

BRCT submission on the DCC Long Term Plan 2015/16 – 2024/25



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The Chief Executive Officer
Dunedin City Council
PO Box 5045
Dunedin

Submission on the Dunedin City Council's Long Term Plan 2015/16 – 2024/25.

Submitters' Names: Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust (attention: Scott Willis)
Address: 31 Hill Street, RD2 Waitati, 9085 Dunedin District
Phone (day): 03 4822048
Phone (evening): 03 4822249
Email: office@brct.org.nz

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We, Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, wish to speak to our submission

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1 Overview

Thank you for this opportunity to submit to the Dunedin City Council's **Long Term Plan 2015/16 – 2024/25**.

The Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust (BRCT) is a registered charitable trust formed in 2008 to support sustainability and transition initiatives in a planned and structured way. We work as a legal body to provide a public benefit and achieve the long-term objective of building community resilience. Our headline work is our community wind development and our core activity areas are in energy, climate change action, and provision of community services. We offer support to number of community groups working in the field of sustainability. Jeanette Fitzsimons is our patron.

We commend the Council for attractively and clearly setting out the LTP. We believe that some innovative thinking will help engage residents further and we would particularly like the Council to take a leadership role in building a great small **low carbon** city, through careful appreciation of opportunity and risk, and alignment of the LTP with the eight key strategies.

While the level of debt is a risk to the City, we see many opportunities in co-funded projects, in strengthening strategic relationships, and in using good processes to assist prioritisation. Our changing world requires innovation and creativity and we offer our support to the DCC in addressing the challenges ahead.

We, the Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, wish to speak to our submission.

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2 General

2.0 *Doing things differently*

Your summary document is attractive, well set out and clear. We understand however that community consultation was not as well attended as hoped and that this format has been required of you by amendments to the Local Government Act. At BRCT we appreciate greater detail in hard copy but did find the online material reasonably accessible. Suggestions to improve public participation in planning include:

1. Implementation of a trial of participatory budgetting¹ withinin the work areas of roading and footpaths, and;
2. Public acknowledgment of the hard environmental limits we now must face if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change; and,
3. Completing work that is overdue, for example delivery of the city Energy Plan, with additional resourcing if required, and;
4. Demonstrating links with existing strategies in the summary copy.

2.1 *Our strengths*

Don't forget that strengths we possess as a city include: Very actively engaged residents particularly in Blueskin, North East Valley and Brockville, and; Effective charities and community organisations providing a wide range of community services in the community, including BRCT, Presbyterian Support, the NEV 'Project', Sustainable Dunedin City, Generation Zero, etc. Community partners and an engaged citizenry is essential to the functioning of a healthy society and key to building a great small (low carbon) city.

¹ See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory>

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3 Financial Strategy

3.0 *About the financial strategy*

We agree with the need for a financial strategy. In a changing world and more volatile global economy, it makes sense to be aware of and limit exposure to risk. Things we'd like to highlight are:

1. The Sustainability Framework and its five principles which has already been adopted by the DCC, to assist decision making, and;
2. Greater use of the Sustainability Audit Sub-Committee to review projects and the financial strategy, and;
3. Continued focus on debt reduction while preparing an action footing to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change impacts, and;
4. Focus on ensuring the Waipori Fund can continue to deliver financial benefit to the City, while considering appropriate risk reduction, through, for example, more local, regional or national investment in modest reliable infrastructure like renewable energy, and;
5. Focus on financial resilience as suggested, bearing in mind all the above.
6. We also strongly approve of the continued improvement of financial controls within council.

3.1 *Rates*

We are concerned in light of recent scientific reports, most recently the PCE report on sea-level rise², that future risk to the city has not yet been fully appreciated. And we believe there is an increasing public appetite for the City to take a leadership role in addressing future challenges. This will require resourcing. We believe a rates increase to 4% (**Option 2**) may be necessary to prepare the city for future challenges.

3.2 *Stadium Review*

We support **Option 1**, the Proposed Approach, as the appraisal indicates that this is the lowest cost option for the stadium. We support improving governance and setting strict budget limits for management.

² http://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/all-publications/changing-climate-and-rising-seas-understanding-the-science/_budgeting

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4 Infrastructure Strategy

4.0 Service Levels

We encourage the DCC to maintain, as possible, current service levels. However because of the significant climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts that must now be undertaken to reduce carbon emissions, we encourage community conversations in climate change 'hot-spots' such as South Dunedin, Waitati and Long Beach before expanding services (and doing remedial work). An action we believe will help sustain resident's quality of life in our changing world is:

1. Work with community groups, NIWA and the Otago Regional Council on a strong engagement model and participatory approach to enable understanding of complex systems, and greater community participation in decision making on service levels. This approach is likely to be more effective than simply holding public meetings.

4.1 Integrated Transport

We support the Integrated Transport Strategy 2013, with its focus on Safety, Travel Choices, Centres, Freight, and Resilience. We actively encourage the Council to assume responsibility for the city bus services.

4.2 Three Waters

We support actively planning for potential events due to climate change. We appreciate all the planning work done to date and in addition we suggest:

1. That Three Waters works collaboratively with City Planning to ensure Hazard Zones are clearly identified and that durable infrastructure is not built in known Hazard Zones at risk from climate change or other phenomena, and;
2. Use of the targetted rate mechanism to provide rainwater tank loans for properties to develop a more resilient city water supply and minimise storm water excess, and;
3. Working with community groups, NIWA and the Otago Regional Council on a strong engagement model and participatory approach to assist residents in South Dunedin, Long Beach, and Waitati to participate in planning programmes and contribute to risk assessments for these areas.

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5 Central City Plan

Generally we support the streamlined, coordinated approach proposed for upgrade of the central city. Aspects we wish to emphasis are:

1. The infrastructural requirements of low carbon cities, which include increasing pedestrian facilities and cycleways. We wish to avoid the cost of digging up the streets twice, and would prefer that the City confirms which streets around the Octagon become 'pedestrian only', before replacing services and pavers, and;
2. The importance of the DCC taking control of public transport to allow for coordinated infrastructural planning and development.

6 Strategic Cycle Network and Unfunded Transport Projects

We support increasing the development of the strategic cycle network (**Option 1**) and low carbon transport infrastructure including improving an improved pedestrian and cycling environment around the Otago Polytechnic and Otago University (**Unfunded Transport Projects**). All of these projects are particularly valuable and important as they can be co-funded, and will enhance both important relationships and city reputation. We support:

1. Option 1 – the proposed option – of the Strategic Cycle Network, and;
2. Co-funding the development of improved pedestrian and cycling environment around the Otago Polytechnic and Otago University.

7 South Dunedin Community Complex

We are not in a position to evaluate this proposed project, although like any infrastructural development there will be a cost. However we see a general principal of careful evaluation in climate change 'hot-spots' as being important part of the decision making process. Although sea-level rise may not significantly affect new buildings and roading within the LTP period, investing in buildings and infrastructure is at least a 50 year investment and such projects often catalyse further business and residential development. We suggest:

1. We request review by the Sustainability Audit Sub-Committee, of hazards and projects in climate change 'hot-spot' zones, including review of this project.

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8 Gigatown

We support **Option 2**, to ensure community groups and businesses can take advantage of this initiative. We particularly desire to see high speed wireless connectivity facilitated for rural and peri-urban parts of the city.

9 Otago Museum

We support Otago Museum Funding **Option 2**, as this institution provides important services and profile to the city and this funding option gives the museum the ability to plan.

10 Dunedin Hospital Therapeutic Pool

We support Funding **Option 1**. The Dunedin Hospital Therapeutic Pool contributes significantly towards improving social wellbeing and improving health in our community. We encourage investigation into co-funding to keep this valuable city asset available for the community.

11 Cosy Homes Charitable Trust

We strongly support the application by the Cosy Homes Charitable Trust for **\$75,000** from the Consumer Electricity Fund to assist with operations. BRCT has been working on addressing fuel poverty since 2008 and after years of working to build a city wide solution, the Trust is pleased to have assisted the development of the Cosy Homes Trust. As the Community Energy Network's Otago representative organisation, we recognise the need and true value of a local umbrella organisation that will coordinate all the city-wide actions towards the goal of making every Dunedin home warm and cosy by 2025. We will continue to support Cosy Homes and assist deliver objectives with what resources we have and we ask that Council contributes to this important initiative that aligns so well with City Strategic Objectives. Making our homes warm and cosy brings not only health benefits, and makes energy costs more affordable, it also helps reduce carbon emissions and stimulates new local carbon businesses.

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12 Planning for Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

While sea-level rise may not significantly affect new buildings and roading within the LTP period, investing in buildings and infrastructure is at least a 50 year investment and such projects often catalyse further business and residential development. We encourage close work between City Planning and the Sustainability Audit Sub-Committee to develop a coordinated approach to address climate change and sea-level rise impacts, across all plans and strategies.

13 Other submissions and initiatives we endorse

We will make reference to other submissions we support at the formal presentation of our submission.

We thank you for your attention to this submission

Yours sincerely,



Scott Willis