

11. ADOPTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

General Manager responsible:	General Manager, Strategy and Planning, DDI 941-8281
Author:	Public Open Space Strategy Hearings Panel

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's adoption of the Christchurch City Council Public Open Space Strategy (**Attachment A**) separately circulated following hearings on submissions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Public Open Space Strategy is a non statutory document, which sets out a vision, principles, goals, objectives and priorities for the provision, development and maintenance of public open space for the Christchurch District over the next 30 years. The Strategy includes a number of concept plans for geographic areas of the Christchurch District and provides standards and guidelines for open space provision.
3. The Strategy sets out four goals. These are:
 - Provide an accessible, and equitably distributed, multi-use open space network while protecting natural, cultural and heritage values.
 - Ensure public open space is diverse, interesting, and promotes local and District identity (providing for and protecting indigenous biodiversity, iconic landscapes, heritage places, Ngāi Tahu cultural landscapes and views special to each area).
 - Encourage community awareness and support and develop partnerships for open space provision, development and maintenance.
 - Ensure open space provision and management is sustainable.
4. The current Strategy was initiated in the latter part of 2008 and approved by the Council for public consultation on 22 October 2009. Community Boards, Ngāi Tahu and key stakeholders were consulted prior to release of the Strategy for general consultation. The consultation process has not been required to follow any legislative requirements, however meaningful consultation has occurred in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA).
5. Public consultation commenced on 16 November 2009 and closed 5 February 2010. One hundred and ninety three submissions were received and key themes from those submissions identified.
6. Overall, submissions on the Strategy were strongly supportive, especially from the urban areas of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula settlements. The main objections received concerned the Banks Peninsula Concept Plan. The majority of concerns were from the rural community, particularly around the potential adverse impacts of public access on adjoining landowners, and that wilderness and biodiversity values might be compromised.
7. The Strategy Hearings Panel, comprising Councillors Claudia Reid (Chairperson), Helen Broughton, Chrissie Williams, Barry Corbett and Mike Wall, convened on 22, 23 and 26 March 2010 to hear from the 92 submitters that wished to orally present their submissions.
8. Consequently the Panel sought information and analysis from officers in response to submissions and met on 7 May 2010 to deliberate. The Hearings Panel reconvened on 30 June 2010 to review and confirm amendments to the Draft Strategy.
9. Key amendments include greater emphasis on consultation and the development of partnerships, and clearer identification of areas of interest on the Banks Peninsula Concept Plan. The guidelines for open space provision were confirmed by the hearings process, including proposals to reduce the level of service for local parks in the Central City (while the area per 1000 people will decrease the total area will still increase over the next 30 years due to increased density of population) and to increase the level of service for regional parks, in part to recognise the role of covenanted land.

10. During deliberations a number of questions arose around the Council's current approach for assessing Development Contributions for reserves. As a consequence, the hearings panel have recommended that a report be prepared reviewing the current Reserve Development Contributions and how well they are meeting community needs for the provision of parks and open space.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The Strategy forms part of the Healthy Environment Programme work programme for which internal officers and external consultant costs have been budgeted. Its implementation will be addressed through the 2009/19 and future LTCCP capital and operational infrastructure programmes.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

12. Yes, covered by existing unit budget.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

13. The Strategy will assist the Council in carrying out its functions under both the Local Government Act 2002 and Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) by:
- Providing a vision, objectives and priorities for Christchurch District public open space to 2040;
 - Facilitating the integrated planning and management of the Council-managed public open space;
 - Facilitating partnership with other agencies and landowners;
 - Providing direction for Council's acquisition of strategic land areas; and
 - Providing standards and guidelines for the provision of parks and public open space which will enable the assessment of development contributions.

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

14. As above.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

15. Aligns with LTCCP 2009-2019 (pages 117-128) by providing a framework for overall public open space provision, development and maintenance over the next 30 years.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

16. Yes. The Strategy will assist in achieving a number of community and Council outcomes under the LTCCP, in particular UDS objectives planning for the future growth of the city. It provides guidance on how the Council might achieve LTCCP outcomes for local, sports, garden, heritage and regional parks.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

17. The relevant Council strategies and plans are as follows:
- Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS). The UDS, which anticipates greater intensification, has influenced the Central City and Christchurch Concept Plans. It has also influenced the Open Space Strategy's emphasis on environmental quality, provision of open space and planting in urban areas, such as the Central City.
 - Christchurch City Biodiversity Strategy, 2008 - 2035. The Biodiversity Strategy identifies priorities for indigenous biodiversity protection and enhancement across the district. This strategy provides an important basis for proposals in the Open Space Strategy, especially on Banks Peninsula.

- South West and Belfast Area Plans. These plans provide base information and priorities for development in these sectors of the City.
- A City for People (Public Spaces, Public Life). This study assessed how people use Christchurch's Central City spaces and streets, the quality of spaces, where people walk, plus how public spaces can better sustain public life and create a better sense of community.
- Port Hills Regional Park Acquisition Strategy 1999 and Port Hills Recreation Strategy. These plans have provided a basis for Strategy objectives and Concept Plans.
- The Styx Vision 2000 – 2040. The 'Vision' for the Styx Catchment and River Corridor has influenced the outcomes anticipated by the Strategy.
- Surface Water Strategy, 2009 - 2039. The Surface Water Strategy provides further grounding to the initiatives promoted in this Strategy.
- Banks Peninsula District Plan and especially the Boffa Miskell Landscape Study of Banks Peninsula and Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Coastal Protection Area maps.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

18. Yes, in particular the Urban Development Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

19. Public opinion and preferences concerning open space and biodiversity were gathered in a 2007 Market Research Survey of Christchurch District residents. This sample survey and other research information was used as a basis for Strategy preparation. Strategy concepts and proposals were tested at a key stakeholders meeting on 4 August 2009, a Council Seminar on 25 August 2009 and a Community Board seminar 21 September 2009. Overall very positive responses were received.
20. Consultation with Maori has been facilitated by Mahaanui Kurataiao Ltd (MKT) the organisation set up to enable better consultation between Council and local Runanga. MKT have been involved in review of the document and have assisted Council staff on the wording of key strategy passages and policy that potentially impact on matters of importance to Ngai Tahu Runanga and others.
21. Public consultation on the Strategy commenced on 16 November 2009 and closed 5 February 2010. Consultation mediums for the Strategy included direct notification of special interest groups, community groups and key stakeholders, public notices and articles in the press and public seminars in the City and on Banks Peninsula. Over the public consultation period staff were able to respond to a number of enquiries about the scope and intent of the strategy as well as facilitate better awareness of the Strategy. 193 submissions were received and 92 submitters indicated that they wished to be heard in support of their submission.
22. A public hearing was held on 22, 23 and 26 of March 2010 to provide submitters with an opportunity to speak to their submissions and allow the Panel to ask questions of submitters. On 7 May 2010 the Hearings Panel convened to consider the officers Summary of Submissions Report, which was based on written and oral submissions.
23. The Panel advised officers on 7 May and 30 June 2010 to make a number of amendments to the Strategy in accordance with their decisions on the submissions received.
24. The Strategy was subsequently amended, (see **Attachment A**) and is now before the Council, to consider for adoption. It will be reformatted and illustrated to improve its legibility and so that it is in keeping with the design format for the Healthy Environment Strategies.

HEARINGS PANEL RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Approve for adoption the Christchurch City Council Public Open Space Strategy as in Attachment A.
- (b) That a report be prepared reviewing the current Development Contributions for reserves and how well they are meeting community needs and Council's Strategy for the provision of parks and open space.

BACKGROUND

25. Christchurch District is expected to grow by approximately 84,000 people by 2040. The UDS signals the environmental and development initiatives needed to make Christchurch a sustainable and enjoyable place to live over the next 30 years. Proposed Plan Change 1 of the Regional Policy Statement, mandates greater population densities in existing urban areas and the Central City as well as urban expansion in greenfield developments and settlements in surrounding districts. Initiatives to accommodate a growing population present a number of challenges for public open space provision. In addition Banks Peninsula presents unique opportunities as a place to live and visit.
26. Public open space is highly valued in a national and international context. Our apparent ease of access to many parks, waterways, lakes and beaches provides an inherent advantage for the Christchurch District. However, projected urban growth, lack of access to desirable places, landscape change, loss of tree cover in urban areas and reduced open space per person overall are challenges that need to be met if the District is to remain competitive in the future. Challenges to be met include:
- Maintenance of the City's Garden City identity as part of the process of urban redevelopment and maintenance of the rural character of Banks Peninsula.
 - Protection and enhancement of Banks Peninsula for greater public and visitor use whilst retaining its values of remoteness and protecting biodiversity.
 - Maintaining and enhancing the quality of parks and ensuring that the quantity of public open space keeps pace with population growth.
 - Ensuring that there is sufficient public open space in the Central City to provide attractive, useful settings for existing and future residents and workers.
 - Enhancing the character of Lyttelton and Akaroa and retaining attractive, publicly accessible rural backdrops for these townships.
27. In order to achieve the above, the Strategy establishes a vision and objectives to support the management and appropriate growth of the public open space network. The objectives and policies are supported by a series of concept plans that provide graphic interpretation of the Strategy's intentions.
28. As the Strategy is not a regulatory document, the method and timeframes for the associated consultation process has not been required to follow any legislative requirements. However, the process undertaken was considered to meet the guiding principles for meaningful consultation pursuant to the LGA.
29. The Strategy was approved by the Council for release for public consultation and submissions on 16 November 2009. Based on analysis of submissions a number of general themes were identified. Overall the Strategy had a high level of acceptability with 83 per cent of comments being positive. It is clear from the number of submissions on the Strategy and strength of those submissions that Christchurch and Banks Peninsula residents feel strongly about their parks and open spaces. The most controversial part of the strategy concerned public access on Banks Peninsula.
30. The key submission themes identified are:
- Strong support for public open space provision overall.
 - Support for continued/increased provision of public open space especially as residential intensification proceeds.
 - Strong support for parks, trees and street enhancement in the Inner City.
 - Strong support for (61 per cent of submitters) and concern (39 per cent of submitters) expressed about provision of more public access on Banks Peninsula.
 - Desire expressed from many Banks Peninsula residents to retain the remote and isolated character of Banks Peninsula and protect biodiversity.

- Desire for greater partnership between agencies, organisations and landowners.
 - Strong support from Lyttelton Harbour communities for greater protection of rural landscapes and provision of regional parks.
 - Concern over lack of funding for parks, maintenance standards and how the City would fund continued parks provision standards in the face of urban consolidation.
31. The Hearing Panel made special note of submissions from members of the land development community and individuals familiar with development contribution levels concerning lack of budgeted financial provision for creation and development of sufficient parks in new subdivisions. To provide greater clarity on this matter the Panel requested that staff report back to the Council on the state of development contribution funding for reserves and if this would meet future community needs for parks and public open space.
32. The Strategy has taken account of the public submissions and attempted to take a balanced approach to fulfilling the needs and desires of the different submitters. To this end whilst stating clearly what the Council (in partnership with others) would like to achieve, there is strong emphasis on future collaboration, consultation and engagement with the community as is appropriate for a non regulatory document.
33. Following adoption of the Strategy an implementation plan will be developed to provide a more detailed programme of actions and key tasks to achieve the Strategy objectives and policies and prioritisation of actions.