

Chairperson and Committee Members

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

30 AUGUST 2012

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report provides an update on health access issues and future focus areas for the Council.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy.

BACKGROUND

- 3 Elected members, aware of the high level of interest, asked for a document that maps out Council's role in supporting access to health services. This report outlines this strategic approach but does not provide a strategy for health services as the responsibility for health service provision lies with the health sector.
- 4 Community consultation continues to indicate that access to health services is a very high priority for the District, particularly as it is the largest population furthest from a tertiary health facility in New Zealand. Health is specifically mentioned in Community Outcome 7: 'The District has a strong, healthy, safe and involved community'. Concern about access to health services is coupled with an expectation that the Council will take a strong role in ensuring good access to health services.
- 5 Residents of the Kāpiti Coast District generally live longer than the national average, with an average life expectancy of 78.8 compared with the national 78.2 years. This life expectancy suggests a District with a generally good health status. There are, however, vulnerable groups and pockets of need which are masked by this generally healthy population. Vulnerable groups, including children and young people, those living with disability, Māori and older people need particular consideration. The northern end of the District has a higher level of need with a significant Māori community. As the incidence of disability increases with age, the District has a higher than national average number of residents living with disability and its resulting health needs.

Council's role

- 6 The health sector spans a myriad of organisations including: the Ministry of Health, Capital & Coast and the MidCentral District Health Boards (DHBs), and primary providers such as the Compass Health Network. As responsibility for health services to the District are generally split by a boundary at Peka Peka, the District is serviced by a multiplicity of organisations. This is also the case for other sectors, including the Police and Ministry of Social Development. The Council has frequently raised the boundary issue, and the service inefficiencies that result, with these agencies.
- 7 The provision of health services is the responsibility of the health sector, however, all the Council activities support the general health of the District. Management of assets such as the provision of clean water, removal of waste water and solid waste and the provision of regulatory services including ensuring food safety provide an important foundation to maintain public health. The provision of open spaces, halls, libraries and sports facilities also promote health. Within the social wellbeing activity, work on the Kāpiti Coast Alcohol Action Plan, the Positive Ageing Strategy and the Kāpiti Coast Youth Action Plan also contribute to the health of the District.

Health sector infrastructure

- 8 The health sector undergoes continual change. The decision to develop the regional hospital on the Newtown site brought with it the concession to build the Kāpiti Health Centre first and provide funding for the Kāpiti Community Health Group Trust (this funding has since been withdrawn). The Council and community were very concerned that the siting of the regional hospital would significantly disadvantage Kāpiti Coast residents.
- 9 Over time work has been undertaken to reduce the impacts of distance and improve access to services:
 - Ōtaki residents can now choose to access services from the south;
 - Kāpiti Coast residents should not receive early or late outpatient appointments;
 - the Wellington Free Ambulance Urgent Community Care initiative piloted in Kāpiti has reduced hospital admissions (and the resulting need to get home again);
 - outpatient appointments have been increased in Kāpiti and Kenepuru.
- 10 Government policy is encouraging the regionalisation of health services which brings the risk of distancing decisions on health services from recipients of those services. Advocacy becomes even more important in this environment. The community regularly voices concerns about health services. Recent concerns have included: home based care, discharges in the early hours from the regional hospital and appointment times.

- 11 The Council has played an active advocacy role, including as a member of the Health Hub Project. The project was created in response to the National Party promise of funding to support the extension of the Kāpiti Health Centre. The project partners developed a business case, but the project did not receive funding to proceed.
- 12 Since then, the members of the Health Hub have continued to meet to work together to support health outcomes for the District. Membership has included representatives from health organisations which provide services in the southern end of the District (Capital & Coast DHB, Compass Health Network, Wellington Free Ambulance), Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai, Members of Parliament, the Kāpiti Community Health Group Trust and the Council. The group continues to meet but in recognition of the shift in function, the group is reviewing its membership and terms of reference and has become known as 'Health in Kāpiti'. The District's needs would be best met by membership that reflects the whole District – 'Health in Kāpiti' could be extended to be 'Health on the Kāpiti Coast', and have representation from Ōtaki.
- 13 The Council has supported the Capital & Coast DHB with its Community Health Forums. The Board is committed to providing two forums a year to communicate with the community and these are supported by the Compass Health Network. The most recent forum focussed on the health land.

Land

- 14 The Council has been a strong advocate for the retention of the health land adjacent to the Kāpiti Health Centre. The Council jointly submitted with Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai and the Kāpiti Community Health Group Trust for the retention of the land. The Capital & Coast DHB recently reaffirmed its decision to retain the land and to seek community feedback about criteria for the future use of the land at the Community Health Forum held on Tuesday 31 July. The Council is working with the DHB on a community feedback process.

CONSIDERATIONS

Focus Areas

- 15 The Council has a strong mandate from the community to support access to health services. Focus areas have been developed to inform the Council's actions. The selection of these focus areas and priority actions has been based on two factors:
 - extensive community feedback and consultation;
 - an assessment of areas that relate most closely to current Council activities and where the Council can be most effective.
- 16 The following diagram illustrates the four recommended focus areas and the priority actions to implement them. These are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Access to Health Services
 Services are provided as close to home as possible and are easy to access

Mandate

Community Outcomes

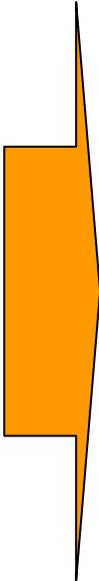
- The District has a strong, healthy, safe and involved community

Strategies, Policies & Action Plans

- Open Spaces, Sustainable Transport, Coastal Management, Smoke-free Parks Policy

Community Feedback

- Access a key concern



Focus Areas and Actions

Access to Transport Services

- Public transport
- Health shuttles
- Advocate for transport home for vulnerable discharged patients

Planning

- Share information
- District Plan Review
- Expressway

Advocacy

- Health land and provision of services at Kāpiti and Kenepuru
- Represent emerging concerns and work collaboratively with the health sector

Information

- Promote health sector communication
- Regional Community Information Directory

Access to Transport Services

17 The Kāpiti Coast District Council has long argued for the provision of health services on the Coast as close as possible to residents to reduce the need to travel. Access to transport services is a key component in ensuring that health services are accessible for those that do need to travel. In the focus area of transport, the Council will:

- work with the Greater Wellington Regional Council to ensure good public transport across the District, with a particular focus on routes to health facilities and Ōtaki. Transport for Ōtaki residents is a particular concern as residents need to access health services in Palmerston North and Levin as well as to the south. The District's most vulnerable residents are dependent on public transport;
- provide interim funding for the Ōtaki and Kāpiti Community Health Shuttles. The Council will continue to advocate for the health sector to provide ongoing financial support to fill this gap as it does in other areas;
- continue to advocate for solutions to ensure discharged patients receive support to return home if necessary. Reports of unsupported early morning discharges are still being received and are highly distressing for individuals concerned and their families.

Planning

18 Council planning can support the provision of health service delivery infrastructure. In the focus area of planning, the Council will:

- share information with the DHBs, such as population projections, to ensure the best possible data informs service provision. Council population projections are higher than those in current use by Capital & Coast DHB;
- ensure the District Plan Review supports health outcomes for the District; for example, allowing for health facilities in a range of zones, recreational spaces and promoting health communities;
- advocate for comprehensive assessment and monitoring of health impacts of the expressway, and effective mitigation where needed.

Advocacy

19 There is a need for the Council to take a strong role in advocating for community needs. In the focus area of advocacy, the Council will:

- ensure the health land is retained and used well, and advocate for services to be provided in Kāpiti and Kenepuru and Ōtaki;
- represent the concerns of the community as they arise and collaborate with the health sector, including
 - continuing to raise the issues resulting from service boundaries;

- holding regular meetings with both the DHBs;
- working with the DHBs to ensure effective consultation with communities about their health needs;
- participating in Health in Kāpiti and propose extending its membership to represent the full District – invite representation from MidCentral DHB and an Ōtaki representative from the Compass Health Network;
- participating in the Compass Health Network Local Primary Care Group and explore representation for Ōtaki;

Information

20 Ease of access to health information is an important building block for accessible health services. The Council had provided funding for the Kāpiti Health Group Trust to support its role in providing health information in the District. With the winding up of the Trust, the Council has had to consider other avenues. In the focus area of information, the Council will:

- encourage key health stakeholders to communicate with the District communities well. The Council will also continue to support the Community Health Forums;
- contribute to the Regional Community Information Directory Project (a joint project between the Capital & Coast DHB and the Councils in the region) and ensure that the northern end of the District is well served;

Financial Considerations

21 There are no financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

22 There are no legal considerations.

Delegation

23 The Environment and Community Development Committee has:

7.1 Authority to develop (within any wider existing strategic framework) policies and work programmes that support the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community. This authority encompasses the power to:

- undertake all matters not specifically delegated to Council officers or other committees concerning or involving community development and wellbeing, including but not limited to the development, implementation, advocacy and monitoring of social policies (within any wider existing strategic framework) relating to:

- o health;

Consultation

- 24 There has been significant consultation with the community about the importance of access to health services. Discussions have taken place with both the Capital & Coast and MidCentral DHBs specifically and with the Health Hub (now Health in Kāpiti) members.

Policy Implications

- 25 Access to health services is supported in other strategic documents including the Open Space, Sustainable Transport, and Coastal Strategies, and the Smoke-free Parks and Playgrounds Policy.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

- 26 The Council worked with Te Ati Awa Ki Whakarongotai and the Kāpiti Community Health Group Trust to retain the health land.

Publicity Considerations

- 27 The various health organisations will handle their own communications. The Council will promote the opportunity to contribute to the development of criteria for the use of the health land.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 28 That the Environment and Community Development Committee note the update on health access issues including the Capital & Coast DHB consultation on criteria for the future use of the health land adjacent to the Kāpiti Health Centre.
- 29 That the Environment and Community Development Committee approve the recommended focus areas and priority actions as set out in SP-12-662.

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