



City of Canterbury

City of Cultural Diversity

Memo

TO: Mayor and All Councillors

DATE: 15 October 2013

FILE NO: C-117-4

SUBJECT: Update on 2013 Rates and Services Review Engagement Program

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

Meeting 4

The fourth meeting of the Community Working Group was held on 9 October and like the second meeting was attended by only twelve people, despite several reminder emails and phone calls to all group members. We continue to do our best to encourage the highest level of participation in the group.

At this meeting the group discussed the future they wanted for the City of Canterbury, and the services needed to achieve this desired future, and then developed a list of key features of, or criteria for, a good solution to the challenge facing council. These features, listed in the box below, form the criteria to be used to assess options generated at Meeting 5.

A good solution is one that:

- Includes increased user pays as well as rate increases;
- Includes reductions to services as well as rate increases;
- Includes achieving efficiencies in council operations as well as rate increases;
- Maintains those services that most contribute to achieving the desired future;
- Ensures council can continue to meet its legislative obligations;
- Involves the community more through increased partnerships;
- Does not require council to spend more;
- Limits rate increases to just that required to meet the need;
- Is able to demonstrate value for money;
- Is equitable, ensuring that no specific group is disadvantaged;
- Can be measured to demonstrate efficiency;
- Is well publicised to and easily understood by the wider community.

Outputs from this meeting are attached for your information.

Representation

Gaps in the demographic profile of the group have been filled (representation from East Ward, and the 40-49 age group), but there is still a gap in renters. Ways to fill this gap without recruiting new members (as it is considered too late to do this, new members would not have the necessary background from attending meetings to date) were discussed by the group during the fourth meeting.

Several group members volunteered to seek views from people who are renters that they know. Specific questions for feedback have been distributed to Community Working Group members and are to be returned by the fifth meeting.

Demographic Profile

After review of the Demographic Profile, it suggested that an additional attribute of the profile be included – that of disability. At the fourth meeting group members were asked to answer the following question (anonymously):

“Do you have a disability, chronic medical condition, or mental conditions which impact on the quality of your daily life? (YES / NO)”

The responses have been included in an updated Demographic Profile which is also attached.

Recruitment

As mentioned in the August update recruitment of the Community Working Group was undertaken by an independent market research company IRIS research. They utilised random survey methodology to recruit 36 community members with an appropriate gender, age, and geographical distribution. Twenty four of these agreed to participate. Further to a councillor request the names and residential suburb of these people are provided as an attachment.

REVISED SCHEDULE

The date for the submission of applications for Special Rate Variations has now been set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). This date is 24 February 2014, which is one month earlier than originally anticipated. This means there is a need to complete the Rates and Services Review earlier than planned.

Important aspects of this revised schedule are discussed in more detail below.

Community Working Group

The Community Working Group is the representative group of Canterbury residents with which we are working to identify a preferred solution to the challenge facing council in relation to rates and services. Due to the earlier application submission date it has been necessary to bring forward the dates for the next two meetings of this group:

- Meeting 5 – **23 October** instead of 13 November
- Meeting 6 – **7 November** instead of 26 November

Adoption of IP&R documents

IPART requires the proposed rate increase to be specified in council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents, in particular the Community Strategic Plan, Council Delivery Program, and Long Term Financial Plan. These documents must be adopted prior to the submission of the application to IPART. IPART also requires evidence that the wider community is aware the proposed rate increase.

It is therefore proposed that IP&R documents that include the proposed rate increase, and other elements of the preferred solution, be adopted by council at the meeting on 28 November 2013 to provide sufficient time to generate community awareness.

Councillor Workshop

A councillor workshop is proposed to inform councillors of the preferred option, and the process by which it has been developed with the Community Working Group, prior to the meeting on 28 November 2013. A date for this workshop has tentatively been set for 13 November 2013.

It is proposed that Community Working Group members attend this workshop to present the preferred option to councillors, and be available to answer questions.

Extraordinary Council Meeting

Council will need to consider any feedback arising from the community engagement program to generate awareness of the preferred solution, resolve that an application to IPART should be made, and confirm or amend the nature of that application. The due date for applications, being the 24 February 2014, is before the first meeting of council in 2014 (likely to be 27 February 2014).

As a result an Extraordinary Meeting of Council is proposed to occur on the night of the first meeting of the Standing Committees in 2014 (likely to be 13 February 2014).

Key Milestones

The table below outlines the key milestones in the revised schedule to meet the IPART application date.

Milestone	Due Date
Community Working Group recommends preferred option	7 Nov 13
Councillor Workshop to present and discuss preferred option	13 Nov 13
Revision of IPR documents to include preferred option	14 to 19 Nov 13
Adoption of IPR documents to include preferred option	28 Nov 13
Continue community engagement program to generate awareness of preferred option	28 Nov 13 to 31 Jan 14
Advise IPART of intention to apply	13 Dec 13
Extraordinary Council Meeting to resolve to apply	13 Feb 14
Submit application	24 Feb 14

BROAD ENGAGEMENT

We continue to invite contributions to the Rates and Services Review via the website:
<http://haveyoursaycanterbury.com.au>

Posters, flyers and feedback forms have also been distributed to Libraries, Childrens Centres, Senior Citizens Centres and to our community networks. Language assistance is also available via our Customer Service Centre for those who need it.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would continue to promote these means of participation in the review to people living and working in the City.

We are also continuing with other broader community engagement activities, including using our newsletter, council column, social media such as facebook and twitter feed, council app, and posters and flyers distributed across the city to promote this website and invite people to participate in the review. Advertisements have also been placed in local English and other language newspapers.

We are planning face to face engagement including visits and presentations to community groups eg. parents and friends, chambers of commerce, and others that are conducted in council community centres; and a series of community forums around Canterbury in November / December.

PROJECT STEERING GROUP

The purpose of the Project Steering Group (PSG) is to provide governance – guiding all aspects of the collaborative decision making process. The group was selected through a call for expressions of interest distributed to a range of community organisations. The members of the PSG are:

- Cr Brian Robson, Mayor, City of Canterbury
- Mr Jim Montague, General Manager, City of Canterbury
- Mr Andy Sammut, Director Corporate Services, City of Canterbury
- Mr Nizar Hoblos, CEO, Lebanese Muslim Association
- Ms Liz Messih, CEO, Canterbury City Community Centre
- Ms Jacquie Cheetham, Manager, Canterbury Earlwood Caring Association Ltd
- Ms Pauline Gallagher, Director, Riverwood Community Centre
- Ms Michelle Baldock, Board Member, Croydon Park Business Chamber
- Mr Michael Fung, Board Member, Chinese Australia Society Services

The PSG is scheduled to meet four times over the duration of the project. Two meetings have already been held, on 12 June and 18 September. The PSG has provided useful insight and advice on the formation and operation of the Community Working Group, and the activities and approach needed to ensure the broader engagement is effective.

Further Project Steering Group meetings have been scheduled for 16 October and 11 December 2013.

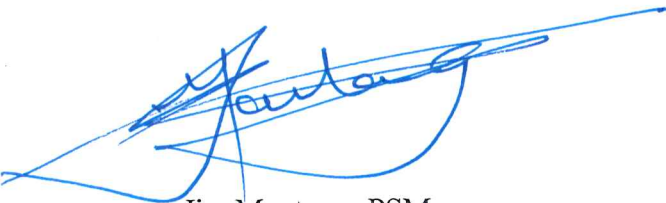
COUNCILLOR CONTRIBUTION

Your contribution to the review is also important, and I would ask you to give consideration to the following questions:

- What would give you confidence that the Community Working Group is functioning well?
- What information do you want from the engagement process to assist you in deciding what changes should be made to the range and level of services, and to support an application to IPART for a Special Rate Variation?

Please provide your comments to me in writing or via email on these issues for consideration within the consultation program.

If you require further details about the program, please let me know.



Jim Montague PSM
GENERAL MANAGER

Attachments

Outputs from Community Working Group Meeting 4

Updated Demographic Profile

Community Working Group Members