

7. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Community Services Committee 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 in partnership with the Police, 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 of concern that 61% of residents do not feel safe in the city centre after dark as indicated by respondents to the *Residents’ Survey* and’ overall, safety was the second most common issue of concern to participants in that survey. While 94% of residents feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day’ this falls significantly to 63% after dark. Recent studies and surveys provided 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 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.

The plans will be one of many ways which communities can and will work to address issues of community well-being.

While a process was offered to Community Board teams to use, it was acknowledged that each Board may choose its own model, priorities and starting point.

The following is an update from the six Community Board teams on progress to date.

Burwood/Pegasus

Have used a process involving the Police, Community Representatives, Elected Members and Council Officers on a working party.

Organisations were identified in the local community who were seen to be contributing to the process and outcomes that Strengthening Community Action Plan was proposing. People from some of those groups were identified for the Strengthening Community Action Plan team.

The team then went through a process to identify projects that would be suitable for funding and that met the outcomes proposed by the Strengthening Community Action Plan process. Funding decisions were then made and the following money allocated.

| | Date of Resolution | Allocation \$ |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Community Gardens Project | 2 September 1999 | \$700 |
| Community Gardens Project (consultation) | 30 September 1999 | \$200 |
| Aranui Community Fun Day | 30 September 1999 | \$1,000 |
| Super Recycled Materials Sewing Project | 30 September 1999 | \$5,000 |
| Parklands Awareness Day | 38 October 1999 | \$1,000 |
| Community Database Update | 28 October 1999 | \$1,200 |
| Balance as at 2 December 1999 | | \$10,900 |

Fendalton/Waimairi

1. The Board established a Steering Committee (including community representation) in March 1999 for the purpose of developing a draft plan for presentation to the Board.
2. A target of 31 December 1999 for completion of the task was included among the Board's objectives for 1999/00.
3. The Steering Committee presented its draft on 23 November. This was adopted by the Board, which referred it to one of its Committees for consideration of action now required, and for any recommendations for allocation of relevant funding.
4. The Board's Community Services Committee commenced its consideration of implementation in December 1999, and will continue with this work over the next two months.
5. In the meantime the document is being amended into one that is more acceptable and user-friendly.
6. A copy of the adopted plan has been separately circulated.

Hagley/Ferrymead

Progress has been slow with this team. There was initially some negative reaction from Community representatives about the process for this project and matters stalled for some time.

However, a process was established for gathering information on all community, sports, cultural and business groups in the area.

The team is operating without a steering committee and that is to be addressed in February. No money has been spent to date.

Spreydon/Heathcote

The Strengthening Community Action Plan for this Board has been progressing steadily. The Board set up a Core Group comprising Board Members, Police, Community Representatives and Council Officers.

The Core Group has interpreted the aims of the Strengthening Community Action Plan very broadly. Previous Board research indicated that the areas of Community Safety from Crime, Health and Education were priority issues in the community. Issues such as recreation, employment, environment, welfare, housing, parks and open spaces were also important to the local community. To re-affirm these findings, information from a Board-funded Community Forum called 'The Big View' was used. This community forum was held in September. Approximately 60 people from the community at large attended and the above issues were work shopped. The groups discussed the issues at large and then developed actions that they as individuals and/or community groups could implement which would contribute to improving the issue. These actions will form part of the final Community Action Plan as actions that address the issues at a local level. This part of the plan will be actions that all of us as individuals can take on board to improve the sense of belonging to communities.

Several working groups made up of interested individuals and community group representatives have since developed from 'The Big View'. These working groups are developing very localised strategies in relation to employment, community welfare, environment and employment. These local strategies will also form part of the Community Action Plan.

The Board's Objectives and Performance Indicators will also be included as part of the Action Plan, as will objectives from other organisations who are helping to strengthen the community.

In response to information from 'The Big View', research and local knowledge, the Core Group have resolved to develop a Community Directory for the Spreydon/Heathcote area. This project is currently underway and is expected to be completed in February 2000. The aim of this production is to increase the community's awareness of what is available in the area and to have that information easily accessible to individuals and groups.

The Action Plans developed by different groups, local communities and the Board will be written up and summarised and published in the Community Plan as a Spreydon/Heathcote Strengthening Community Action Plan and as such will be owned by the community. The final plan will then be used to prioritise funding options.

Shirley/Papanui

In Shirley/Papanui the Strengthening Community Action Plan project was approached by establishing a Core Group which included two Community Board members, local Police representative, two community representatives, and the Papanui Advocacy Team. Early on it was agreed to the appointment of a person to assist the development of the plan. This person was employed for four months to collate, analyse and develop community data, to organise community forums, collate the new material, present the information and assist in identifying possible priorities for further action, finalise priorities and present information to the Board. A research review, collation of input from community forums, and questionnaires were used to indicate the issues residents and groups would like addressed.

This part of the project was completed in December 1999. The Board at its meeting on 2 February will consider issues for Board support and/or funding.

Of most value to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board is that the project establishes the correct targeting of its objectives of “*working in partnership with the Shirley and Papanui communities to achieve, through effective consultation, a healthy, enjoyable environment*”. While the information gathered did not reveal new directions for the Board, it did reinforce the issues of concern in the community. In brief these include:

- Traffic flow and parking problems outside schools
- Informal safe places for young people to meet, talk, do homework, etc
- Safe cycle routes, especially on the Main North Road, Styx Mill Bridge and between primary and intermediate schools
- Establishing the need/reason for graffiti and tagging, and identifying more socially acceptable alternatives
- Cleaning up graffiti from business, private fences, schools, etc. Graffiti creates a sense of ‘fear’, particularly for the elderly
- Assisting revival of troubled areas
- Strengthening and supporting Neighbourhood Support Groups
- Youth recreation facilities and transport to city facilities
- Holiday and after school activities
- Lighting of footpaths and public areas
- Heavy traffic, volumes of traffic, speed
- Public transport
- Availability of community information
- Safety of schools, bullying; cultural differences, tensions between different groups

At this stage it is not intended to continue with the Core Group meetings. The Board’s Strategic Planning and actions tends to overtake the necessity of Strengthening Community Action Plan.

Riccarton/Wigram

The project approach by the Board was to set up a Core Group involving Elected Members, Police, Community Representatives and Council Officers.

The Core Group pulled together a large amount of information from a wide range of sources, including recent research, etc.

A comprehensive plan was drawn up which has far wider implications than the \$20,000 allocated for the Strengthening Community Action Plan project. The plan also sets priorities and recommendations for the local Board and its Advocacy Team in the wider allocation of its resources. The Strengthening Community Action Plan has been seen by this team as another facet of its on-going work and presence in the local community.

A copy of the plan has been separately circulated.

Metropolitan Plan

It was agreed that a metropolitan plan would be developed once the local plans have been prepared and adopted by Community Boards. This is to enable trends occurring across several areas to be identified and addressed in the metropolitan plan.

In preparation for this work, staff are currently preparing a metropolitan profile which will be presented to the next Outputs and Standards meeting of this Committee.

SUMMARY

Most Strengthening Community Action Plan teams have seen this process as strengthening what is currently happening in their area, not as a discrete project. Those teams who have engaged their communities in dialogue and encouraged participation in the process have benefited. The overall outcome has been an increase in the communities' understanding of Council objectives, and the opportunity to help decide local priorities and activities and apply funding.

Recommendation: That the report be received.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:**
1. That Community Boards be congratulated for including Strengthening Community Action Plans in their on-going activities to strengthen their local communities.
 2. That SCAP Committees be asked to brief their respective Community Boards on progress with their plans.
 3. That it be noted that SCAP plans, and related processes, will be incorporated into respective community plans.
 4. For discussion.