

Submission to the Christchurch City Council
on the Draft Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)

Name: Te Whare Roimata

Address: PO Box 32-139, Christchurch

Contact: Jenny Smith. Phone 3795 134

We wish to talk to the main points in our written submission.

1. Introduction

This submission comes from the Te Whare Roimata Trust, Christchurch. Te Whare Roimata is the Community Centre of the inner city east neighbourhood and surrounding neighbourhoods of the eastern inner city. The Centre seeks to enable local residents to develop culturally appropriate, self-help responses to the issues and needs they confront. Our aim is to create a more self-reliant and self-sustaining community that is better able to meet its social, cultural, economic and recreational needs. A range of programmes has been developed based on the principles of community development, bicultural partnership, social justice, and sustainable development.

The draft LTCCP continuously refers to the Council's "increasing responsibility" resulting from the growth of the city and its population, saying, "as Christchurch continues to grow, the Council must plan to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to support the quality of life that residents expect" (LTCCP full report, p.19). While we agree wholeheartedly with this and congratulate the Council for its forward planning, we are concerned that no mention is made of the potential increase in SOCIAL problems and the subsequent need for an increase in social and community services. It is from a social justice perspective that we address many of our concerns. If there are going to be more people, shouldn't we keep our suburban libraries and community halls? If the population is aging, shouldn't we keep the mobile libraries? We feel that as Christchurch faces some of the challenges of urban growth such as reductions in social cohesion, and increases in crime and poverty, the community needs support now more than ever. Community funding, we believe, therefore must remain. Community development initiatives will need to be supported alongside the increases in infrastructure, in order to cope with the many challenges that urban growth will bring. Set against this is our obligation towards a treaty-based approach to planning and the development of services and outcomes for Maori.

This submission relates to four sections of the draft LTCCP. The submission first comments on the Vision, Community Outcomes and Strategic Directions and includes our vision for our future Christchurch. The next section is a discussion of our general issues and concerns about the LTCCP. Thirdly we outline our concerns about the essential and discretionary projects. The final part of this submission relates to the Council's proposals for savings and reductions.

2. Acknowledgements to the Christchurch City Council

The Christchurch City Council can be congratulated on its forward planning in regards to the LTCCP. We appreciate the many challenges that the council will continue to face during the ten years for which this Community Plan is valid.

We at Te Whare Roimata acknowledge and appreciate the City Council's long commitment to the community. The retaining of the community funding is very welcome, yet the intention to review this funding is of great concern. With Christchurch's increasing population, this funding for communities is needed now more than ever, and in greater amounts than has previously been provided.

3. Comments on the Vision, Community Outcomes and Strategic Directions of the Christchurch City Council

3.1 A vision for our future Christchurch?

A key question that the LTCCP addresses is what sort of city we want Christchurch to be, and whether it will be a place that our grandchildren want to live. The City Council's vision of a "boutique" city is laudable, however we question the relevance of such a vision for ALL the residents of Christchurch. What does a "boutique" city mean to those who are on the margins, and who live on very low incomes? This vision seems to be focused on Christchurch for tourists and for foreign investors, instead of the local residents of Christchurch. The vision does not mention the Treaty of Waitangi. We support the vision of a diversity of landscapes, a unique economic base and first class environment, but not at the expense of the more vulnerable members of our community.

3.2 Our vision for our future Christchurch

Our vision for Christchurch encourages a healthy and safe city that cuts its cloth according to the means:

- A city that looks after all its people, particularly those from low income and vulnerable groups. A city that ensures that everyone has access to services and is able to participate in the community and enjoy living in Christchurch
- A city that recognises the place of Tangata Whenua and the need for a Treaty based approach

- A city that ensures that services are available and affordable to all
- A city with work opportunities for everyone and assistance for those unable to work
- A city that focuses on it's local residents when considering and encouraging tourism and development
- A city that rejects foreign investment especially when it involves profits and ownership of land, resources and workforce being based overseas.
- A city that values sustainability

3.3 Community Outcomes and the Strategic Directions

The nine community outcomes identified are indeed important to people's wellbeing. However, we believe that the community outcomes do not include protection of the vulnerable groups and low income people of Christchurch. Our concerns are also based around the strategic directions that the Council intends to use to achieve these community outcomes. We feel that some of these strategic directions focus too heavily on the positive aspects of life in Christchurch, and neglect the social inequality that does exist. None of the Community Outcomes identified mention the Treaty of Waitangi.

Community: A City of Inclusive and Diverse Communities

Te Whare Roimata agree completely with this outcome of diverse and inclusive communities allowing all people to feel a sense of belonging and to participate in the community. Our concern is that the LTCCP falls short of enabling this by glossing over and avoiding the social inequality that exists in Christchurch. While this is a wonderful aim, the LTCCP does not explain how the Council will work to enable participation by those vulnerable groups in Christchurch. There is no mention of the Treaty of Waitangi in this community outcome. This renders Tangata Whenua as just another ethnic group. There is no mention of how the Council will attack social injustice.

Health: A Healthy City

Healthy lifestyles are indeed important. However the LTCCP fails to mention health inequalities in Christchurch. We would like to see a focus on people with disabilities and on those who do not have access to affordable health care. While the Council aims to encourage more people to live healthy lifestyles, we are concerned that the closing of libraries and pools directly contradicts this outcome. While new leisure

facilities are suggested, these favour the North West of the City and will create a gap in the East of the city.

City Development: An Attractive and Well-Designed City

This community outcome places the development of attractive neighbourhoods ahead of protecting older inner-city neighbourhoods from being destroyed. Such an outcome must not be at the expense of areas such as the inner city east. New development in such an area is in direct conflict with the Council's aspirations of creating a safe and healthy city as it destroys community networks and erodes social cohesion.

We would encourage the council to include social indicators in monitoring the adverse effects of urban renewal in Community Outcomes. We advocate the need for a social impact assessment report to be undertaken to highlight the potential impacts the current revitalisation efforts are having on this area.

We encourage the Council to look at building more Council housing in the inner city East, or to enter partnerships with local housing groups to ensure that the stock of affordable housing is maintained in the inner city East. Urban redevelopment in the mid 1990s saw the destruction of a significant number of bedsits and/or affordable housing that has not been replaced.

Safety: A Safe City

Living free from crime, violence, abuse and injury are very important to well being. The LTCCP, in its glossing over inequality and poverty in Christchurch, fails to indicate the important link between poverty and crime. The strategic direction of "working with partners to reduce crime" is a worthy one, but this one mention in the LTCCP leads the reader to believe that crime is not a big problem in Christchurch. Without admitting that crime is a problem, how can the Council work to meet the challenge?

4. Our General Issues and Concerns with the Draft LTCCP

The following concerns address those matters closest to the heart of Te Whare Roimata. We are especially concerned about the lack of regard for the Treaty of Waitangi and acknowledgement of Tangata Whenua status, and the impact of the Council's intentions on the vulnerable communities of Christchurch.

4.1 The Place of the Treaty of Waitangi and Tangata Whenua issues

The LTCCP makes no reference to the Treaty of Waitangi and the obligations that Councils have under Section 81 of the Local Government Act to ensure both Mana Whenua and Tangata Whenua are consulted with, or included in decision-making, and in the development of culturally appropriate responses to issues faced.

While the plan does mention Maori in terms of being a vulnerable group (Full document, p.50), Maori are simply seen by the Plan as being part of Christchurch's diverse community. In doing so, the LTCCP relegates Maori to being part of an ethnic group. This negates their Tangata Whenua status and is a breach of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Despite their status as Tangata Whenua and their vulnerable socio-economic position, no reference is made in the Community Outcomes for enhancing the position of Maori. Neither is there any strategies developed in the Strategic Directions to address issues faced.

Likewise there seems to be little opportunity for Maori input into the consultation processes of the Council, including the preparation of this plan. We understand that no formal arrangement has yet been finalised with Mana Whenua despite several years of negotiation. This is of considerable concern. The \$122,374 available for development of Maori capacity to contribute to decision-making processes would also seem to be considerably short of what is required.

We would strongly urge the Council to ensure that the LTCCP addresses these critical legislative and Treaty obligations, ensure Tangata Whenua status is recognised, and seek to appropriately address issues faced by Maori.

4.2 Marginalisation of Vulnerable Groups

The LTCCP seems to focus more on creating a boutique city fitting for overseas tourists and foreign investors at the expense of marginalised groups. Issues of inequity and social justice are glossed over and reframed in such a way as to portray Christchurch as being a social paradise. This is not the reality. 56% of the Hagley Ferrymead Board's area is rated decile 9 or 10 on the New Zealand Social Deprivation Index. This means that many of these communities are part of some of the most marginalised in New Zealand.

The LTCCP fails to mention and address certain vulnerable groups in the community. For example, the elderly. While the LTCCP does mention the aging population as a challenge, and suggests that "the Council needs to make sure that....services are available...also that older people can participate in and contribute to society" it fails to address how the Council plans to meet this "challenge" of an aging population (LTCCP Full report p.50).

We express grave concern about the loss of \$300,000 from the Canterbury Development Corporation's budget for community employment funding. Such funding supports vulnerable groups to obtain access to employment or pre-employment training.

Other vulnerable groups include those with disabilities and poor physical and mental health. Once again the LTCCP mentions such groups as a "challenge" and suggests that the Council will help communities to "target" these "disadvantaged groups" (LTCCP Full report, p.50). Once again there is a noticeable lack of a clear process that the Council will follow to meet these challenges. This is in stark contrast to the precise activities outlined for other Council priorities such as regulatory services.

4.3 The Consultation Process

The LTCCP clearly states that the Council "provides opportunities for public participation in decision-making, and it receives and processes the community's input to ensure effective decision-making (LTCCP full report, p.109). We acknowledge and appreciate the information meetings held for the public, and also realise the challenges involved since this is the first time the Council has prepared a LTCCP. However we have some concerns in regard to the consultation process:

- The LTCCP is a ten-year plan, yet the Council has only offered six weeks for public consultation. Unfortunately, this period also coincided with school holidays and the Easter break. This added pressure made it especially difficult for groups and individuals wanting to make submissions
- The full version of the draft LTCCP was very difficult to obtain. We understand that there were some printing difficulties, however the request for personal names and addresses and the wait for the full document by post added to the time constraints and frustration felt by those wanting to make submissions
- As far as we are aware, there has been no consideration made for those who cannot read the LTCCP (apart from a version for the visually impaired). How do blind people, people who cannot read and people who do not understand English participate in the consultation process if they do not have access to the LTCCP?
- There are some Council intentions that have not gone out to the community for consultation. These include the intention to have a Trading Company build the Civic Offices and then lease back to the Council, and the intention to remove City Care and the Red Bus Company from Council assets.

Recommendations:

- That the Council provide a longer consulting period
- That the Council make the LTCCP more easily obtainable
- That the Council consider those groups who cannot read the LTCCP in its original version
- That the Council consults with the community to the extent which it promises

4.4 Community Development

The Council activities surrounding Community Support seem to focus mainly on providing services and facilities. The retaining of the community funding is much appreciated (although we note with real concern that this is to be reviewed), as is the Council's intention to initiate and support community development projects (LTCCP Full Report, p.50). Our question is how can community services be carried out if there is no community? We feel that the Council needs to focus on reversing the

trend towards destruction of social cohesion and community. While we think about the future for Christchurch and on developing as a city, we need to keep in mind the importance of investing socially as well as economically. The PEOPLE of Christchurch are what makes our city "the most attractive city in New Zealand."

4.5 Global Investment

The idea of Christchurch as a "global investment destination" raises concerns that the city will become foreign owned, that profits will go offshore, and we will lose ownership of our land and of our assets. This may negatively affect the local people of Christchurch. There is a danger that such a focus on global investment will ignore local needs. We feel that while global investment may be important to a certain extent, the focus should be on developing local initiatives and drawing on the strengths and skills of the local residents of Christchurch.

4.6 Resource Allocation and Access Issues

Resource allocation seems to favour the Northwest. The Council proposes a redevelopment of Jellie Park, and a new pool in North Christchurch. We are concerned that the leisure centre long-needed on the Eastside has been put on hold while the North West will get an upgrade and a newly built centre. Related to this issue of resource allocation are our concerns about access and affordability. Many of the inner city East and Eastside residents have low incomes and therefore cannot afford to travel long distances to the new pools in the North of the City, let alone afford the expensive pool entry costs to these elaborate new "leisure centres."

We are also concerned about resource allocation in terms of the Community Board Funding, which is allocated equally across the Community Boards regardless of need. This favours the North against the Eastern Community. We encourage a needs based approach when allocating Community Board Funding.

4.7 Sustainability

Sustainability is hinted at throughout the LTCCP but never fully addressed. The use of non-renewable resources needs to be minimised. Pollution must be minimised. There is no mention of any strategy to accommodate urban growth and renewal. Instead of building more roads, should we be looking at alternative options that would reduce pressure on our city such as Park and Ride or Light Rail options? We acknowledge the Council's encouragement to recycle, and recommend that such facilities be increased. Social sustainability must also be addressed. Social and

community services need to be viable long term. We feel that the Council needs to increase its support for community and social services, in order to cope with the demands of a growing population.

4.8 Discretionary development grants

We acknowledge and support the need for a Development Contribution towards recovering the cost of growth. We would also argue that there is a critical need to establish a special financial contribution in older inner city neighbourhoods such as the inner city east to mitigate against the impact of urban renewal and the loss of low-cost housing. Such a contribution would see developers contributing to a public housing fund to ensure the provision of replacement affordable accommodation.

5. Concerns about the Major Projects and Proposals

We need to cut our cloth according to our means. Do we really need elaborate swimming pools, first class Botanic Gardens, and grand civic offices, or can we settle for more basic amenities? Can we incrementally upgrade for some projects, rather than spending large amounts in a short period? We suggest more creative ways to achieve our goals such as partnerships, sponsorships (for example corporate sponsorship for tree renewal), or alternative methods such as downsizing our expectations. We need to be clear about what sort of city we want to create, and ensure it is relevant to local people. We need to focus on sustainability when undertaking such projects.

5.1 The Essential Projects we challenge:

- There is evidence of poor planning by our Council. The very recent projects of the Christchurch Bus Exchange and the Christchurch Art Gallery now require more expense. We question why there is the need for more expenditure, given that these are such recent projects.
 - \$59.5 million on the new bus exchange.
 - \$0.2 million on the Christchurch Art Gallery air conditioning upgrade.
Are there other ways that the air conditioning problem could be financed such as the installation company taking responsibility?
- \$17.2 million on tree renewal. Can we look at other methods of gaining capital for this project such as corporate sponsorship?
- \$4.3 million on fit-out for new Civic Offices: do we want a grand palace or a modestly outfitted building?

5.2 The Discretionary priority projects we challenge:

- \$11.1 million upgrade of the Botanic Gardens. Is there a way to incrementally upgrade facilities instead of investing large amounts of money into sizeable projects? Do these gardens need to be of first-class standard, or could we set our sights a little lower?
- \$12.5 million on New Leisure Centres. We need to cut our cloth according to our means. Is there really a need to have elaborate and expensive recreation centres with wave pools and hydro slides? We are concerned that the Eastern communities of Christchurch will miss out. We suggest that the community is happy to settle for basic amenities such as an ordinary swimming pool.
- We question the \$50-60 million from the streets and transport budget being spent on new motorways. We believe that this is trying to solve 21st Century problems with 20th Century solutions. We need to look instead at more public transport alternatives such as park and ride options, light rail, car-pooling and so on. While we welcome the idea of beautification of our streets, there do seem to be more pressing priorities.

6. The Council's proposals to save money on its services

We are very concerned about the impact that many of the "reductions" proposed will have on the community, especially low-income people, the elderly and the vulnerable. We are concerned that all the reductions seem to target these vulnerable groups of the community and will have large social costs. We do not believe that the savings made will justify the cutbacks.

- We oppose the withdrawal of the mobile library. This withdrawal is in complete contradiction with the Council's concerns about the challenges of an aging population, who, due to mobility and transport issues, are regular users of this service. Low-income people will also be affected, as they will have to deal with increases in transport costs. It also contradicts the strategic direction to "increase involvement in lifelong learning" (LTCCP full report, p.59).

- We contest the closing of community libraries and suburban pools. We think that there are other areas in the budget that have greater funds that could be cut, such as the upgrade of the Botanic Gardens, the Civic Buildings upgrade and the Tree Renewal project.
- We acknowledge that swimming pools need replacing, but this needs to be done in a staggered way so that as a pool closes, a new one opens.
- The reduction of community halls: we suggest that the Council wait until the current review of Community Facilities has been completed.
- We are concerned about the proposed increase in cemetery charges. Low-income people need to have access to funds to cover such costs. We have several stories of situations where we have had to fundraise to cover the costs of a burial- especially single people with no families.

7. **Concluding Comments**

We very much welcome this opportunity to comment on the draft Long Term Council Community Plan. We appreciate the challenge of creating such a plan and acknowledge the Council's continued efforts to consult with the community on matters affecting our city's future.

We agree with the Community Outcomes identified, but feel that the LTCCP needs to reflect more honestly the not so glamorous aspects of life in Christchurch as well as to celebrate our achievements. We need to support our most vulnerable communities, and enable everyone to participate in order to create a city in which everyone enjoys living. We recommend a greater emphasis on the impact for the least advantaged people of Christchurch. We recommend a review of the Council's projects and proposals, and ask that the Council bear in mind the impacts of such spending and reductions on the people of Christchurch, particularly those most vulnerable. We recommend that the Council take immediate action to address its Treaty and legislative obligations, and to recognise and afford Tangata Whenua status to Maori.

Anneke Lange

Jenny Smith

John Manuel