



Submission on the Draft Community Development Strategy

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We DO want to be heard

Introduction

1. Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch (SOC) is an incorporated membership society, formed in 2005, which carries on the vision of two previous local voluntary organisations, Sustainable Cities Trust and Christchurch-Otautahi Agenda 21 Forum. Our vision is “Christchurch people practicing, living and demonstrating sustainability in all that they do.”

2. Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch seeks to

“ensure that all people have their basic needs satisfied, so that they can live in dignity, in healthy communities, while having the minimum adverse impact on natural systems both now and in the future.”

3. We welcome this opportunity to comment on your Community Development Strategy and congratulate the Council for its ongoing commitment to building strong sustainable communities.

4. It is pleasing to read of the Council's commitment in the Strategy to place greater emphasis on promoting collaboration and working in partnership to address issues of importance to the community (page 28).

5. This submission is offered in the spirit of that collaboration. We declare our interest in working collaboratively with Council on this Strategy.

6. We wish to emphasise that the current consultation phase is very important and appeal to the Council not to hurry this phase. We warmly acknowledge the elected members' commitment to community consultation regarding the draft Community Development Strategy, including the extension of closing date and incorporation of hearings.

7. We have a number of points to make about the current draft Strategy. These are fundamental and many other potential points depend on these underlying aspects being addressed first.

8. We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

What is Sustainability?

9. We are disturbed at the lack of coherence of the terms used in the Strategy

10. In order to describe this concern we first set out our understanding of key terms.
Sustainability / Sustainable Development

11. The Parliamentary commissioner for the Environment has stated that

Sustainable development recognises:

- *the finite reserves of non-renewable resources*
- *the limits of natural life-supporting systems (ecosystems)*
- *the interactions between environmental, social, and economic outcomes*
- *the well-being of both current and future generations.*

12. The only reference to sustainability or sustainable development in the Strategy is in the Principles on page 19 and page 36

Sustainability

The Council will give preference to community development activities that enhance or sustain community benefits beyond the duration of Council involvement. The Council will also undertake community development activities that contribute to its wider environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes (page 19)

Sustainability

That the design and location of facilities meets the growth and development needs of the city's population. (page 36)

13. In both instances these references to sustainability are potentially misleading.

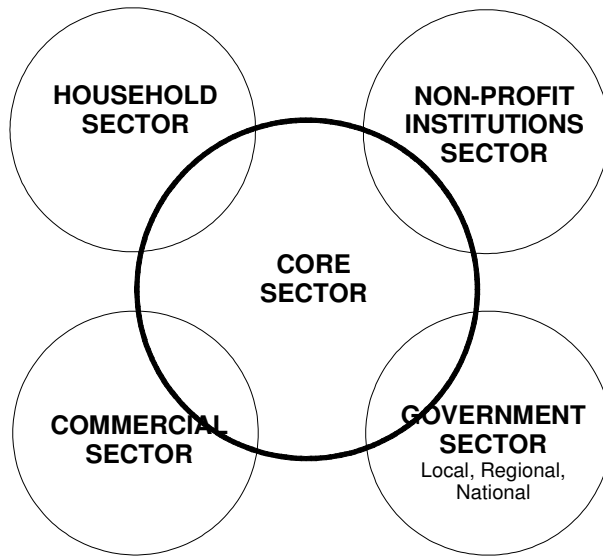
Why is Sustainability Important?

14. We believe that sustainability should be at the core of the Community Development Strategy.
15. The Council has a legislative obligation to take a sustainable development approach. The Principles of local government (Section 14 in the LGA 2002) state that local authorities should take a sustainable development approach.
16. Promoting wellbeing, one of the two legislative purposes of local government, (Section 10 LGA 2002) by definition requires a sustainable development approach. The Act confirms this by stating that the legislation provides for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach Section 3).
17. This means that all Council strategies should reflect a sustainable development approach.

18. Nationally and internationally the emphasis is now on “strong sustainable communities” rather than simply strong communities.
19. Governments throughout the world have recognised the importance of local communities in implementing sustainable development. By shifting the focus of sustainability to the local level, changes are seen and felt in a much more immediate manner [incentive effects].
20. Research has indicates that sustainable community development may be the most effective means of demonstrating the possibility that sustainability can be achieved on a broader scale; concrete examples of sustainable development are more likely [demonstration effect] (Bridger and Luloff 1999)

What is a sustainable community?

21. Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development. They do this by:
 - bringing together the social, economic and environmental components of their community and addressing the relationships and interdependencies between them
 - meeting the needs of existing and future generations
 - respecting the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally to make their own communities sustainable (Department Communities and Local Government 2006)
22. Sustainable communities are also those that recognize and engage all sectors with communities.
23. We are concerned about the Council's recognition and engagement with the community and voluntary sector. In particular we are concerned at the inconsistencies of interpretation in the Draft Strategy document of "community" and "community and voluntary" sector. We offer this diagram as an illustration
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Adapted from
Hilkka Pietilä

24. Recent work by Statistics NZ has resulted in a decision to prepare a Satellite Account for Non-Profit Institutions. This work will complement the information already developed by them for other Sectors. However their Time Use Survey shows that only about half the activity in which those surveyed are involved is reflected in formalised "accounting". An example is the work done by Southland farmers at the time of the Wairarapa floods. The energy and resources, the aroha and the gifting were planned, unpaid and performed outside the Household, but not formalised within any organisation. The Core Sector is an attempt to document the importance of the interactions that are not formalised between people in their communities - this is often the very essence of Community development. This diagram reflects the picture of the wider community and the Sectors which it comprises. It should be overlain with a further layer to reflect tangata whenua activity. We are pleased to note the recognition (page 10 of the draft Strategy) that nationally, unpaid work outside the home is more likely to be undertaken by Maori rather than non-Maori. Treaty-based, sustainable, community development is the goal

What is community development?

25. There is little recognition in the Strategy of the theory and practice of Community Development as an academic discipline. For example, there is a Community Development Journal published by Oxford University Press, and we draw to your attention the following references from an upcoming issue which has articles by several authors from this country.
26. One such article (by Love Chile, Robyn Munford and Pat Shannon) introduces Community development as concerned with the critical examination of how forces of structural change, economic integration, institutional development and

renewal impact on the capacity of individuals, groups and communities for self-determination. It also presents the challenge to community development to foreground local initiatives and to make the most of funding to build autonomous long-term community capacity for sustainable community-defined change.

27. Another article refers to the work of Armstrong, Davies and Doyle that defines community work as an umbrella term for three separate but related aspects - community organisation, community action and community development.
28. Yet another refers to the work of Paulo Freire summarising community development as focussing on change and on working in the margins to understand how groups have been silenced and unable to participate.
29. In one other contribution to this Journal, Robyn Munford and Wheturangi Walsh-Tapiata have addressed the following key principles for community development practice:
 - Having a vision for the future and for what can be achieved
 - Understanding local contexts
 - Locating oneself within community
 - Working within power relations
 - Achieving self-determination
 - Working collectively
 - Bringing about positive social change for all communities in Aotearoa New Zealand
 - Action and reflection
30. We trust these references will assist in better defining Community Development.

What is sustainable, Treaty-based community development?

31. One of the main things we know about communities is that everything and everyone is linked in one way or another, as part of a living system. Communities are held together by a network of relationships, some of which extend beyond the community. The more communities understand these interactions, the better informed their decisions will be.
32. Such development is a process and a capacity to make decisions that consider the long-term economy, ecology and equity of all communities, where the unique role of tangata whenua is recognised. We are pleased to note that (on page 24) particular reference is made to how the L G Act 2002 specifically requires councils to provide opportunities for Maori to contribute to its decision-making

processes, and consider ways to develop Maori capacity to contribute to those processes.

33. The goal is to build sustainable communities: communities with the ability to remain healthy and successful over the long term.
34. Consideration is given to the long-term consequences from today's actions and decisions. Practitioners are encouraged to think broadly across issues, disciplines, physical and social boundaries.
35. It suggests searching out new ways to
 - create economic vitality,
 - maintain a healthy environment, and
 - build healthy communities and meet local needs.(Bauen, Baker, and Johnson 1996)

Why care about equity?

36. The central principle of sustainability is the recognition of the interdependence of environmental, economic, and social equity concerns - these are the "three Es". They are often referred to as three legs of a stool - lacking just one means the stool will not stand; emphasizing one over the other puts us on uneven ground.
37. Giddings et al 2002 (p194) presents Haughton's (1999) five equity principles of sustainable development:
 1. Futurity – inter-generational equity.
 2. Social justice – intra-generational equity.
 3. Transfrontier responsibility – geographical equity.
 4. Procedural equity – people treated openly and fairly.
 5. Inter-species equity – importance of biodiversity.
38. Promoting wellbeing implies improving
 - the overall or aggregate level of well-being and
 - the distribution of well-being.
39. Distributional principles involve ensuring:
 - that all people enjoy some basic minimum level of well-being;
 - there is opportunity so that all have a fair chance to achieve their potential;
 - that the well-being of future generations is protected.

Community Funding

40. We congratulate the Council on the Social Initiatives Fund. We believe that this fund has addresses the issues. This fund has worked to address issues in inequity and has achieved measurable results.
41. We urge the council to continue this funding stream.
42. The proposal to chunk the funding schemes according to the size of the grant has the disadvantage of losing coherence relating to the purpose of the funds.

Community Facilities Review

43. We understand that the reason for reviewing community facilities at this time is to reduce the cost of these facilities on ratepayers.
44. However, the benefits to the neighbourhoods or communities that these facilities serve must also be recognised. Many of the facilities have been built or funded by community people and can have historical significance.
45. In the past measurements for the use of the facilities have been coarse estimates and have not reflected the particular situation, needs and requirements of each centre. Because a citywide review is being undertaken at this time we are concerned that again rough measurements based on simplistic questionnaires will be used to identify facilities for closure.
46. It is important that each facility is assessed with the communities and any underutilization identified is thoroughly investigated.
47. Our submission is that methods be found to increase the utilisation of a facility by, for example, providing a resource person for the facility to organise and coordinate programmes and activities, rather than suggesting or promoting closure.
48. A sustainable city must be based on cohesive self-supporting neighbourhoods, and most of the existing facilities will help provide such neighbourhoods.

Recommendations

We submit that

- The Strategy should reflect a sustainable development approach
- The Strategy and other council documents should refer to strong **sustainable** communities
- The Strategy should reflect the need to address issues of equity

- Retaining the Social Initiatives Fund will greatly assist the Council in this effort to discern its contribution to and success in contributing to Community Development.
- The funding programme should be based on the purpose of the funds rather than the size of the application.
- Increased use of community facilities should be supported and resourced rather than making any recommendation regarding closure