Christchurch City Council
Community Engagement Strategy

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Council commitment to engagement:
Community Outcomes for Christchurch[1]:

The public understands and has confidence in decision making

and:

People have a sense of connection to and participate in their community

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1. Purpose of this strategy

The Christchurch City Council undertakes extensive community engagement, reaching out through a broad, formal program to seek the views of the people it serves. In the 2012 calendar year the Council conducted more than 250 formal consultations that generated more than 3800 submissions from the community on Council plans and proposals. Despite this, the **Communications Audit[2]** in mid 2012 and the 2012 Quality of Life Survey[3] identified that the people of Christchurch feel they are not adequately consulted on Council decisions, or made aware of the rationale behind the decisions made.

The purpose of the strategy is to initiate a step-change in the Council's community engagement practices, with two goals, to:

- Increase the people of Christchurch's participation in meaningful, engaging dialogue with the Council on important decisions facing the community

- Increase the people of Christchurch's awareness of the Council's existing consultation and engagement processes

2. Principles

This strategy is guided by the following principles:

- The aim of engagement is to ensure elected representatives making the final decisions are well informed and fully aware of public and stakeholder opinion.

- At the outset we will establish a clear understanding of the expectations for each engagement activity.

- The extent and means of engagement will be tailored to each topic.

- We will engage and consult with stakeholders on topics where there is a realistic expectation of a project going ahead.

- We will be open and transparent in all our engagement practices.

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[1] Draft 2013 Community Outcomes for Christchurch - Council Plan
[2] 2012 Communications Audit Research Report: http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/CCC-Communications-Report.pdf
[3] 2012 Quality of Life Survey: http://qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/pdfs/2012/Quality_of_Life_2012_Christchurch.pdf

3. Context

For some time, the Council has been conscious of a need to improve the clarity, consistency and awareness of its efforts to engage with key stakeholders and the public on key decisions affecting the future of Christchurch.

The **Consultation Review commenced in early 2010**, defined five areas where the Council conducts formal, statutory consultation with the people of Christchurch:

• Special Consultative Procedures

• Resource Management Act

• Reserves Act

• Strategies, Policies and Plans

• Capital Programme

Unfortunately, the review was interrupted by the earthquakes and stopped short of outlining engagement activities against each area – on Capital Projects this is included in the new Christchurch City Three year Plan.

The **Christchurch City Council Communications Audit 2012**[4] identified the need for greater engagement with key stakeholders and the wider public as a priority for the Council.

4. Community engagement in a post-earthquake environment

Now more than ever before, the city is faced with momentous decisions that will set the direction for the future of the city and the lives of the people of Christchurch. This creates unprecedented pressure on the Council to engage with the public to gather their ideas, and win their support and trust. Compounding this pressure is an international social movement towards greater public participation[5], facilitated by the louder voice afforded to ordinary people through the digital revolution and social media.

5. Importance of engagement?

A community engagement strategy is increasingly recognised as an integral component of effective communications planning for any public agency. An effective community engagement strategy can improve an organisations' reputation, gain community support and buy-in on key issues, and highlight issues of importance.

Underpinning this view is a core value of the International Association of Public Participation, IAP2 which states: 'Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.'

Effective community engagement is important to community wellbeing for two reasons:

1. It builds trust through sustained relationships between organisations, stakeholders and communities.

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[4] 2012 Communications Audit Research Report: http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/CCC-Communications-Report.pdf
[5] International Association for Public Participation: http://www.iap2.org/

In establishing and maintaining relationships with communities, an effective engagement strategy helps to build shared understanding and trust within communities and increase confidence in an organisation's decision-making processes.

Sustaining relationships with communities also make it possible to identify and remove barriers to participation where they occur, clarify issues and opportunities, and identify the appropriate level of engagement required.

2. Community engagement helps an organisation respond to the dynamic and changing needs of communities.

The needs of communities will change over time, and from place to place, as the Christchurch earthquakes have demonstrated. The notion that 'one size does not fit all' is inherent to any effective engagement strategy, and reflects the need for relationships that help clarify specific community needs, issues and opportunities and how Council can respond effectively.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) provides a useful guide to the types of engagement that could be used. Refer Appendix C.

6. How do we currently engage?

The Council has six dedicated teams **directly responsible for community consultation and engagement:**

Staff that lead or contribute to the Council's **formal consultation programme** within:

- Public Affairs Group Consultation Team
- Capital Programme Group Consultation Team
- Strategy and Planning Group
- Property Consultancy Team
- Transport and Greenspace, and Asset and Network Planning

In addition, staff lead or contribute to a range of community engagement and development initiatives within:

- Community Services Group - Strengthening Communities, City Housing and Community Facilities; and Community and Safety Teams

Plus:
- Councillors and Mayor – 14 elected representatives who make decisions on behalf of the residents of the city
- Eight Community Boards – 40 Elected Members on Community Boards that represent the residents of eight Wards across Christchurch, with seven Community Board Advisers in support.
- Stakeholder deputations to Committees and the Community Boards
- The Earthquake Forum – information sharing public forum including CERA briefing

Plus:
- Customer Service staff who directly interact with customers at Service Centres and the Call Centre

- All council staff

7.   What other organisations also have engagement strategies?

With a number of areas of mutual interest, **The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority** (CERA) also has a **Community Engagement Strategy** which has a goal to: "enable you and your communities to participate in decision-making around the rebuilding and revitalisation of greater Christchurch."

On 16 January, 2013 CERA also released a draft **Canterbury Recovery Stakeholder Plan** to "provide a framework for the way CERA engages with stakeholders to lead, facilitate and partner to achieve recovery. Refer Appendix D.

8.   Who do we engage with?

More than 4000 organisations are listed in Council databases and engagement with these stakeholders is tailored according to their relevance to the topic. Refer Appendix B.

The Council does not currently collect demographic data to enable it to establish a profile of residents who engage in its formal consultation programme on, for example, the Annual Plan, District Plan Changes, and Bylaws. However anecdotally, it is observed that those currently engaging with the Council tend to be older, 50 plus, often retired, home owners – people who are "civic minded", and have motivation and the time to attend public meetings, and write submissions.

In contrast, the Council's **Share an Idea[6]** campaign, which collected some demographic information, attracted a more diverse demographic, engaging more broadly across the city's population base.

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[6] "Share an Idea" was carried out in 2011, to gather ideas to develop the Draft Central City Plan

Demographic Profile for "Share an Idea"
Under 25 – 10%
25-49 – 53%
50-64 – 28%
65 and over – 9%

The contrast between these two profiles highlights one of the important priorities of this engagement strategy, which is to broaden public participation in and awareness of decisions facing the community and the Council, reaching out particularly to younger residents of the city and key stakeholders.

9. What's best practice?

In addition to attracting a broader demographic, the success of the Council's **Share an Idea** campaign also demonstrated the benefits of a fresh approach to community engagement. This was a significant undertaking by the Council, and was a widely applauded initiative that enabled residents to be a part of the decision-making process for their city's future.

Share an Idea generated 106,000 ideas for the rebuild of the Central City, which now form the basis for city planning. This was far in excess of our traditional formal engagement numbers. Refer Appendix A.

A desktop search of other Council's websites reveals a number of other innovative ways Councils here and abroad are engaging with their communities, with use of online channels coming to the fore. Refer Appendix E.

The learnings from these successful engagement programmes inform this strategy.

10. Recommended strategy

It is recommended that the Council build on its formal engagement strategy by instigating a range of new engagement initiatives to increase the reach and diversity of those it engages with.

The focus to be on:

- **Employing a range of innovative techniques** to ensure residents feel they are listened to and informed on Council decisions; that people understand the reasons for Council decisions, and the Council hears a range of views.

- **Developing the means for engaging with people online** – discussion forums, interactive tools to create an online community that utilises the capability and growing relevance of this medium.

- **Reaching out to engage with new people** the Council doesn't touch through traditional, formal means – youth.

- **Engaging more closely with business leaders and key influencers** – people who influence community opinion, are approached for comment/endorsement or who may be critical.

- **Mobilising staff** as community "listening posts" and as advocates.

- **Raising awareness of the importance of community engagement** and the opportunities for participation in decision-making.

11. Target audiences

In addition to the people it presently engages with through its existing formal engagement program, it is recommended the Council place special emphasis on engagement with these audiences:

- Youth*
- Stakeholders – key influencers
- Business leaders – with an emphasis on particularly relevant sectors, including developers, construction, home builders and retail

*This strategy is informed by and consistent with the Council's Youth Policy and the Christchurch City Council Youth Strategy[7] that states:

> The Christchurch City Council is committed to developing, supporting and promoting initiatives which positively contribute to the safety and wellbeing of young people, their families and communities

And includes in its outcomes:

- The views of young people are sought and taken into account in the development of the Council's policies and activities

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[7] Christchurch City Council Youth Policy and Christchurch City Council Youth Strategy, December 1999:
http://www.ccc.govt.nz/thecouncil/policiesreportsstrategies/policies/groups/community/youthpolicyandstrategy.aspx
http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/youthStrategy-docs.pdf

12. Tactics recommended for consideration

To deliver on the recommended strategy, the table below suggests some new community engagement initiatives, complementary to work already underway, for consideration:

Activity	Outline	Ballpark cost
Face to face		
"Meet the Council" community forums	Host community forums as required for local residents to meet Councillors and senior Council staff in an informal setting on key challenges facing the city – for example: pool in the east, Central City Library, Youth Charter, Local Alcohol Policy.	Venue hire, promotion, supp. materials: $30,000
Key stakeholder meetings	Establish a regular schedule of key stakeholder meetings.	Catering costs: $5,000
Council's Conversation Café	Two options are proposed for engaging local communities by this method. 1. Trial hosting **informal forums in local cafes** an alternate venue to engage a different audience than those who attend Council's formal consultation drop-in sessions. 2. **Hire a venue/coffee cart** and take it to specific locations, events or an identified venue to offer another form of engagement for local communities with Council. These meetings to complement those already undertaken by the Strengthening Communities team.	Promotion, venue costs, materials: $10,000
Monthly Business Leader Meetings	Establish quarterly business leader forums for the Councillors and the Executive Team to regularly engage with the city's business community as a key relationship building priority in support of the rebuild programme. Partially underway with the Mayor's initiative: "Breakfast with Pictures" – Councillors to be invited. Executive Team to continue to provide regular briefings to members of the business community.	Catering costs: $5,000
Online		
Calendar of community opportunities, online	Establish a Calendar of the Council's engagement and consultation opportunities on the Council website, to raise awareness of upcoming opportunities to participate around Council activities and decision making.	Existing budget

Establish basic online engagement tools	Initiate new online engagement tools. This could include **moderated discussion forums** (e.g. Bang the Table) to allow less formal public feedback, engagement, and debate around chosen topics or initiatives. **Online surveys/polls** on particular issues or topics to gauge public sentiment and support. Investigate alternative forms of reporting back to the public, such as **digital 'animations'**, for example http://vimeo.com/49107391, to profile community engagement initiatives in a new way.	To be scoped as part of an upgrade of the Council website & content management system next year.
Community Board information online	Establish an online presence for Community Boards – a dedicated "page" they can update with their meeting timetables, issues, points of contact and decisions.	Part of website upgrade
Have Your Say Public Feedback Summaries	As part of a possible revamp of the **Have Your Say** site/pages, provide short engaging summaries of consultations to provide feedback to those who contributed, and the wider public, on the outcomes of completed consultations. This is currently not provided through Have Your Say and could be a demonstration project focused on informing the public how their involvement has an influence on Council's decision-making.	Existing budget
New audiences		
Youth engagement	Work with Council staff and youth forums such as the Otautahi Youth Council to identify opportunities, methods and issues that engage young people more compellingly in Council's decision making. Or seek to engage on youth-led proposals from organisations such as the White Elephant Trust. In addition, review options to engage with children such as the Council partnership on the CERA led initiative: (http://www.theamazingplace.co.nz/)	Existing budget
Reach out to Community Volunteers	Maintain contact with and identify potential areas of support for the significant volunteer initiatives that have emerged post earthquake and represent a defining characteristic of the City's recovery.	Existing budget
New suburban communities	Work with Community Boards in supporting new residential communities that are forming rapidly (e.g. Wigram Skies) to help identify local needs & support structures as these new areas are established. *Underway.*	Existing budget
Surveys		
"Hot issue" surveys	Establish a **Citizen Survey panel online** based on representative sampling that targets 'the silent majority of residents' defined as those who are not particularly interested in what Council does unless they are directly affected (est. 65% of population). (See www.publicvoice.co.nz). The aim would be to produce monthly surveys	Panel: to be costed Omnibus surveys:

	to scope a range of topics that can provide a benchmark resource of public opinion as an aid to Council decision-making. As recently launched by Wellington City Council[8].	$1500 - $2000 per question
	Include questions on "Hot topics" in **omnibus surveys** by external research companies.	$8,000 for five
Council "Mall Surveys" and Farmer's Markets	Establish teams of Council people who will go out to Malls, and conduct quick-fire Mall Surveys on hot issues. Establish a kiosk at Council events and on other community gatherings, such as, local farmer's markets to engage local residents and identify issues and opportunities they see for the City and their local area.	Mall surveys: existing budget Kiosk: $3,000
Tell Us What You Think - Cards and Drop Boxes	Produce a branded card that enables residents to tell us what they think or to share an idea. The cards would allow people to quickly write an idea of comment down and place it in a drop box at Council libraries and services centres, and other locations (such as shopping malls, suburban centres). An online version using the same branding could be developed as a novel alternative engagement through the Council's website.	Printing, distribution, drop boxes: $8,000
Staff		
Staff as advocates	Establish an intranet page for staff to raise public feedback they encounter about Council and provide FAQ responses to inform them of the basis for Council's decision making.	Existing budget
Build Stakeholder database	Amalgamate existing stakeholder databases to one, accurate up-to-date resource for use across the Council, for initiatives involving engagement.	Existing budget
Process enhancements		
Increase awareness of community engagement activities	Make more extensive use of Council's communications channels, stakeholder databases and community networks to promote new and upcoming opportunities for the community to participate and provide feedback on Council services and activities.	Existing budget
Establish demographics for submissions	Include a brief **demographic section in all Submission Forms**, to find out who the Council is reaching through formal submissions.	Existing budget
Establish "Engagement Steering Group""	Establish a cross Council staff "Engagement Steering Group" that brings together all the teams managing community engagement to build collaboration, capitalise on resources and synergies, develop cross group initiatives and ensure consistency of approach.	Existing budget

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[8] http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1303/S00168/online-citizens-panel-a-new-voice-for-wellingtonians.htm

13. Costs

The ballpark costs outlined are unbudgeted.

14. Measurement and evaluation

Each initiative would have targets for evaluation of their effectiveness in areas including:

- No of online visitors
- No of attendees at forums, events
- No of comments in discussion forums
- No of votes in online polls
- No of Likes on facebook
- No of stakeholders reached

Council staff will provide a report on the implementation of this strategy for review by the Community, Recreation and Culture Committee, six months after its approval by Council.

The CERA Wellbeing Survey[9] will provide an indication of the success of this strategy through ongoing six monthly measurement of the people of Christchurch's satisfaction with:

- opportunities to influence earthquake recovery decisions
- communications/information provided by the Council
- and confidence that Council decision making is in the best interests of greater Christchurch

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[9] http://cera.govt.nz/wellbeing-survey

Appendix A: Formal Consultations undertaken by the Council, January to December 2012

Consultations
Via Have Your Say: 69 consultations

Community Board Meetings
For all Wards: 139

Community Network / Liaison Meetings
Strengthening Communities: 67

Submissions
Suburban Centre Masterplan: submissions received: 527
Statutory Consultations, including 2707 for the 2012/13 Annual Plan: total
submissions received: 3307

Plus:

Facebook followers
More than 6,000 as at December 2012

Appendix B: Key Stakeholder List

The Council confers with more than 4000 different stakeholders throughout the city.
These include those in the following sectors:

Councillors and Community Board Members	Construction
MPs, elected members	Building
Tangata Whenua and Iwi organisations	Retail
Professional Services	Transport
Residents Groups and Associations	Farming
Trusts, Societies & Advocacy Groups	Employers
Youth organisations	Education
Seniors groups	Health
Business Associations	Arts & Entertainment
Real Estate	Sport and Recreation
Government and Local Government Agencies	Culturally & Linguistically Diverse groups
Religious groups	Media

Appendix C: IAP2 - Public Participation Spectrum

IAP2 Spectrum
of Public Participation

iap2
International Association
for Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	• Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberative polling	• Citizen advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decision

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Appendix D: CERA DRAFT Canterbury Recovery Stakeholder Plan

Canterbury Recovery
Stakeholder Plan - 16

Appendix E: Examples of best practice online engagement from other Councils

Rotorua Youth Council Initiative:
http://www.localgovernmentmag.co.nz/News/LatestNews/tabid/387/articleType/Articl
eView/articleId/3974/Parks-for-youth--by-youth.aspx

Bang the Table – community engagement for City Councils:
Budget Allocator:
http://pmhc.budgetallocator.com
http://talkvancouver.com/budget2012
http://northsydney.budgetallocator.com
http://marion.budgetallocator.com
http://burnsidebudget2012-13.budgetallocator.com

Community Planning:
http://makingmarion.com.au/communityplan
http://yoursaywarringah.com.au/budget2012
http://werelisteningmellville.com.au/communityplan
http://yourviewhq.holdfast.sa.gov.au/ourplacecommunityplan
http://yoursay.cairns.qld.gov.au/imaginetomorrow3
http://letstalkrichmond.ca/lets-talk-official-community-plan
http://yoursaymarrickville.com.au/

Porirua City Council engagement platform – Buzz It:
http://www.buzzit.co.nz/buzzit-products/

Porirua City Council proposal to introduce e-voting, halted by Prime Minister:
http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/regional/126902/pm-quashes-porirua-move-to-trial-e-
voting

Public Leaders Award for community engagement in the UK:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/2012/nov/20/genius-city-york-
community-engagement-winner

Council partnership on the CERA led initiative: The amazing place
http://www.theamazingplace.co.nz/