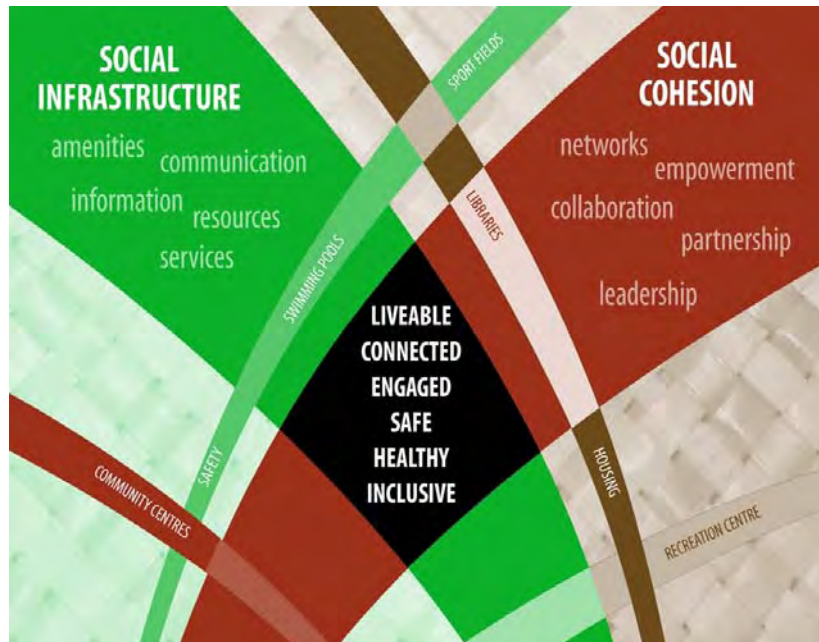


Social and Recreation Strategy

Building strong, safe and healthy communities for a better quality of life

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Wellington City Council

July 2006

1. Introduction

The Wellington City Council is charged with a responsibility to promote the social well being of communities in the present and for the future.

The social domain is a broad one encompassing a wide range of activities, many of which central government is responsible for and some of which community organisations take responsibility for delivering. The Council does not wish to duplicate the role and activities of either central government or the community, but rather to maximise opportunities and to complement the work of both. As a community leader, the Council is in an ideal position to promote partnerships with both central government and the community.

The role of the Wellington City Council in the social domain is focussed at the community level. This Social and Recreation Strategy is premised on the basis that strong communities are those that have

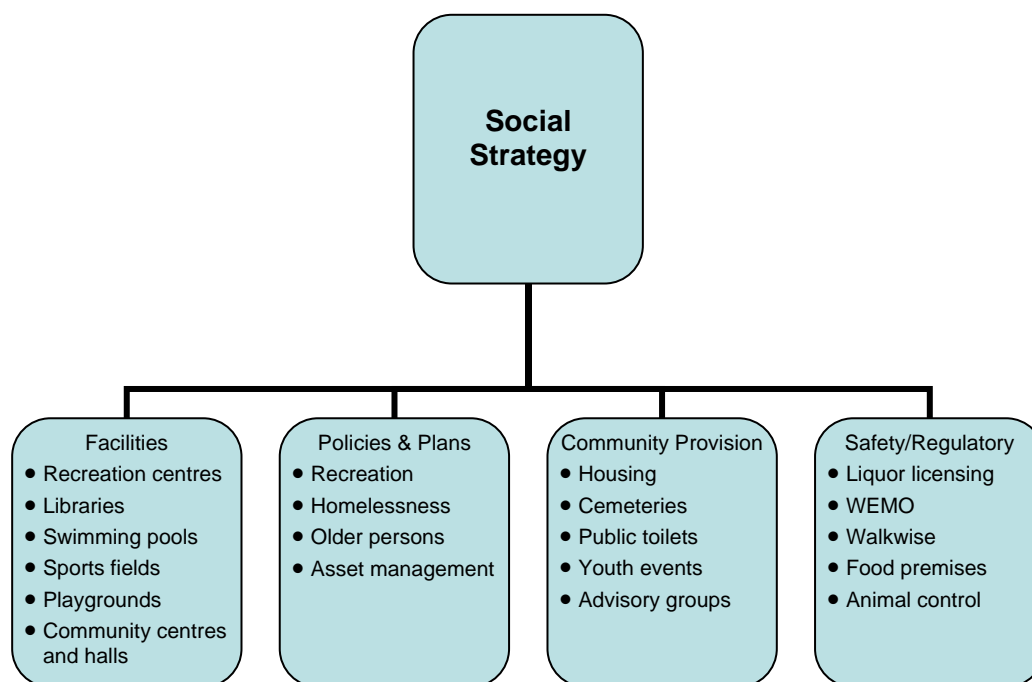
- a robust social infrastructure, that is, there is sound provision of amenities, facilities and key social services
- are cohesive, that is, there is a high level of community participation, strong networks and empowered community groups.

In some respects infrastructure is concerned with buildings and organisations and cohesion is concerned with relationships and engagement. Both aspects are interdependent and critical to strong communities.

The Wellington City Council is actively involved in providing a range of amenities and facilities for the community, such as swimming pools, sports fields, social housing, libraries and playgrounds. Because the Social and Recreation Strategy encompasses so many disparate areas, it is a relatively high level document focussing on the key themes that apply across that range of activity. It aims to promote maximum utilisation of facilities and amenities by ensuring strong relationships with user groups to facilitate access.

2. Context

Existing Framework



The context

Wellington is a dynamic and growing city with a strong sense of identity and community. It is diverse, safe and vibrant. Communities are generally well served with amenities and Wellingtonians report a high level of satisfaction with their quality of life.

Growing ethnic diversity is reflected in ongoing immigration and the number of languages spoken. There are proportionately higher numbers of young Maori and Pacific Islanders, especially under 15 years.

Wellingtonians have the:

- highest median hourly earnings
- highest level of educational attainment for adults
- lowest proportion of the population on low incomes
- lowest level of workplace injuries claims (82 – national median 168)
- lowest rate of road traffic injuries

Wellington City is predicted to grow by 33,400 by 2026.

By 2026, it is projected that there will be:

- 2,000 fewer children aged 0–14 (18% to 14.4%)
- 20,000 more people aged 40–64 to 68,900 (28% to 34%)

- 14,000 more people aged 65 plus (14,500 to 28,500).

The number of migrants is expected to increase, requiring support and assistance in adapting to a new country to ensure successful settlement.

These changes mean there will be greater demand for different services. Housing may become less affordable for a growing number of people and particularly for those on a fixed income. Older people, in coming years, may have different expectations from previous generations about the way they will live and work, and the services that they will require.

The challenge

Wellington offers a high quality lifestyle. In the context of growth and changing demographics we must maximise the benefits of our current position. We must act to preserve our sense of place, which is described as a city-village attitude – a strong sense of community, safe, tolerant, cultured, smart and caring.

The solution

A social strategy that builds strong, safe and healthy communities for a better quality of life

To retain our quality of life, our sense of place and access to services and resources, the Council will provide greater leadership to promote a high level of social cohesion and participation.

High levels of participation in the community, including sports clubs and groups, are critical to resilient and safe communities.

Working collaboratively with communities, to ensure the best delivery of services and programmes, will mean maximum use of amenities and resources. It will ensure a sound social infrastructure and a high level of social cohesion that will make Wellington:

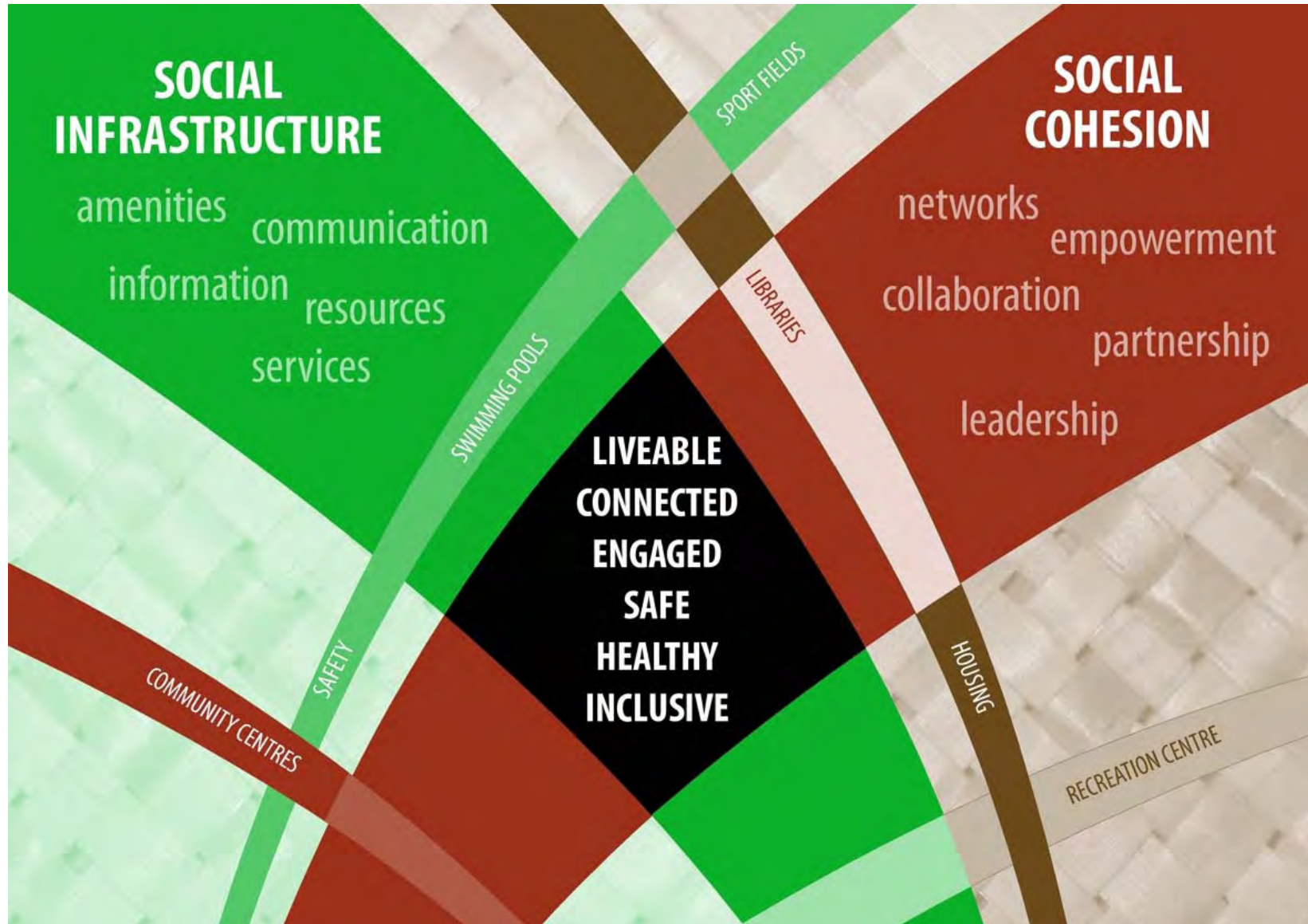
- more liveable - with increased lifestyle choices and, if done right, quality of life
- more inclusive – more diverse with a strong sense of tolerance
- more actively engaged – with more people participating in city life, recreational activity and in their own communities
- better connected – with excellent access to a comprehensive social infrastructure that supports strong social networks
- safer – with people feeling safe in the city and in their homes
- healthier – with people living healthy lifestyles and high standards of public health

The pre-conditions

The successful realisation of this strategy will require:

- a thorough understanding of the communities that make up our city – geographic and ethnic communities and communities of shared interest
- proactive responses to emerging issues
- support for and/or investment in community facilities, where required

3. Long-term direction for social and recreation



Wellington City Council Outcomes

Over the next 10 years, we aspire to the following outcomes:

6.1 More liveable: *Wellington will be a great place to live, work and play, offering a stimulating and high quality range of community amenities and services, including affordable housing.*

Wellington will be a safe city that offers residents high quality choices about where and how they live, work and play. Providing wide-ranging work and lifestyle options for increasingly diverse communities will be important if the city is to attract and retain an innovative and dynamic population that will deliver the city's desire for smart growth.

Making the city more liveable will mean:

- providing sustainable community facilities and services appropriate to the needs of Wellington residents and visitors
- ensuring there is adequate provision of affordable housing for those on low incomes or for those with special needs.

6.2 More inclusive: *Wellington's diverse population will be supported and embraced by a tolerant, caring and welcoming community.*

Wellington's population is constantly changing – it is ageing, and growing more ethnically diverse through immigration. It is important that residents are supported to ensure they develop potential and have access to housing, employment and community activity. This mitigates the risk of social exclusion, which leads to disenfranchised individuals who may become isolated. All groups in society need to be acknowledged and celebrated to ensure that Wellington's sense of community, tolerance and diversity continue to be a feature of its sense of place.

Making Wellington a more inclusive city will mean supporting expressions of diversity and addressing barriers to participation by people at risk of social exclusion.

6.3 More actively engaged: *Wellington residents will be actively engaged in their communities, and in recreation and leisure activities.*

Strong, cohesive communities are inclusive, resilient and safe. They tend to have high levels of participation, including volunteering. Participation and access supports individual's efforts to develop potential, contribute to society and obtain employment. To maximise engagement within the community, barriers to participation must be addressed, and appropriate services and programmes provided.

Making Wellington a more actively engaged city will mean:

- developing greater participation and involvement through closer working relationships with community organisations such as sports clubs, ethnic and cultural groups, and service providers
- developing community by engaging with people and communities to respond to social and economic issues
- working with clubs and groups to promote participation of youth
- providing information and support to community groups through grants and other assistance.

6.4 Better connected: *Wellington will offer excellent access to a sound social infrastructure that supports high levels of social cohesion.*

Wellington will have a broad range of community services, and facilities that are geographically accessible for people. That provision ensures that there are opportunities to encourage people to develop to their full potential, support a strong sense of community and build social cohesion. Wellington will have strong community networks, working in partnership, to bring about a high level of cohesion and integration. Access to services, resources, information and recreational facilities is essential to a successful city. Being better connected also includes access to information technology.

Making the city more connected at a community level will mean:

- increasing information flow, with active communication of relevant and appropriate information that supports the achievement of Council and community objectives
- continuing and enhancing provision of community resources and public services for people of all ages and abilities, including community centres and halls, libraries, grants, programmes and advice
- working with communities to build capacity and capability
- encouraging community partnerships.

6.5 Healthier: *Wellington's population will enjoy a healthy lifestyle and high standards of public health.*

As the city's biggest provider of recreation facilities, the Council aims to promote healthy lifestyles and build strong communities. It provides recreation programmes along with opportunities for passive recreation in parks and on the waterfront to increase overall wellbeing. Changing demographics mean an increased focus on the implications of an ageing population and the consequent changes in demand for recreation programmes and services to support a healthy lifestyle. The Wellington population must continue to have confidence in the Council's role in maintaining standards that contribute to public health.

Making Wellington a healthier city will mean:

- promoting recreation programmes
 - continuing and enhancing provision of recreation facilities and programmes, including swimming pools, recreation centres, playgrounds and sports fields
- promoting high standards of public health through appropriate regulations, advocacy and support (including the regulation of food premises, liquor licensing, managing the city's burials and cremations).

6.6 Safer: *Wellington will offer a safe living environment, where people feel safe.*

Public confidence in the safety of the city's streets and suburbs is a top priority for all cities. Wellington enjoys a reputation as a safe city with a vibrant inner city. To be an attractive destination for immigrants and visitors and to offer a high quality of life to residents it is critical that that reputation is maintained or enhanced. In addition to initiatives designed to promote safety in the city, safety will also be enhanced through initiatives and programmes that act to support a vibrant city where people participate in their communities and activities. Safety is also enhanced when people feel proud of their community and have a strong sense of belonging. As a city built on an earthquake fault line, and with an extensive coastline potentially at risk of violent storms or tsunamis, Wellington must maintain a high level of preparedness for natural and other hazards. (Road safety and safety design principles – noted in the Transport and Urban Development strategies respectively – also contribute to making Wellington a safer place)

Making Wellington a safer city will mean:

- promoting public safety
- supporting crime prevention programmes such as Walkwise, CCTV
- mitigating the effects of potential natural and technological hazards through Wellington Emergency Management Office
- advocacy with partners to increase police numbers.

4. Three-year strategic priorities

For the period 2006/09, we have identified the following three priorities for our social and recreation work. These priorities are important stepping stones towards our long-term goals.

- We will work harder to increase the value of community facilities to their communities
- We will build capability and capacity within the community to promote social cohesion and sound social infrastructure
- We will increase our efforts to promote participation in sport and recreation, particularly for youth.

How we plan to achieve these priorities?

We provide a wide range of services and facilities that promote stronger communities, protect public health and safety, and support the high quality of life Wellingtonians enjoy.

These include:

- Sport and recreation facilities such as swimming pools, sports fields, recreation centres and marinas
- Recreation programmes and events
- Community halls and community centres
- Libraries
- Playgrounds
- Social housing, and funding of projects to help homeless people
- City safety initiatives
- Support for 'community computing' initiatives
- Funding and support for community groups
- Regulation of food outlets to protect public health and safety
- The Emergency Management Office
- Public toilets

- Cemeteries.

Over the next three years, we plan to develop a new indoor community sports centre. We plan to continue to support Project Margin, which is helping homeless people with health and accommodation needs. We plan to step up our provision of computer/internet access for people who otherwise would not have access to information technology. And we will review our network of community facilities to ensure they are meeting people's needs.

5. Strategy Tree – Social and Recreation

