

Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy

Report To: Strategic Partners Forum
Subject: Strategic Partners Forum Arrangements
Report Authors: Bill Wasley, UDS Independent Chair
Report Date: 9 February 2009
Reference to UDS: Governance and Implementation (Appendix V)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report discusses issues arising from the current structure of the UDS Strategic Partners Forum (SPF) and puts forward a reform proposal for discussion and input.

2. BACKGROUND

Section 6.28.4.7 of the Strategy and Action Plan (p. 126) calls on the UDS Implementation Committee to establish a Strategic Partner Forum “for ongoing input into implementation.” As such the SPF was established in 2007 and comprises a wide ranging membership from community stakeholder groups and government agencies. As implementation has progressed the makeup and utility of the existing SPF has been increasingly felt by some members and to not be as effective as it could.

It would be fair to say that no parties have found the current arrangement to be satisfactory, with significant levels of frustration arising on a number of fronts. Of particular frustration has been clarity regarding role and information access. For example, at what stage during the policy development or implementation process can or should particular groups be included in the process? How much ability to influence and change direction do groups expect, actually have, or should be encouraged to have?

This report discusses a way forward for continuing engagement with strategic partners in a revised forum structure in order to enhance both engagement and input into implementation, as envisaged by the strategy.

3. Implementation Agency Engagement

The Strategy Partners are not able to achieve the vision of the UDS in isolation. It is particularly necessary that the Partners engage with government agencies or groups which are responsible for local public service provision or planning in the sub-region.

By their very nature they have a significant impact on the future shape of Greater Christchurch.

These agencies, such as Canterbury District Health Board, NZ Police, the Fire Service, and various Ministries, are essential to the success of the UDS and local authorities need to coordinate a great deal of planning and thinking about strategic problems with them on an ongoing basis. Only limited engagement and coordination has been achieved through the SPF so far. Much has been occurring outside the SPF through existing fora at the TA level, or through newer, largely ad hoc groups.

It is therefore proposed that an Implementation Forum be established to encourage and enable engagement across the UDS Partnership with these agencies. As a result, membership of the SPF by government agencies would come to an end.

4. Tangata Whenua Engagement

Since beginning implementation of the UDS, engagement with Tangata Whenua has been very infrequent at a 'Whole of UDS' level. Individual partners have maintained or enhanced existing arrangements and dialogues, but the UDS as a whole has failed to achieve satisfactory engagement.

In early 2008 inclusion, as SPF members, of the three most affected Runanga was considered. However the reality is that more focussed engagement is desirable and commensurate with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations placed on local government.

To this end it is proposed that a Runanga Forum be established to encourage and enable engagement across the UDS Partnership with the local Tangata Whenua, as and when needed by either party. This is a step which, while forming only a part of the process of increasing the ties between the UDS and local Maori, is important to take.

5. Community Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement remains an important priority for the UDS Partnership, and this should be reflected in an ongoing manner in the form of a renewed and updated Strategic Partners Forum. Having moved Runanga and Government Agency representation to separate fora, there remains an open question as to which groups and organisations are best suited for membership to a Community Stakeholder forum.

Certainly some groups are obvious: Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce, the development community, academic representation, the Civic Trust, the AA, the Road Transport Forum, and Sustainability Otautahi Christchurch are all important stakeholders with valuable views that need to be taken into account as implementation progresses.

Experience from Tauranga suggests that a smaller forum of organisations and groups works better for all parties than one whose membership is open and allowed to expand to all comers. This thought is worthy of discussion amongst current Forum members

6. Summary of Proposed Reform

In summary, the proposed change would split SPF into three (3) groups:

1. Community Stakeholder Forum
2. Implementation Agency Forum
3. Rununga Forum

This is so that engagement can be more focussed, information can be appropriately disseminated and shared, and so that engagement as a whole is better valued by all parties and input is considered to be more effective.

Note also that the resourcing implications of the proposed new engagement structure will have to be agreed through the normal UDS partnership process.

Discussion and input in respect of the paper is sought at the meeting.

7. RECOMMENDATION

1. That the report be discussed

Bill Wasley
Independent Chair