

# Appendix Four

## Summary of October 2008 workshop discussions

Based on oral submissions heard by Council in September 2008, council officers were asked to host workshops with appropriate stakeholders to explore issues raised particularly around the interface between heritage and earthquake strengthening as well as process issues. The following summary of issues arising from the workshops is taken from the 13 November 2008 report to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

### Discussion

Council officers facilitated two workshops with stakeholders, on 1 and 8 October 2008. The majority of participants were submitters or people involved in the EQPB process (see Appendix 1 for a list of workshop participants). The workshops identified a number of areas within the management of EQPB's that required further investigation before a finalised policy could be returned to SPC for consideration. The key areas of discussion during the workshops are outlined below with some of the specific suggestions that warrant further investigation from officers.

#### *Policy Issues*

There was feedback by participants about the level of guidance in the policy in relation to heritage buildings. It was suggested additional guidance be provided to help and incentivise building owners to comply. The importance of the policy's correlation with other council policies, for example the Built Heritage Policy 2005 (see 4.3), was raised.

A number of participants felt that the 'one third' trigger should be retained as it was seen as a pro-active approach by the Council in its efforts to enforce the EQPB Policy. It was considered the existing timeframes (for strengthening) are reasonable, but that the Council should be more pragmatic / flexible in the application of its policy timeframes.

#### *Process Issues*

There was some discussion about the Initial Evaluation Process (IEP) being sufficient evidence on which to base the Building Act 2004 (s124 notices). For example, the production of additional information by building owners has sometimes required the IEP result to be reviewed. However, the IEP's purpose was designed primarily as an initial assessment tool, which it has achieved. With this in mind there are a number of questions in the use of the IEP that require investigation, including:

- the order in which buildings are assessed by the IEP process
- when to issue the notifications (s124 notice)
- partial and/or staged strengthening
- the need (from time to time) for the Council to undertake a more detailed analysis of an IEP before a notice can be issued.

### ***Heritage***

The importance of the correlation between the Council's Built Heritage Policy 2005 and the EQPB Policy was discussed. It was also suggested a more clearly defined connection to the District Plan via the heritage precincts requires investigation by officers. The workshops identified that greater clarity between Council policies is required to provide building owners with improved guidance and a 'whole of Council' approach for what is required of a building owner.

### ***Incentives***

A number of incentives were suggested that would encourage building owners to undertake strengthening work sooner, rather than leaving them to the last minute or having the building(s) demolished. Suggested areas for investigation are:

- rates relief
- rates differential
- accelerated depreciation rates. This would require liaison with the Inland Revenue Department
- fast tracking of the consents process
- grants
- rebates on consents
- incentive payments for listed buildings.

An increase in face-to-face contact (rather than via letters and/or phone) coupled with providing more guidance to building owners and developers is important in supporting the above incentives.

### ***City Strategic Management Plan***

The group were concerned that the EQPB process does not operate within an overall 'city-wide strategic management plan' or similar document. The group suggested that the Council should develop such a plan to provide a consistent and overarching direction and context for property owners and developers. The EQPB Policy (along with other WCC policies) would then be applied within the strategic context of integrated management. Participants also suggested that the Council establish a Reference Group (of appropriate stakeholders) to focus on both heritage and EQPB matters and to input into the development of a strategic management plan.