
Briefing - Council NOTES

Date: Tuesday 3 October 2023
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Council Chambers and Mayor's Lounge, Civic Offices,
53 Hereford Street, Christchurch

2. LTP 2024-34, Joint development briefing

Council Briefing, Seminar or Workshop Recommendation

Cllr Melanie Coker, Cllr Tyrone Fields, Cllr Sara Templeton, Cllr Mark Peters, Cllr Victoria Henstock, Cllr Yani Johanson, Cllr Kelly Barber, Cllr Aaron Keown; Cllr Tyla Harrison Hunt; Cllr Sam MacDonald (9.37)

Online: Cllr Andrei Moore, Cllr Tim Scandrett

Chair: Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter

Principal advisor: CE Dawn Baxendale

Apologies: Cllr James Gough for lateness, Mayor Phil Mauger, Cllr Celeste Donovan

Building Regulation

Presenter: Steffan Thomas, Head of Building Consenting (acting)

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What this activity delivers

So just a quick summary of what this activity delivers, the activity delivers full range of regulatory requirements under the Building Act, acting both the building consenting authority and the territorial authority. Summary of the tasks included the activity plan is:

- Issuing a building consents
- carrying out building inspections
- issuing of code compliance certificates,
- building warrant of fitnesses
- exemptions & certificates of acceptance,
- certificates of public use

- inspection of residential swimming pools
- maintain the register of earthquake prone buildings.
- Licencing and inspection of amusement devices.
- Emergency building assessments and building claims management.

Included in the activity plan is number of interesting statistics and just sort of some year on year progress as well against those. I won't run through all those... There's a few pages.

Why we deliver this activity

So, I guess why are these activities delivered. Under the Building Act 2004 territorial authorities are required to perform the functions of the building consent authority. And that means that the building consent authority is responsible for checking in accordance with the requirements of the act each type of building consent to ensure that the building consent complies with the building code and that the building works being carried out in accordance with that building consent. And the activity aligns with Council's community outcomes by ensuring that new and older buildings meet the requirements of the building code, are resilient and have attributes that contribute appropriately to the well-being, health and physical independence of the people use them, and this aligns with the collaborative, confident city.

Providing a free eco design advice service to promote the development of healthier buildings, improve energy, water and material use, minimise waste and reduce the environmental impacts of buildings, and it's aligning to a green liveable city.

Effective building regulation services ensures developers feel part of a modern and robust liveable city, which promotes strong communities and prosperous economy, allowing citizens and developers to have faith to invest in Christchurch, aligning to a thriving, prosperous city.

Strategic priorities

Also this section 2.2 outlines how the activity supports progress on the strategic priorities as well.

Climate resilience goals

So around climate resilient goals. I guess one of the big factors for us is around we have a number of inspection vehicles that are always out and about. So we're going through a phased approach to replacing those with electric vehicles when they come to end of life. And we're also using remote inspection technology as well and we're sort of working with MB at the moment on how that could be further developed as well. We also feeding into the MB climate change amendments as well, so there's some elements of basically around coming to make it mandatory for new and existing public, industrial and large scale buildings to hold energy performance ratings and requiring those having building or demolition work to have a waste minimization project plan.

The high impact issues and mitigations planned

So the high impact issues for us, for building, consenting or building regulation as climate change and adaption and regulation and reform. So obviously there's a bit of central government reform, but it has the potential to impact on the way we operate in the short and long term. And it may determine a new operating model and standards that service are required to implement or be impacted by. So we're working closely with central government where we can to understand and input into the reforms. And also so that we're aware of what they are and when they're happening, so we can up skill staff and put those into our processes.

Our levels of service

Just around levels of service, some proposed changes but generally, we're retaining the existing levels of service because there are regulated KPI's or levels of service and the only changes have been proposed are reallocation of tasks across activities. Level service 9.1.15.2 is provide case management that's been proposed to move into the City Growth and Property activity. That's with the tasks. Similarly, the levels of service around processing project information, memoranda, applications, and also the level of service around swimming pool, residential swimming pools and it's around preventing drowning or an injury to young children, they're both moving into building regulation because we look after those tasks.

Capital Expenditure and key capital projects & Financial resources required

In terms of Opex and Capex, this this little service doesn't have the activity doesn't have Capex and then the Opex is just generally proposed to remain the same, but inflation adjusted.

And then just a quick coverage of some of the challenges outlined in the plan for us.

The main ones around peak workload generated by population growth and movement technology changes, which is probably more an opportunity rather than a challenge, but there's a lot of change as with a lot of activities and ongoing reform round 3 waters reform, RMA and future of local government. And I guess the risks outlined to the plan include loss of accreditation, litigation, reputation. I guess trying to find technical staff resources where we need to. And also national government, the Central Government recommendations, but also I guess with the elections coming up, what the opposition parties are proposing, with some changes to the way building continue, could be done if they're successful. So that's really all I was going. To cover off.

Questions

Cllr Yani Johanson: Just looking at the levels of service. Obviously the building consent you know the 61 and 19 working days is pretty bleak. So the, yeah, the agenda, I really like the trend so it's really good to be able to see where we're going. But I guess what I don't get a sense of, is how do we get back on top of that satisfaction?

And the other thing that I was quite interested in, and I know there's been some work done, was around the audit building warrant of fitness and just, you know, in 2019 we're doing 405 and 2023 we're doing 198. And I know we've had a kind of a bit of a discussion about what happened up in Wellington with the fire in that in that building. I was just wondering if you could just talk through you know what we're going to be doing differently in this LTP to get on top of the building consent time frames and satisfaction and also to ensure that we're doing good audits of the buildings that are that are at risk.

And I have one other question on the eco design, which was just around, I think it's only for new builds, but have we thought about what would happen if we extended that to people that are doing redevelopment or significant repairs or?

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: So that's four questions. Three, are you able to manage those? And if you can't answer the Eco one, we can do it with a memo.

Response: I'll start with the building warrant fitness. Yeah. So we've made a number of changes to - I guess our internal procedures for that and we've got a few new systems in place which is increase the efficiency of our operations and I guess the way to see the success of that is really talk about some of the stats. So if you look at the previous years leading up to the current one, we'll do about 190 or just under 200 audits a year. We're currently have in the three months this year have done that many already and we're on track to do potentially over 750 this year based on the changes we've made. In addition to that, we've also got three additional staff coming on board as well. So once they're trained up, we're thinking we're going to get right up to pretty much close to, I guess that a 1/3 of the buildings, so therefore we do them every three years. We're also targeting the buildings a little bit differently. So all the buildings are sort of categorise them to different risk factors. So these high risk, medium risk and low risk. Looking to do the high risk buildings, audit them, so there's about 700 of them, so we try and do those every year.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Right. You're getting into really detail. We don't need that detail. The three more. Is this a self funding operation, so three more staff will be funded...?

Response: It's part, its included into the LTP.

Response: So your first question. So again, we've put a few processes in place that is bringing down some of those response times. So we've got, we're using staff bit of overtime for staff, we've changed some processes and all that so the response times are trending down at the moment. So we'll continue with that too through the next LTP to ensure that those times are met.

Cllr Yani Johanson: The eco design, like given that we've declined, but I mean again happy to get the answer later. But just what we would need if we wanted to extend that, what that would look like?

CE Dawn Baxendale: So I suggest that Stefan takes it off offline and gives a written response back.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: It'll come back to all of us.

Question

Cllr Tim Scandrett: Just with regards to looking at building sites or development sites and sediment run off, I just wonder because it seems it's still being run by ECan, but I thought we were picking that one up and I was just wondering where that sits?

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Is that the compliance?

Cllr Tim Scandrett: Yeah

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Yeah, we do the inspection, don't we, for ECan or something like that? So we found efficiency there by having just one inspector when we go out to inspect the site, we include the sedimentation, yeah.

Response: Yes we do

Cllr Tyrone Fields: Thank you. So just on that, like it's encouraging to hear that the response times are reducing. So what's the like the natural, well not natural, but what's the backlog for building consents look like and what would it take to get the backlog down to practically zero?

Response: I guess the backlog was generated by - the most current one was by the changes to the H1 regulation back in March or April, which resulted in a number of a much larger number of applications coming in on, on over a weekend. So we are.... what are we looking at currently... Yeah, I'm not sure of the top of my head.

Cllr Tyrone Fields: I mean just in terms of like days of throughput, like what would the backlog normally look like, like how many, how what would be either be the lead time between receipt of an application to when it actually kicked off, you know, to be processed?

...

Response: So residential is back under 20 working days.

Cllr Tyrone Fields: That's the statutory requirement.

Response: We're picking up just below 20 days.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Excellent. And you're always working on continual improvement?

Response: Yeah.

Question

Regulatory Compliance and Licensing

Presenter: Tracey Weston Head of Regulatory Compliance

I'm going to be presenting 2 activity plans today. So you're going to get used to seeing my smiley face and we'll start with the Regulatory Compliance and Licencing activity plan, if that's OK. So this activity plan is quite diverse. A lot of my business is linked through the legislation but not linked together. So it's quite an interesting area to be in because everyday it changes.

This activity plan covers off:

- Animal management services,
- Compliance investigations,
- Alcohol licencing,
- Environmental health,
- Food safety, and
- Regulatory compliance public advice.

A snapshot of provision and use for 2023-24

I've given a bit of a snapshot of the provision, that of service that we provided the community last year. So we had 2388 Barking dogs 580 biting dogs complaints, 572 rushing. So as you can see, I mean I'm not gonna read every table for you cause I'm sure you've had a look earlier. But they're generally consistent year on year. We did an analysis of last year and this year and they've been, there's no major spikes or anything, it's just sort of, just been consistent. we now have 40,000 registered dogs in Christchurch. Now that is an increase and we've seen more and more dog owners, pretty much most households have a dog, if not multiple dogs. So.

....

And then the next slide is talking about other activities and the volume of those activities that we deliver.... I've stolen Stephan's interesting statistics. And I just wanted to show you some trends for the last three years.

Barking dogs has increased and when speaking to the my team, I said, well, why do you think that is? And it was a lot at the end of COVID and the dogs got used to their owners being at home and then when they went back to work, they got sad, so that's why they were making a lot of noise and that's sort of that's what we think the trend is. But it's quite clear it's linked to when the lockdowns ceased.

Also dog bitings, we can't 100% say why that is, but we we've got 5% more dogs in the city now. So it's just the population of dogs, I think and there's community awareness of it all. And they're ready to communicate with us when they're seeing things that they're not. With out in the community, so we can't govern how many complaints we receive; we just respond.

The building act: unconsented work, so that has had a decline. Over the last three years and dangerous buildings have remained fairly, fairly steady, with a small dip in 21/22, and unconsented RMA works has also had a slight decline as well. So that's good, good trends. But overall the business remains fairly steady.

Community outcomes: How this activity contributes:

So why we deliver our services? Well, this activity plays a key role in keeping the Community safe and healthy by carrying out compliance cheques to ensure that the legislation that we administer as a Council is actually adhered to. We respond to potential breaches of incidents and with respect to dog control and all the other services that I mentioned earlier. And we, we believe, I believe - this activity strongly aligns with the Council's strategic priority of building trust and confidence in our community through meaningful partnerships with the residents and other key stakeholders.

... I just wanted to touch on our compliance strategy. So you would have seen in the documentation that was shared with you, the Council's compliance strategy was also within that bundle. So that strategy is explaining that we operate the VADE model within our model of compliance. And that's the Voluntary, Assisted, Directed and Enforced model. So voluntary is where people are most likely to comply and they're breaching the legislation, but they're not actually sure, they're not aware that they're breaching it. Assisted as when people don't necessarily know the breaking the rules and they want to comply. And direct it and enforces when we start to use our enforcement tools that are available to us and I just wanted to share with you that, our enforcement tools based on the

legislation that is provided to us. So it comes at a high level. We can do warnings, infringements, notice to fix, notices, direction for food safety, abatement notices and at the top end of enforcement is prosecution.

But for our bylaws we don't have the ability to infringe. We basically engage with them to comply by removing the matter that is causing the breach. We have to go to Court. So our bylaws enforcement tool is something that I don't know everyone was aware of that we don't actually have a lot of levers to pull there.

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Climate resilience Goals

So climate resilience in relation to this goal, we are looking at doing an assessment of where our dog shelter is placed just with flood level rise. So it's would only come through a project and come as a form of a recommendation at this point to see what options we have available. And we're also looking at whether we can transition some of our fleet over to electric as well because we have 11 dog control vehicles...

The high impact issues and mitigations planned

The risks. We haven't got really any high impact risks. We just move with the ebb and flow of workload and prioritise on risk.

Our levels of service

And our levels of service: not looking to do a lot of change because my levels of service are very legislated. Probably the changes that we're looking at, at this point is just moving some activities over into the building control space as I've had a recent organisational structure shift and some of those activities have gone over to building and planning area.

How assets will be managed to deliver the services

We have assets. I have a very, very small Capex and that's related to the shelter maintenance and collaboration of compliance equipment.

Financial resources needed

Financial we're still working with our team on those.

Open for questions

Cllr Mark Peters: Thank you. Think I noted you had noise control as one of your little areas you look after. Do we have much in the way of smart technologies helping us in that space?

Response: No

Cllr Mark Peters: Is it something that might be useful, to sort of develop?

Response: We've been talking to our contractors in relation to that, but it's not a tool we can utilise when it comes to enforcement, it's just takes some subjectivity away from it, yeah.

Cllr Andrei Moore: Are you able to please say when the dog control bylaws being reviewed?

Response: 2024 ohh 2026 sorry.

Cllr Andrei Moore: So it's been pushed back three years?

Response: No, it's reviewed every 10 years.

Cllr Andrei Moore: Our review was due to take place this year next?

Response: No. Next year we commence the consultation. We commenced consultation next year and as I mentioned, we have 40,000 dog owners we need to consult with. So that's quite an extensive period of time that we have to speak to the community about what we're proposing and hear what their views are.

Cllr Andrei Moore: So OK, so conversation's due to take place next year?

Response: Yeah

Cllr Andrei Moore: We've got a number of new wetland areas being treated basically as off leash dog areas, which is causing some havoc in the areas that you'd assume are kind of likely to be either no go areas for dogs down the track anyway, or leash areas. Do you have any comments about sort of how that can be handled between now and then? Because obviously there's a lot of areas that have been built since the dog control bylaw was last reviewed.

Response: So when we are aware of a problem area, the team do a focus patrol in that area and they will when the resources are in the general vicinity, they will make a point of doing a patrol and educate anybody who is in the area at the time. But until the bylaw is reviewed and we look to move to those, some of those wetlands as being prohibited, we just do an educational approach.

Cllr Aaron Keown: Not so much dogs, but cats. I noticed that a number of Councils in New Zealand have compulsory microchipping and desexing cats over a particular age as like 12 weeks, just the youngest one. When do we consider that?

Response: I believe that it is been looked at central government level at the moment.

Cllr Aaron Keown: And do we know where that's at? No. Could we get an update? Because I think at some point we should consider that as a Council. But you know, bird life and everything else.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Yeah can we please get an update on that, particularly because we're doing all the urban tree planting and trying to attract the birds back into the metropolitan area, yeah.

CE Dawn Baxendale: Can I suggest that you do that after you know what the outcome is of the general election.

Response: Yeah, that's fine. I'll talk to our policy team and once we know the outcome of the election we'll let you know.

Action 2.1

Cllr Yani Johanson: I thought the, is national going to repeal the RMA reforms?

Response: I don't know. There has been talk about that.

Cllr Yani Johanson: I guess I'm just concerned about us...I thought national might repeal the RMA reform, but I was just concerned about us doing stuff now ahead of the election because we don't know who's going to be in power and some of the changes might happen. So just to raise that as a flag.

.... I also was interested in the dog...

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: I think our wheels don't turn that fast. I mean, there's an election in two weeks now. So I think...

Cllr Yani Johanson: We're doing things now for the changes to the RMA, but if a new government comes in and reverses the changes, then we've wasted all that time and energy.

Response: We're not active in that space at the moment.

Cllr Yani Johanson: The dog control stuff. So is there any sort of projects around upgrading dog parks? I see like on page 64, you've got a number of kind of key projects and appreciate that won't be everything, but I was just wondering, do the dog parks come under this schedule?

Response: We work closely with the parks team on the dog parks, So if they're upgrading any agility equipment or signage or fencing, we generally support them by providing a proportion of funding. But how they have done and what schedule that occurs on is down to the parks team.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: So maybe if you flick the questions through about that Yani and I think you're always looking for, is there any pro programme for additional, is there any planning for additional dogs parks?

Cllr Yani Johanson: Alright. OK. Yeah, I'll put a question through.

Question

Cllr Yani Johanson: And then I was quite interested, I went to that Avon Ihutai history Trust sort of AGM. And they were reporting back on the results of the clean up and they've been asked to measure

dog doos and so they had quite a high number that they were finding. And I'm also aware that we've taken a lot of rubbish bins away from around the rivers as well. So I just wonder is there any work going on around this sort of strategic response to that issue?

Response: To fouling in the? So what we do again is once we know about it, we'll do some patrols and some education in other parts of the city. We have actually done a mailbox drop in the past just outlining people's responsibilities and making them more aware of taking what their doggies do away with them.

Cllr Yani Johanson: But putting back like those green dog bins that we used to have or that we do have in some areas that would be through the parks? OK. And just a final question from me is in regards to the VADE model. Obviously there's a lot of frustration in some communities over our approach, and I think the point that Councillor Peters raised is one of the problems is that by the time people report the activity and then by the time someone can assess it, it's often the activity has stopped or it's intermittent. So I'm just wondering, like if we can get a project to look at the use, better use or increased use of technology to monitor particularly high risk sites that are generating a lot of complaints? That people are just getting really exasperated of having to complain.

Response: We do have stationary monitoring devices that we utilise in high risk areas or high volume complaint areas specifically relating to noise. So we do do that now.

Cllr Yani Johanson: Now can you measure vibration?

Response: No.

Cllr Yani Johanson: So are there things that we could look at to do cause that's probably one of the biggest complaints I'm getting at the moment.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Vibrations from what?

Cllr Yani Johanson: Do you wanna guess? From industrial activity. Adjacent to residential. So it's short, sharp, loud bangs that causes vibrations that are.

Response: We'd have to look at what legislation we'll be utilising to enforce that.

Cllr Yani Johanson: But just in terms of technology. I guess, yeah, it'll be good just to get sort of think about what's possible, because I'm also mindful of things like dust and odour, which are probably more ECan.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: But as Tracey said, you have to look at the legislation to see if there's anything about that in the 1st place. So maybe if you have a quick look and let us know, that would be helpful.

Question

Cllr Sara Templeton: Yeah, I was just gonna point out that it might be, there's probably some information around already on the cat stuff because I know there's a couple of elected members already been working with staff in the background on the potential for the cat microchipping and stuff.

Response: So I'm aware that our policy team have been having some discussions,

Land and Information and Property Services

Presenter: Tracey Weston Head of Regulatory Compliance

So the next activity plan is the Land and Property Information Services. So this activity delivers LIMs to potential property owners or investors in the community and property file requests of - that's the records the Council holds - in relation to specific sites. We produced nearly 9000 LIMs last year, 726 property files were digitised within five working days and 5942 electronic property files were provided in two working days.

So I haven't got a trend graph in this plan at this point, but I can talk to you about the number impact that we've had over the last three years. So as you can imagine, in 2021 we had like near 13,000 LIMs

requested and then 20/21/22 with COVID and house sales not going forward we saw a bit of a drop there which was 11,103 and then last year we saw a further subsequent drop down to 9000. So I think what that's displaying is the volatility of the property market at the moment, inflation, interest rates, people are just sitting rather than buying. And we saw a very similar trend with our property file requests as well. The two usually go hand in hand. So I just wanted to give you a bit of background there.

Why we deliver this activity

This service activity supports the thriving and prosperous city and it provides people with the ability to make informed decisions before they make any investments. And it supports the building trust and confidence in Council as our strategic priority. Not a lot of goals associated with the climate resilience aspect here other than we will support what the facilities teams are wanting to promote. There's no high impact issues. Our levels of service are statutory, so they'll just be looking to roll over. And we have no assets in this activity. We have no capital and that's pretty much it.

Open for questions:

Cllr Melanie Coker: I was just looking at the cost analysis and has some of it been funded by rates before and now, all of it's going to go to fees, is that's what that's showing?

Response: It's pretty much all fees anyway.

Cllr Melanie Coker: Because it says -60% on rates and one 160% on.

Response: I think the property file component might be supported slightly by rates. But I haven't got those figures in front of me. I could talk to the finance partners if you wish.

Cllr Melanie Coker: Yeah, it just looks a bit weird.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: Do you want an answer to that?

Cllr Melanie Coker: Yeah.

Question

Cllr Yani Johanson: I was just interested in the high cost of getting the information, especially once it's become digitised. And I just wondered if we've done a section 17 review because I'm aware that this is sort of a privatised partner now that we contract out to a private operator.

Response: For the scanning services?

Cllr Yani Johanson: Yeah. And is Recall still doing?

Response: No.

Cllr Yani Johanson: So we've changed from recall now.

Response: Yeah

Cllr Yani Johanson: OK. So what's just in terms of the cost of the fees like obviously we don't have that in in here, but what do you know what we're looking at in terms of any increase or any reduction?

Response: I think we're looking at the same, no increase.

Cllr Yani Johanson: And once we scanned a file. Why would that not become cheaper to access?

Response: Because we have to look at if we've got any additional files that we need to incorporate because we're a file is scanned, it's a point in time document. So then we need to, over time things get placed upon it. So you're talking about when we have digitised a property file and then it gets included.

Cllr Yani Johanson: Yeah, so like originally when we first went through to this, my understanding was that we were charging a bit of a higher fee because of the time involved with digitising. This is going back quite a few years and when we moved to this kind of different model. And as over time as more and more become digitised, I just wondered what that did to the fee structure of what we need to charge? Because it's like the fees haven't reduced, but obviously the time wouldn't be as much for digitised files.

Response: Yeah, I don't have the fee schedule in front of me, so I can't quite say what the fees are at this point.

Cllr Yani Johanson: Yeah, I'll put it through.... So we currently warehouse all the data on ours? So is it a Council warehouse now?

Response: when we digitised it, yes.

Cllr Yani Johanson: Right. So where are the files currently held?

Response: Iron Mountain.

Cllr Yani Johanson: Which is a private provider.

Response: yeah and it holds all of Council's records.

Cllr Yani Johanson: And have we looked at what the cost benefit is to doing that versus us having that space?

Response: No.

Deputy Mayor Pauline Cotter: we can find that out

Question

Briefing concludes