2. STATUS REPORT – CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION SPECIAL COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2002

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the activities undertaken by the Consultation and Communication Committee during the past twelve months. Some commentary is also provided which highlights particular aspects of the Committee's activities to date. A draft outline of work still to be done during the remaining term of the committee is also provided.

CONSULTATION

● Overview report on consultation – City Manager

● Review of the Seeking Community Views Policy and Guidelines (2001) – Mary Richardson and Philippa Joughin

● Staff feedback on recommendations of the SCV report

● "Anticipation Dialogues" seminar session (City Manager) – Decisions – Committee to look further at:

 ● Techniques for engaging the community in coordinated and unified dialogue.
 ● Ways of making information on Council activities and decision making available in accessible and targeted ways, especially by using electronic means.
 ● Clarifying expectations of the public in the various types of consultation process.
 ● Techniques for the community to initiate issues for discussion with the Community Boards/Council.

● Belle Melzer – presented Mayoral Forum residents groups workshops as one successful model of consultation and communication.

● New City Streets consultation practice model outlined.

● Parks and Waterways presentation – current consultation processes, trial involving the application of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) framework, and pilot evaluation process in partnership with Landcare Research.

● Consultation Project Team established (Dorothea Brown – sponsor) to review and coordinate progress to date and advise on future resourcing; to implement some of the recommendations of the SCV review report (2001).

● Consultation framework produced - to augment the SCV policy and provide guidance for staff and the public alike as to Council commitments to consultation.

● Northern Roading Options Scoping Study (NROSS) - casestudy presentation.

● Consultation guidelines and tipsheets for staff produced – to be placed on the Internet.

COMMUNICATION

● Proposal – Communication Policy (Grant McSherry):

 ● Do we need a Communication Policy?
 ● What would it look like?

● Council Branding presentation.

● Media and Communication policies and guidelines – report outlining the communication policies used by other local authorities.

E-COUNCIL DEVELOPMENTS

● E-Council briefing – why e-consult?, current Christchurch City Council situation, review of other initiatives.

- America Speaks (Gordon Ryan) – one example of an event involving the use of wireless laptop communication to enable people to personally participate in public forums.

- Consultation website – 'Have Your Say' – launched 3 September 2002.

- Presentation – Using 'e' to increase civic engagement, national and international examples.

- Report – E-Council - projects that could enhance and increase civic engagement.

- Access to the Internet for Community Board Members.

COMMENT

It was agreed at the outset that the Consultation and Communication Committee would take a project-based approach to understanding where Units that undertake consultation on capital works projects were at in terms of their processes and systems used for such consultation. To that end, the Committee has had a number of presentations made involving capital works projects (City Streets, Parks and Waterways) during the past twelve months. These presentations have focussed on new initiatives ands pilot projects in each of these units around improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective consultation processes.

Aligned to these presentations, a series of guidelines and tipsheets around the who, when, and how consultation will be undertaken have been produced which offer a series of benchmarks to encourage good practice amongst those staff who are engaging in consultation work on behalf of the Council. There remains some work to be completed around defining the limits to consultation, clarifying the "when" we will undertake consultation and the form that consultation will take once a decision to consult has been made.

In addition there have been a number of presentations around e-Council - including both national and international trends in the use of e-democracy to improve access and engagement of citizens in the political processes of both local and central government.

In October 2002, a report outlining the various options available to increase e-engagement was presented to the Committee, which resolved to pursue the additional funding required through the appropriate channels.

The potential impact of the new Local Government Act in terms of consultation is as yet unknown, however it is clear that local authorities will be required to view consultation as a primary rather than secondary function of local government. In view of this, a significant issue to be addressed by the Committee is around what the role will be for Council's elected members around consultation and communication once the current Special Committee is disestablished.

There are a number of options which could be considered by the Committee:

- No role at all
- A Standing Committee on Consultation and Communication
- A consultation and communication advocate on each Standing Committee

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Committee is a new Committee with a specialist role. It took longer than I expected to make substantial progress, but now it is moving towards a conclusion, I believe it should continue until it completes it present work programme, which may be more like June 2003 than March 2003.

At present the extent to which the Council consult is extremely variable. Consultation of park development and some streetworks extends to quite minor detail, while in other areas, quite large projects or programmes are only consulted on through the annual plan process and not in any detail.

In considering implementing the requirements of the new Local Government Act, the Council needs to consider defining limits to the extent of consultation which can be adopted as a uniform policy and strategy across all the Council's activities and to review the existing policies and processes.

This is a substantial area of expenditure and one which is often contentious. I do not believe the Strategy and Finance Committee can take on the lead role in this area until after the 2003/04 Annual Plan process is completed.

Staff
Recommendation: That this report be received.

Chairman's
Recommendation: (1)   That the work programme be approved.

                          (2)   That it be recommended that the Special Committee continues in existence at least until June 2003.