

Wellbeing Collaboration Project Discussion paper - Future Directions 2007

Kim Conway – Wellbeing Collaboration Project Manager

Purpose and Focus

The Wellbeing Collaboration Project was originally established with the aim:
To facilitate projects that will make a difference in the wellbeing of the community of Waitakere City.

At the October 06 Collaboration Strategy Group meeting, this aim was endorsed, further clarified and made more specific:
To facilitate social sector partnering and projects that sustain strong vibrant urban communities

The purpose of the Collaboration Strategy Group was reaffirmed as bringing key government /Council/ and community sectors together, to work on agreed social wellbeing priorities where they could make a difference. The CSG was also charged with providing analysis and direction through its representatives from key government and community sectors.

The primary focus on the social wellbeing sector provides a tighter and more realistic focus so that the Wellbeing Collaboration Project is not spread too thinly or ineffectually across the other wellbeings. There will still however need to be good links to the other wellbeings to ensure that there is an overall systemic approach to avoid fragmentation and working in silos. It is also essential to recognise and include different world views. Maori as well as other cultural perspectives must be recognised and included. Links to other wellbeings and world views will need to be factored into work programmes to optimize the overall impacts.

In the review paper presented at the October CSG meeting, key questions were posed and some of these will be revisited as part of this paper.

Measuring change – Process and Progress

How well is the current framework of Calls to Action doing in meeting the Wellbeing Collaboration Project's aim of improving wellbeing? Are there robust indicators or measures and are these being met?

Recent reflections in the paper written by Megan Courtney (2006) as well as the C2A review I have just undertaken indicate that the **process** of bringing the different sectors together for joint action in the 'Waitakere Way's generally viewed as working well. There is a perceived improvement in networking, collaborating on joint initiatives and first level short-term indicators for change. All Calls to Action are seen to benefit from an ongoing linking role that the Collaboration project provides.

However the actual **progress** of this work is much less clear. In terms of outputs and attributed impacts, there is positive evidence of networking where none previously existed, increased Maori, Pasifika and new settler engagement in some areas, new services initiated, events held, and resources produced, but far less in terms of tangible measures of wellbeing.

Process

The current Calls to Action have moved at different paces, according to different circumstances, often due to capacity issues. Capacity-building is a critical underpinning for the Wellbeing Project – both in terms of resourcing the C2As and building skill-sets for effective actions. Calls to Action have clearly benefited by having coordinators in brokering roles, acting as catalysts in getting initiatives off the ground. Providing appropriate infrastructure support, skills development initiatives and establishing partnering continuum protocols is also assisting some of the Calls to Action such as Te Korowai Manaaki build their Maori and Pasifika caucus base.

Strategic Brokers

There is a clear need to grow/provide more strategic brokers in Waitakere city in other key areas that are not specifically addressed under the umbrella of the Wellbeing Collaboration Project. Important emerging initiatives in areas such as Youth and Parenting would benefit from more strategic brokering of collective responses. Older Adults, given the projected demographics of an ageing population also requires active brokering to provide impetus for comprehensive planning now. Disability is another ‘invisible’ under-resourced area with considerable potential for development

Progress

Little or no data has been collected on some of the possible measures for the broad C2A goals such as whether there are (in Waitakere City)

- More children in early childhood learning centres
- More refugees in employment
- Increased access to and use of InfoTech
- More affordable housing available
- Less cases of injury and violence to young children
- Less police call outs for domestic violence
- Regular use of the Culture of Inclusion checklist for events
- More young people reporting a successful transition into training, study or work
- More quality educational options being delivered

It is probably unrealistic to solely expect or attribute such measures of change to the Wellbeing Calls to Action. Many issues are complex, there are often multiple factors at play and a range of complimentary strategies are required that go beyond the capacity of many current Call to Action groups to achieve these measures.

Developing an intervention logic and realistic if not entirely ‘robust’ evaluation measures in the planning cycles of Calls to Action would help provide more strategic direction, ‘best practice’ activities and relevant indicators to track what progress is being made. This is an area where more attention could be focused in 2007.

Current and Future Calls to Action

Are there critical areas of wellbeing that are not being addressed? Could the Wellbeing collaboration process add value to and progress other key initiatives?

A “Call to Action” is a focus area expressed as an agreed goal for a consortium of organisational representatives to work on collectively for three years under the intersectoral umbrella of the Wellbeing project. The original Calls to Action were initiated in response to expressed community needs that fitted to different degrees with Council and sector priorities. In many ways it was a trial to see how well the collaboration process could work. The current climate calls for a more strategic direction of effort and resource that recognises the need to align and integrate priorities into a more rigorous intersectoral planning, implementation and evaluation process. It will be essential to balance having a more evidence-based way forward with the mix of creative initiatives based on local knowledge and experience, the energy, gut instinct and common sense that has typified the indomitable and acclaimed ‘Waitakere way’.

Over their three year life, most of the original seven Calls to Action have left their mark in contributing to the development of increased initiatives and services in their respective areas. They have become ‘established’ or are well on the road to becoming self sustaining.

Many C2As could now become independent initiatives in their own right and the WCP could start afresh seeking community mandates to develop new Calls to Action. New C2As could be based on recognised health priorities such as improving wellbeing by increasing the levels of physical activity (Active Waitakere) or identified common priorities arising from the last Wellbeing summit, the Community Outcomes and Local Social Mapping.

Another option is refocusing some existing Calls to Action and building on their established potential to make significant contributions to overarching priorities. Identified issues such as Equity and Poverty and Sustainable Community Development or Urban Intensification could be addressed across all the Calls to Actions. This could be flagged for the next Summit in 2007 as considerable lead-in would be required to ensure such priorities were openly and robustly discussed for integration into the WCP and C2A activities and processes. In the meantime Calls to Action have indicated a willingness to focus on addressing social inequities in their current activities. Some are also tentatively putting their toe in the water with activities linked to Sustainable Community Development and Urban Intensification.

A June 2005 paper written for the CSG by Mark Allen on the future of the Wellbeing Collaboration Project has already outlined a case for and steps to begin to address the poverty issues in Waitakere City.

“Deprivation index analysis indicates a growing environment of poverty in the City and there is currently no initiative in the city targeted to address this. One option may be the agreement to develop a strategy to understand the issues underlying and contributing to poverty – how to address this, where (what places) to locally influence

change in the City. One idea raised is to collaboratively target areas of increasing poverty with a view to having no areas of high deprivation by 2015. Potentially the Community Outcomes work will identify this focus”.

In light of the C2A review, the previous CSG discussion and further dialogue with different stakeholders about other changes currently occurring, the attached diagrams proposing changes in the WCP organisation structure have been developed to address

- a) How new focus areas and priorities might be integrated with the existing Calls to Action
- b) The need for a common planning structure for identified social wellbeing priorities in Waitakere City

Three possible main clusters (Housing, Education and Supporting Families, Young and Old) are proposed that could positively impact on Equity and Poverty issues to improve social wellbeing. These are all subject of course to further discussion and decisions by the CSG and Calls to Action groups.

It is proposed that:

- *Infotech* and *Culture of Inclusion* become integrated approaches across all the Calls to Action and continue to meet as networks. *Every Student Leaves School with a Plan* convened by the Waitakere Employment and Skills Project becomes incorporated into *Education and Communities/the Learning Plan*, although WESP would also continue as a network. This would become part of an Education cluster with Early Childhood Education.
- A part-time paid coordinator position is secured for *Housing* with funding from the Wellbeing Collaboration Project Discretionary Funding Pool, monies earmarked for Housing from Community Waitakere and possible other sources. There has been a recent resurgence of activity in this Call to Action and potential developments in the affordable social housing and tenancy advocacy services areas that would benefit from a dedicated coordinator role.
- Reducing Violence is reframed as Supporting Families – Young and Old. This would cluster other existing and emerging C2A initiatives i.e. New Settlers Out West, Te Korowai Manaaki, Active Waitakere, Positive Parenting/Fathering, and possibly at a later stage Youth and or Older Adults

Development of a Plan for the City

How well is the overall intent of improving collaboration working? Are the key players involved in all three sectors? If not, how can they be better connected?

Although there is widespread support for a Plan for the City, this still needs to be taken to the Council for official approval. Once this occurs it would be timely to set up a working party (through the CSG and Community Wellbeing Network) to develop a process and a partnership agreement to align Calls to Action priorities, together with the Local Service Mapping priorities and Community Outcomes to the social wellbeing domain of the Plan for the City.. This would be a key strategic document and road map for government/Council/community sectors to:

- Document who is doing what, what more needs to be done, what are the gaps and the ‘big themes’ that need to be progressed
- Identify areas of alignment, shared, effective use of resources, shared work plans and programmes. Activities to be informed by evidence-based information and best practice (local knowledge and experience) on the ground
- Decide which stakeholders lead progress towards which outcomes.
- Implement, document and evaluate activities

It is anticipated that the Wellbeing Collaboration Project through this suggested ‘*Social Wellbeing Partnering Group*’ could be given responsibility for promoting the social wellbeing outcomes of the Community Outcomes priorities. The WCP could also through its Call to Action activities be able to address key sustainable development themes in the regional START framework such as Social Development and Cultural Diversity and Community Cohesion.

The composition of this working party would need to reflect all the key players required around the table who would be there as mandated representatives to ensure commitment and provide a dual accountability process. It would also impact on the current CSG group’s role of analysis and direction. Consideration would need to be given to the CSG’s future role, perhaps as one of overall governance meeting less frequently with a more defined governance structure.

Process Development: WCP as holder of Partnering Continuum Principles and Processes

Is there a need to focus more on relationship processes and levels of partnering to get better results?

As often noted, collaboration between sectors is not all sweetness and light, nor a quick fix. It can be difficult and demanding and requires long-term commitment to change and negotiating paths through both government and community development processes. The partnering continuum framework (Courtney 2006) and the work developed around this provides a springboard for different partnering roles to be reviewed and identified across the WCP – to assess what levels of partnering people are at or want to engage in and the principles and processes to support those relationships. The WCP can take a lead role in using the continuum framework to help identify what sorts of roles, relationships, and types of partnering arrangements are needed to plan and deliver their activities at all levels. Some Calls to Action_eg New Settlers Out West and Te Korowai Manaaki are currently using the framework in this way.

As well as the invaluable work done by Megan Courtney and others in Waitakere, there is a growing and very useful body of literature on collaboration and what can make the processes more effective (Cook 2006). This is a key area for further work in 2007 to build on and strengthen the Wellbeing Collaboration Project.

2007 Wellbeing Summit: Community Mandate for Change

There was a strong desire from the last CSG meeting for the next Wellbeing Summit to be transformative. The change in focus to address one or two key issues such as Poverty and/or Urban Intensification would ensure a Summit that would take a big picture approach, be bold in its intent and strategic in its planning. Given that this is a local body election year it would need to be mindful of the political climate and framed positively eg “Raising the level in Waitakere” - A Fair Deal for All”

In terms of timing it is probably best organized well before the local body elections in October/November so a July summit is suggested

Suggested timeline

Membership of Summit Planning group decided	December
Initial Event plan and budget drafted	January
Working group meet to decide date, theme/ initial programme, speakers, venue Programme planning	Late January 07 Further monthly/bimonthly meetings organised Feb – August 07
Fliers sent out	March 07
Communications, Health and Safety, Inclusion and Summit Day Plans developed	March –April 07
Programme finalised	May 07
Invitations sent out	May 07
Catering finalised Facilitators briefed	May 07 June 07
Summit	July 07

References

Allen, Mark, (2005) *The future of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project*

Cook, Lesley (2005) *Partnerships in Practice*, Report for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia.

Courtney Megan (2006) *Putting Pen to Paper- Creating Partnering Agreements That Work*, Department of Internal Affairs and Waitakere City Council.

Courtney Megan (2006) *Towards Wellbeing in Waitakere – Reflections on the first ten years*, Governments and Communities in Partnership Conference, Melbourne.