

Appendix 2:
Interviews with
Local Authority representatives

1. TRENDS

a). Older people

The changing demographic to an older population was a trend identified by all Local Government participants interviewed. Implications for Christchurch from an older population were identified as:

- Greater demands on the health system.
- Need for supported/rethome accommodation.
- Need for more trained members of the caring professions.
- Need for support systems for carers of dementia sufferers.
- Need for facilities/services for people from different ethnic groups.
- Increasingly, the age of retirement from the paid work force is going up, as people remain in the paid workforce longer.

b). Youth

There is a growing dislocation in the world view and behaviour between youth and the older population. One community board chair questioned whether the issues of youth behaviour and addiction were a reality or mostly a perception fostered by the media.

The incidence of graffiti and vandalism by young people is increasing. Young people are becoming increasingly bored and frustrated. Fewer are involved in sport, and there are few organised activities for this group. The Rowley Youth Centre which is supported by the CCC is an example of a project that works with other agencies to meet the needs of the young people in the area.

c). Local authority

With the introduction of triple bottom line accountability that takes into account not just economic measures, but social and environmental, the Christchurch City Council is becoming a leader in a more integrated way of operating at local government level.

There is a trend on both local and central government for a shift away from the neo-liberal ideas of competition, to a more collaborative approach. Although CEOs are speaking the language of collaboration, not all workers in organisations are embracing this change in approach.

The trend for the CCC and Community Boards to involve the community through consultation in decision making is challenging the way the local authority operates. There is a need for specialist people to work in the area of consultation, to ensure that appropriate processes are utilised. The CCC policy requiring consultation is vague and not always adhered to.

The volume of traffic on the city roads is increasing, as people use cars where in the past they may have cycled, walked or used public transport. People's lives are so busy that many cannot take the time needed to travel to work by public transport.

The issue of the northern arterial motorway was identified as a major issue for people living in the Papanui/St Albans areas.

d). Families

Statistics show that more families are breaking up. The pressures on families to have two incomes to survive is contributing to family breakdowns. Easy access to finance is putting families into debt that they cannot repay.

e). Housing

Infill housing throughout the city is having detrimental effects on families who no longer have a backyard where the children can play, or space for a vegetable garden.

The cost of rental accommodation in the private sector is increasing, as is the waiting list for Housing New Zealand properties. It is becoming increasingly difficult for people to save a deposit for their first house.

f). Work

Youth unemployment is still a big issue for Christchurch.

g). Poverty

There is increasing disparity between income groups in the community. As the economy has improved, the gap has widened. There are pockets of poverty in Christchurch in Waltham, Addington, Rowley and Linwood. New Zealand is a low wage country, and many families struggle as a consequence.

A study of six cities in New Zealand found that the Linwood/inner city area of the Hagley ward had the highest level of social deprivation.

h). Health

An older population will make heavy demands on the health system at a time that the tax paying population is smaller.

Drug, alcohol and gambling addictions are increasing. Gambling is seen as a “more socially acceptable addiction”.

i). Cultural/Ethnic/Immigration

The “browning” of Christchurch is a trend, with the growth of the Maori and Pacific Island communities. With people from more different ethnic groups settling here, Christchurch is becoming a multi-ethnic city. The needs of refugees and new migrants must be taken into account by city planners.

New migrants and refugees can become very isolated, particularly if they do not speak English well. There is a need to find a way for the dominant culture to start to learn to communicate with people with limited English.

There is “white flight” from some Christchurch schools, for example Rowley primary. The culture of competition between schools has resulted in some schools providing buses to collect children from neighbouring areas.

j). Education

Student debt and the increasing costs to the individual of tertiary education is a trend in education.

k). Voluntary sector

It is more difficult for groups in the voluntary sector to attract funding.

The CCC has traditionally supported some voluntary organisations in the community, but has never worked out what the needs of the city are. Projects funded are not measured against CCC policy. Twelve million dollars is spent each year by community boards, but the CCC does not know if that money is spent in the most effective way.

There was concern stated about the number of voluntary organisations operating, and duplicating services. The CCC was seen as having a role in rationalising the number of organisations operating in the community by management of funding into the community. Some councillors were concerned at the need of some organisations for ongoing funding, and did not want the CCC to be seen as “a cash cow”. One councillor strongly advocated the need for voluntary and community organisations to be self-funding.

l). Community

Christchurch is part of a globalised world that is changing rapidly due to technological innovations, and mass media. There is a concern about people’s abilities to adjust to pressures of constant change.

There is an increased focus on individualism, with an emphasis on rights but not responsibilities. With this atomisation of society people are less connected to their communities than in the past. Modern technology, for example the use of email, has resulted in a loss of communication skills and human interaction.

There is an increasing sense of powerlessness, feelings that people don’t have control over their own lives. People living in poverty have always experienced this powerlessness, but increasingly it is experienced by the wider community.

Serious crime is increasing, and there is a higher level of acceptance that serious crime cannot be prevented. Many people who have never been direct victims of crime, do not feel safe in their homes or on the streets.

2. OUTCOMES

Participants identified a range of outcomes that they wanted to achieve. The ideas are listed below with the number indicated in brackets. Most wanted to achieve a more equitable society where people have a greater sense of belonging.

- More equitable healthy city (7)
- Greater sense of belonging to a community (5)
- Sustainable environment (3)
- Continuing economic growth (3)
- Effective public transport system (2)
- Good physical environment – adequate housing and heating (2)
- Collaboration between Central Government, Local Government and the community (2)
- Greater concern for the well-being of others (2)
- Support for elderly
- Strong relationships across generations

3. PRIORITIES OF OUTCOMES – SOCIAL CAPITAL

When participants identified outcomes of a more equitable, healthy city in which people felt connected to their communities, they were asked whose responsibility is to achieve these outcomes. Most stated that both Central and Local Government has a role in creating an environment where people had

opportunities to become involved in their communities. However, at the same time they emphasised that the ultimate responsibility came back to the individual. The CCC provided opportunities for social connection by providing

- Sporting facilities.
- Parks and recreation areas.
- Supporting neighbourhood support groups.
- Financially supporting community organisations and sports clubs.
- Free concerts and arts events.
- Opportunities for community input into CCC decision making.
- Partnerships with the community and Central Government, for example, the Aranui Renewal Project.

4. CRITICAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

- Having agreed common goals; everyone knows what they are working towards.
- Collaboration across sectors.
- Good planning, based on good information.
- Community ownership of projects.
- A sense of being able to change things, and to build on those changes.
- Celebrate the positive – for example “random acts of kindness”.
- Ways of measuring outcomes.
- CCC committed to achieving social outcomes, not just rates and rubbish.
- A buoyant economy.

5. FACTORS MAKING PROJECTS SUCCESSFUL

a). Processes

- Good needs analysis.
- Good planning.
- Ensure that key stakeholders are brought on board at the planning stage.
- 'Home grown initiatives' like the 'Children at risk ' project in Addington.
- Effective networking and communication to avoid duplication.
- Collaboration across sectors. Finding respectful ways of working together.
- Excellent evaluation.

b). Structures

- Utilise structures people can understand and feel comfortable with.
- Having effective boards in community organisations.

c). People

- Experienced, trained and committed staff.

6. BARRIERS OR LIMITATION TO ACHIEVING THE DESIRED OUTCOMES

Barriers are the opposite of factors identified in questions four and five above. Participants also identified the following barriers.

- Insufficient funding, particularly for ongoing maintenance of the organisation.
- Lack of political will to bring about change.
- People are less willing to volunteer their time and skills.

7. NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING/SERVICES

Participant's opinions were split when it came to the need for additional funding for services. Some felt that there were already enough resources going into the community, and they needed to be better prioritised. Several mentioned that they were unable to tell how effective the existing CCC contribution to community organisations was. They stated that because the CCC did not have a clear picture of what it wanted to achieve in the community it was difficult to know if more money was needed.

8. PRIORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Priorities for additional funding are listed with the frequency in brackets.

- Ongoing maintenance of voluntary organisations (3)
- Afterschool programmes (2)
- Holiday programmes.
- Injury prevention programmes targeting falls.
- Services for refugee and migrants.
- Local sports clubs.
- Womens' organisations like neighbourhood support that encourage relationship building in the community.
- Crime prevention.
- Swimming pool and indoor recreational facilities for Papanui.

9. ORGANISATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

When Community Board chairs were asked what contribution they thought Community Boards made to the community, they identified the following:

- Supporting groups and individuals in the community. Provide funding, but also working at linking people up with others in the community.
- Community Boards can approach private enterprise and advocate for sectors of the community. One example of this sort of advocacy is when a Community Board member approached a shopping mall and negotiated to get a “shopping bus” to run through a suburb where many people did not have cars. The existing bus routes did not pass the mall.
- Advocating for communities with the CCC. An example given was to get the CCC support to establish a community cottage in Sydenham.
- Community Boards provide a “Safety valve for the CCC. People come to us when they have an issue with the Council, and let off steam. We help them find ways to resolve the issues”.

10. COLLABORATION

a). Opportunities for increased internal collaboration

There is the potential to increase collaboration between Community Board members and units in Tuam St, for example the City Streets. An increase in collaboration between the Community Development staff and the Leisure staff would be helpful for the Community Boards.

The manager stated that the CCC as an organisation struggled to achieve a seamless integration of services. He stated that it was very difficult to break down walls around units in the council. Senior staff still worked to achieve separate outcomes for “their departments” and “their staff”. The structure of the organisation made it very easy to put the walls back up, and to “protect patches”.

Elected Community Boards members have an appointed liaison person in the council to give guidance on how to operate effectively within the Council system.

There was some concern among some of the Community Board chairs that although councillors on Community Boards were part of decision making at the board level, they were not bound by those decisions when it came to full council meetings to ratify decisions. At times councillors voted against decisions that had been approved at the board level.

b). Opportunities for increased collaboration with external agencies

The long term CCC plan (LTCCP) requires collaboration.

One Board Chair identified that collaboration was central to the way that the CCC operated and the current City Manager was a strong proponent of community involvement with the council.

Collaboration with Central Government and community was mentioned as the way of the future by several participants. As one stated “collaboration and partnerships are the way of the future. One single agency can no longer claim to be addressing all the complex issues that arise in any community. We need to work together. Sometimes the CCC will be the lead agency, and at other times different agencies will be the lead agency. This is a critical difference to the way we have operated in the past”.

People interviewed

Ingrid Stonhill

Mike Mora

Phil Clearwater

Jonathon Fletcher

Mike Richardson

Garry Moore

Graham Condon

Bob Todd