a further two years be recommended to the Annual Plan Working Party.