

Council will continue to be a strategic partner in working with all communities to support and strengthen them. The delivery of its work being guided by the following principles:

Capacity building

Council will work to build capacity in each community, recognising that fundamental to strengthening communities is getting the community to identify and respond to its own goals. Council has reinforced its commitment to work with community organisations to enhance their long-term capacity to implement projects, programmes and services to improve community well-being.

Diversity

Council welcomes diversity in its community, whether it be identities, ethnicities, interests or abilities, and the richness diversity contributes to our community.

Participation

Council supports and encourages participation by all individuals and groups in community life and local decision-making, and will work to remove any barriers which may prevent full community participation.

Social justice

Council recognises it has a role in supporting and strengthening communities by providing opportunities for all people to have fair and equitable access to services and resources. Council also respects the rights of all individuals and their communities, acknowledging that addressing disadvantage benefits the wider community.

Valuing the community and voluntary sector

Council honours and respects the significant contribution community and voluntary organisations and Maori and iwi groups make to enhancing the lives and well-being of those who live in our city. Council will continue to support this sector to develop effective and collaborative responses to the communities' issues.

Partnership

Council will form partnerships with community and voluntary organisations, government agencies, Maori, iwi and other key stakeholders to enhance the community's well-being.

Treaty of Waitangi

Council recognises and respects its responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi – as in the Local Government Act 2002 – and is committed to working with local iwi and hapu, and wider Maori community.

Sustainability

Council will give preference to activities that enhance or sustain communities' benefits beyond Council involvement, and look to support those activities which contribute to its wider environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes.

Effectiveness

Council's resources will be focussed on areas which provide the greatest benefit to the community and achieve the vision and goals of the Strengthening Communities Strategy:

- Take an evidence-based approach.
- Collaborate with others.
- Support action to reduce or prevent future areas of need.
- Ensure the primary benefit of all initiatives is community not organisation based.
- Establish appropriate accountability and evaluation processes.

Managing Risk

Council will manage risks without sacrificing the ability to find innovative solutions to communities' issues.

VISION

Council acts as a strategic partner to develop communities, based on a sound knowledge of communities' trends and issues, and strong productive relationships with community and voluntary organisations, Maori, iwi, and other key stakeholders.

Council support helps to sustain a flourishing community and voluntary sector and rich informal networks. It also enables effective wider community participation in local decision-making.

Council support builds resilient, resourceful and ultimately self-sustainable communities to which all residents feel they belong.

Strengthening Communities Strategy



Building strong communities

The Strengthening Communities Strategy signals a new goal-focused framework to guide Christchurch City Council's work with community organisations to help build strong communities.

Through the Strategy, Council will look to identify areas of priority within the community and focus its resources in these areas. This will ensure the work is outcome-oriented and Council's resources are targeted to deliver real benefits for the community.

The Strategy will seek to empower communities to build capacity through the provision of services, community development and community advocacy.

With the passing of the Local Government Act 2002, local authorities are expected to promote the social and cultural, as well as environmental and economic well-being of their communities.

Under the Strengthening Communities Strategy, Council will place a greater emphasis on promoting collaboration and working in partnership to address issues of importance to the community.

Council will take a whole-of-organisation approach to the contribution it can make to strengthening communities, taking a lead collaboration role on some issues. At other times encouraging and assisting groups to collaborate at both a city-wide and local level.

Ensuring fair and equitable access to services and resources will also be a priority.

Council will put more effort into researching, monitoring, evaluation and reporting back to Council, community boards and the community. Through a more evidence-based approach to all aspects of its work, Council will build a better shared understanding of community issues and commit to addressing these.

Strong communities are recognised by Council as giving people a sense of belonging that encourages them to take part in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the city. The strength of a community depends on the extent to which all its members are able to participate and contribute.

Strong communities are renowned for having higher democratic participation, are cleaner and safer, have better educational achievement, higher economic growth, lower mortality rates, a healthier environment, and are more attractive places for people to live, visit and invest in.

Christchurch's key challenges in building stronger communities are:

- An ageing population.
- Increased cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Differing levels of disadvantage between population groups.
- The complexity of factors which contribute to social exclusion, such as poverty, poor health, mobility problems, lack of education and employment opportunities, and discrimination.
- The capacity of voluntary and community groups, Maori and iwi.
- Decreased civic engagement.



1. Understanding and documenting communities' trends, issues and imperatives

For Council to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Christchurch's various communities, it needs to understand ongoing and emerging issues. It also needs to know what community and voluntary organisations, government agencies, Maori, iwi and other stakeholders are doing to respond to issues. This information will inform Council's own planning, decision-making, monitoring and review processes.

Council plans to:

- Collate evaluation, funding and other research information.
- Analyse research information.
- Disseminate research information throughout the Council and wider community.
- Track and act on research recommendations inside and outside Council.

2. Promoting collaboration among key stakeholders, including government agencies, Maori, iwi and community and voluntary organisations to identify and address community issues

Many of the issues that have a significant impact on the well-being of our communities are complex and persistent and require a co-ordinated response from a variety of organisations.

Council plans to:

- Work with key stakeholders from government, Maori, iwi and community and voluntary sectors to identify specific collaborative areas of focus for a defined period. These will be areas where there will be the potential to make significant, measurable progress through collaboration. Council will focus its resources in one to three areas and commit to taking the lead in these areas for an agreed time of three years.

Council will select areas of focus which closely align with the key challenges to building strong communities as identified in the LTCCP, which make a contribution to achieving the Strategy's vision, have a city-wide significance, measurable outcomes, have commitment from Council and other key stakeholders and ongoing future benefits to residents.

- Advocate to central government on behalf of its communities – Council being well-placed to be a strong advocate on behalf of the city's diverse communities, especially those who are less able to make their views heard because of a lack of resources, skills or barriers.
- Establish key relationship funding agreements with community and voluntary sector organisations that make a major contribution to achieving the vision and goals of the Strategy at a city-wide or local level.

3. Enhancing engagement and participation in local decision-making

Effective engagement is crucial to strong, connected communities. It helps build shared understanding and trust within communities, increase confidence in decision-making processes and leads to better decisions.

Council plans to:

- Employ a range of innovative techniques to increase levels of public participation in Council decision-making.
- Build shared trust and understanding with and within communities.
- Evaluate existing Council consultation policy and procedures.
- Ensure Council policies on consultation with Maori are effective.
- Ensure that Council submissions, seminars and meetings are open, accessible and community orientated.
- Ensure accountability around community engagement processes.
- Raise awareness of the importance of community engagement and participation in decision-making.

4. Helping build and sustain a sense of local community

Christchurch people value a sense of local community connectedness. This provides them with a positive sense of identity and belonging and support in times of stress. The numbers who feel a sense of community with others in their local neighbourhood has been increasing during the last five years. Key to achieving this goal is local knowledge and building relationships between community boards and community organisations.

Council plans to:

- Support capacity building of local community organisations.
- Respond flexibly to local trends and issues.
- Promote and provide opportunities for communities to participate in Council decision-making processes at both city-wide and local levels.
- Fund local community organisations and projects that align to Council's strategic directions and relevant Council strategies.
- Provide support and advice to local community groups to help them to become more effective with a focus on encouraging groups to work together collaboratively.
- Support community neighbourhood activities that build a sense of connectedness.

5. Ensuring that communities have access to community facilities that meet their needs

Within Christchurch there are many providers of community facilities and Council proposes to work more collaboratively with these providers to ensure all communities have access to facilities.

Opportunities will be provided for communities to be involved in the use and management of Council facilities in order to enhance community connectedness.

It is envisaged, Council's ownership of community facilities will be focussed on more modern multi-purpose facilities that serve suburban needs. This will be achieved through the development of a network of suburban facilities evenly distributed across the city. In some circumstances the Council will support provision of facilities at the neighbourhood scale, particularly where they meet significant social needs.

Council plans to:

- Ensure Council community facilities are distributed evenly across the city.
- Enhance community connectedness by providing opportunities for community involvement in the use and management of Council community facilities.
- Ensure the design and location of community facilities maximises accessibility, including disabled access and proximity to public transport.
- Ensure fees and charges are set at a level to encourage community use.
- Ensure the design of new facilities enhances sustainability through good urban design and flexibility which accommodate a mix of uses and activities.
- Ensure Council facilities are managed effectively and efficiently.

6. Increasing participation in community recreation and sport programmes and events

Supporting community recreation and sport programmes and events will continue to be one of the ways that Council contributes to strengthening communities in Christchurch. Through recreation and sport, people experience a sense of belonging and improve their links with others.

Council plans to:

- Promote the value of integrating recreation and sport into everyday life.
- Facilitate or deliver accessible and meaningful recreation and sport opportunities for everyone.
- Provide advice and resources to internal and external stakeholders.
- Facilitate or deliver community recreation and sport leadership training and education.
- Conduct and respond to research and evaluation.

7. Enhancing the safety of communities and neighbourhoods

This goal supports Council's commitment to the Safer Christchurch Strategy which aims to make Christchurch the safest city in New Zealand.

Inclusion of this goal within this Strategy confirms that enhancing communities and neighbourhood safety will continue to be a major focus for Council's strengthening communities.

Council plans to:

- Take a lead role in implementing the Safer Christchurch Strategy.
- Undertake a stock take of, and evaluate, current work that links in and supports the Safer Christchurch Strategy.
- Build and maintain relationships with funding agencies.

8. Improving basic life skills so that all residents can participate fully in society

Council recognises that improving the skills and knowledge of Christchurch people is critical to both economic growth and creating a strong, inclusive society. Essential life skills help provide a more equitable foundation to society.

The Council aims to complement the government's provision of education by improving basic life skills which enable residents of all ages to participate in their community. These include budgeting, ability to use information and communications technology, parenting skills, and communication and conflict resolution.

Council plans to:

- Identify essential life skills with relevant government agencies, community and voluntary organisations.
- Communicate effectively what Council will and will not support.
- Provide support and advice to community groups with a proven focus on life skills programmes and early intervention initiatives.
- Work collaboratively with other funders and agencies to ensure sustainability of programmes.
- Advocate to central government where gaps exist in services that should be provided at a central government level.

