



22. 4. 2004

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PROSTITUTION REFORM ACT SUBCOMMITTEE

PART B - REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECENT MEETINGS

On 14 July 2003, the Prostitution Reform Act Subcommittee was formed by the Regulatory and Consents Committee to consider the major issues facing the Council presented by the Prostitution Reform Act 2003.

A meeting was held on 24 March 2004 to discuss with Community and Youth Groups problems relating to street workers in Manchester Street and a follow-up meeting of the Subcommittee on 5 April 2004 confirmed its opinion on necessary further actions.

Present at the meeting were representatives from the New Zealand Aids Foundation, New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, Community and Public Health, Salvation Army, Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board, YCD Youth Centre, Child, Youth and Family Christchurch and Sydenham and Manca.

There were two sets of issues dealt with by the group: One broadly defined as 'Social Agency' issues, the other as 'Council as Regulator' issues.

SOCIAL AGENCY ISSUES

Some discussion took place on the social issues relating to street workers in Manchester Street, particularly under-age workers. There did not seem to be one agreed goal or outcome sought and it was seen that it would be helpful for all the agencies to be participating in working towards a common vision for dealing with underage prostitutes.

The Mayor suggested that the Christchurch Safer Community Council should play a coordinating role in bringing together the various agencies to address this bigger issue, and continue to keep an eye on other social issues associated with this activity. This suggestion was endorsed by the meeting and it was agreed that the following agencies should be involved in these discussions:

- Child, Youth and Family
- YCD Youth Centre
- Community Public Health
- New Zealand Prostitutes Collective
- 198
- The Police
- New Zealand Aids Foundation
- Salvation Army
- Christchurch City Council (to link with the regulatory and service provision functions)
- Local residents

COUNCIL AS REGULATOR

The Subcommittee was advised that at a meeting of local residents at St Luke's Church there were a number of nuisance concerns raised around night-time activities on Manchester Street. Such things as:

- Noise, including loud conversations in the street late at night, and the slamming of car doors
- Litter - fast food containers, bottles, cups and condoms
- Other anti-social behaviour such as using residents' gardens as toilets
- Unsafe parking practices, in particular double parking and parking close to intersections
- Personal safety of local residents as well as pedestrians passing through the area.

It was noted that street prostitutes were not the only group responsible for creating the above problems. Patrons of the bars and fast food outlets in the commercial area of Manchester Street also contributed. A general observation was made that a number of issues that were raised could not be put down to prostitution alone and arise from a general increase in the level of social activities in the city centre over extended times.

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Further issues discussed involved the relevance and enforcement of the Public Places and Signs Bylaw as it related to soliciting and prostitution, street cleaning and litter control.

SOLICITING ON THE STREET

There were many issues raised around the difficulty of enforcing the relevant Public Places and Signs Bylaw for street prostitution. The issue of permits is complex, difficult, and would require much more work before any decision could be made.

There was some discussion on whether there should be locations or times where street prostitution could occur without the need for a permit (as happens with busking). It was asked whether Manchester Street was appropriate given its visibility, but if not there - then where?

Of the matters raised, it was agreed that they should be pursued along the following lines:

1. Underage sex workers

Action: Refer to Christchurch Safer Community Council

2. Litter, condoms etc (particularly on Manchester Street)

Action: Review litter and street cleaning policy. Report to Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee

3. Vomit, urine etc

Action: Review provision of public toilets available for use at night (eg use of Manchester Street parking building toilets). Request Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee to look at the issue.

4. Noise, feeling unsafe

Action: Strengthen relations with local residents and businesses. Prostitution Reform Subcommittees using links with Safer Community Council.

Action: Working closely with the police and

Action: Developing a 'one stop shop' mentality so that when complaints come into the Christchurch City Council they are not dismissed if they are not core business but rather referred to appropriate agency. Communications Team.

5. Soliciting on streets

Action: Prostitution Subcommittee to continue to explore options around the Public Places and Signs Bylaw, in consultation with relevant groups and report back to Regulatory and Consents Committee.

6. Use of commercial car parks for provision of sexual services

Action: Officers to contact identified businesses and suggest accesses be closed when not required for business because of the consequences.

7. Nuisance effects of sex in public places

Action: Unlawful activities continue to be the province of the police.

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Chairman's

Recommendation:

1. That the information be received.
2. That the actions as set out above be referred to the appropriate Committees, organisations, or officers of the Council for their prompt attention.

CONSIDERED THIS 22ND DAY OF APRIL 2004

MAYOR