

20. URBAN DESIGN PANEL INTERIM REPORT

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the second review of the Christchurch City Urban Design Panel (UDP) to the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Panel was established in June 2008 and will be due for a full review in September 2010 to consider all aspects of the Panel, including a budget review for inclusion in the Annual Plan process. This report is the second annual review of the panel, prior to this.
3. The panel has met on 31 occasions and has reviewed 48 projects This has included four Council projects and four projects returning to the panel for further advice. Panel meetings are triggered by receipt of resource consent applications which meet the panel terms of reference.
4. As yet it is too soon to evaluate the impact of the panel on built projects as the applications that have gone to the panel have not yet been constructed, but the review can address alterations made to proposals by applicants as a result of recommendations from the panel.
5. The panel is fully subscribed up to two months in advance, with consultants often contacting the Council in order to ensure a position on a panel meeting before submitting their resource consent applications. There has been positive feedback from applicants both to members of Council staff and to panel members.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

6. The Panel generally consists of four members at each meeting. It is selected to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure a range of skills appropriate to the application
7. Following last year's report to Council it was agreed to extend the pool of members for the UDP. Nominations have been received from the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors (NZIS) and the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI). It will be recommended to the Mayor and CEO of the Council that David Fox and Malcolm Smith from the NZIS and Janet Reeves and Stephanie Styles from the NZPI be added to the pool of panellists, to extend the range of relevant skills
8. Nominations from the New Zealand Property Council are currently being awaited.
9. In addition regarding heritage, staff are working with Historic Places Trust to identify heritage experts to join the pool of panellists.
10. As agreed at the last review, a change to the Terms of Reference requiring a quorum of three members has been made. This has allowed meetings to proceed when a panel member has had to leave a panel meeting early or has arrived late.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PANEL TO DATE

11. In spite of the limited weight of panel opinion in terms of the City Plan, their review of projects has led to the alteration and amendment of many of the proposals that have been brought before them. These alterations have been positive and welcomed by the planners associated with the projects. They have included:
 - Alterations to Parklands Hospital, in line with UDP advice, working with the Council planner and urban designer to achieve a design that the Council was able to support at hearing.

- Alterations to Chateau Blanc Apartments and Ronald McDonald House taking on board all of the comments made by the UDP, although these were limited as the proposal assessed by the UDP was of a high standard.
 - Alterations to multi unit housing developments – at least two proposals have been completely revised in line with panel advice and four more were amended to reflect with UDP suggestions. This has also resulted in similar developments applying some of the UDP suggestions at the early stages, thereby improving the overall quality of proposals.
 - Alterations to two proposals for alterations to suburban malls, in line with UDP suggestions
 - Alterations to a private dwelling application in line with UDP suggestions so that the Council were able to support the proposal that was previously unacceptable.
 - Alterations to a central city office application in line with UDP recommendations.
12. We are now contacted in advance by some applicants who are ascertaining when they will be able to attend a panel meeting and timing their resource consent process to work with this. Some applicants have returned to the panel more than once to get further advice and/or to refine proposals with the help of the panel. In general applicants seem to find attending the panel a positive process and several have commented on the fact that they found the process both helpful and practical.
13. Council planners note that they find attending the UDP both in terms of suggestions made to applicants regarding proposals and in terms of a learning experience where the planners can become more conversant with standard urban design concerns. Generally the response to the panel internally from EPA planners has been a positive one.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no financial implications arising from this report, the budget for the Urban Design Panel is within the Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

15. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

16. No legal considerations have arisen in connection with the urban design panel since the review undertaken last year.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

17. There are no additional legal issues arising from this report.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

18. As discussed in previous reports to Council, the UDP aligns with a number of community outcomes including:
- *An attractive and well designed city*
 - *A safe city*
 - *A prosperous city and*
 - *A well governed city.*

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

19. No, the UDP trial was established following adoption of the 2006-2016 LTCCP.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

20. The UDP aligns with the Council's strategies of a Liveable City, Strong Communities and Healthy Communities. The UDP also aligns with the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

21. In terms of the Council's Strategic directions the recommendations of this report contribute to:

Liveable City

Maintain and enhance the quality of development and renewal of the city's built environment, by:

- Championing high quality urban design
- Encouraging improved accessibility in public and commercial buildings
- Improving the way in which public and private spaces work together

Strong Communities

Reduce injury and crime and increase perceptions of safety, by:

- Using and regulating urban design to maintain and improve public safety

Healthy Communities

Strengthen the Garden City image, by:

- Providing street landscapes and urban open space that enhance the character of the city

22. The report is also aligned with the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy and the Central City Revitalisation Strategy Stage II.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

23. Consultation with the UDP and with Environmental Policy and Approvals planners at the Council is ongoing. It is intended that more comprehensive feedback from the development community will be sought at the end of the three year trial period as part of the report back to the Council at that time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Council receives this Interim Report on the Urban Design Panel effectiveness.
- (b) The Council notes that new Urban Design Panel members will be agreed by the Mayor and CEO to extend the range of skills and broaden the pool of members in the areas of planning, surveying and heritage.

BACKGROUND (THE ISSUES)

24. Consultation with senior planners in the Council's Environmental Policy and Approvals Unit revealed that there was concern the current City Plan does not carry enough weight in terms of urban design to enforce the panel's recommendations. The planners would support a plan change to increase the effectiveness of the UDP's recommendations.
25. Consultation with the UDP panel members also noted that the City Plan is very limited in terms of urban design and the weight that can be given to the panel's recommendations. A full yearly review of the panel will be held with all panel members later this year.

THE SCOPE OF THE PANEL

26. Currently the UDP can consider matters which meet the following criteria:
 - (i) Proposals that require a resource consent from the Christchurch City Council under the City Plan and which are located within any site within the four Avenues (all zones) and or any land zoned L3 or Business 2 (Suburban Malls) in the City Plan. The trigger points for review by the panel within these areas/zones are:
 - Multi Unit Residential Development of five units or more.
 - Multi Unit Commercial Development of three units or more
 - Any building with a gross floor area (GFA) of 1500m² or greater.
 - Any building adjoining any item contained in the "List of Protected Buildings, Places, and Objects", in the City Plan.
 - Any building adjoining any Conservation, or Open Space Zone land in the City Plan.
 - (ii) Any Christchurch City Council Capital Project with a value of \$5 million or greater, which is intended for public use, or to which the public have regular access.
 - (iii) Any of the following types of development, in any zone:
 - Hospitals.
 - Retirement villages.
 - Elderly persons housing, where a multi unit development of five units or more is proposed.