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Our Community Plan
Christchurch City Council
email address:-
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the draft of "Our Community Plan 2006 to 16", (the plan).

The purpose of my objection to the level of increases in years 06/07, 07/08, 08/09 is:

1. Affordability, and
2. While maintaining 'core services' to the rate payer, applying a greater discretion to certain other expenditure as noted below, thus ensuring a rate increase within an affordable and reasonable level.

As noted on page 20 of the plan volume one 45.5 % of rates are spread over three items comprising:

- Cultural & Learning, (16.7%)
- Streets and Transport, (14.5%)
- Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways (14.3%)

A further 15.3% of rates are proposed for

- Community Support (8.5%)
- Recreation and Liesure (6.8%)

The sum of these two groups comprise 60.8% or \$140 million of the proposed 2006/7 rates expenditure.

I would suggest that the items noted above (\$140 million) is within a level of greater discretionary expenditure, (although desirable), and the balance of \$90 million are more typical of 'fixed' core services.

It is accepted, however, that there are some core services within the groups above.

My proposal to the council is therefore aimed at further reduction of \$14 million in the 2006/07 rate and proportionately over the 10 year period under review.

The major items of expenditure covered by my proposal are as follows:-

1. Community Support.- \$19.611 million

While I congratulate the council on a net operating deficit re housing (\$2.643 million),

Community Grants (\$4.4 million) and
Community Support (\$8.3 million), represent 64% of the total Community Support.

Without further detail I recommend that targeted savings within this area should be at least 25%, or \$4.1 million.

2. Cultural and Learning Services - \$38.288 million

The major item in this group relates to the city's 14 libraries at an expenditure of \$24.9 million or 65% of total expenditure.

Once again with limited detail of this expenditure, rate payers must be assured of efficiencies in the library area, particularly with respect to current technology and continuing improvement in transport services. (For example the ring road system).

My recommendation is to rationalise the library facilities to (say) 7 main suburban (super) libraries.

Targeted savings in the vicinity of \$6 million.

3. Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways. - \$32.977 million.

Regional and Urban Parks comprise a net \$22.3 million.

I consider that a 7.5% efficiency and effectiveness reduction in expenditure could be achievable.

Targeted savings \$1.7 million

Tree renewal of \$17.2 million spread over an increased period of 50% (15 years).

Targeted savings of \$580,000 per year.

4. Recreation and Liesure - \$15.632 million

As noted on page 8 of the Summary plan the council plans to close 5 suburban pools due to ageing and lack of economic attendances, yet plans to build a pool north of the city for \$8.5 million.

Indications are that if attendances are reducing for the pools under closure, it could be expected that the north pool will suffer the same fate..why would the planned north pool be any different over time?

Recommendation:- restrict council development to liesure centres and retire "stand-alone" pools.

Targeted savings:-

Cancel Northern pool plan – saving \$8.5 millionCapital expenditure

Operating cost savings estimated at 15% of net pools and liesure centre costs of \$9.98 million, or \$1.5 million.

5.Summary

<i>Item</i>	<i>Total Plan \$ million</i>	<i>Saavings / Reduction \$ million</i>
Community Support and Grants	\$12.70	\$4.10
Cultural and Learning Services - Libraries	\$24.90	\$6.00
Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways – Regional and Urban Parks	\$22.30	\$1.70
Trees	\$1.7 per year	\$0.58
Recreation and Liesure - Cancel North Pool complex	\$8.50	\$8.50
Operating cost savings	\$9.98	\$1.50
Summary Total:-		
Operating		\$13.88
Capital		\$8.50

Targeted Rates

I recommend that the targeted City Mall ratio is changed from the proposed 70/30 to 50/50, and the

Water charges ratio is changed from 20/80 to 50/50.

Loan repayment provision

I recommend that this provision is extended from 3% to 1.4%

Fit-out for new Civic offices

I recommend that at the level of rateable increase proposed the Council should set an example by demonstrating a significant saving in the proposed \$4.3 million fit-out.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Batstone.