



Mayor and Councillors
Porirua City

Porirua Long Term Plan 2015-2025: response from the *Shine* management group

Summary

Your strategic framework provides a sound basis for implementing the priorities of the *Shine* education summit, and the projects and discussions that followed the summit.

A range of key issues were identified in these discussions, including low academic performance, the number of students leaving the area to attend college, access to digital technology and science teaching, and a lack of alignment among and responsiveness from service providers. It was also known that some schools were struggling financially and administratively.

A Collective Impact (CI) approach was proposed by local educators and adopted in principle at the *Shine* summit. CI is based on the five result areas listed below. It provides practical step by step guidance that can be used to introduce a process that places '*children and young people at the centre of city decisions*'.

Council policy supports the approach (See the recommendation of Te Komiti on 17 July 2014, adopted by Porirua City Council on 23 July 2014. '108/14 *SHINE* – The Porirua Education Initiative . . .'). The priority now is to implement the resolution. If we use the CI framework to assess the current situation in Porirua the next three steps the Council can take to support action to improve educational opportunities are:

- Establish a core capacity for governance, monitoring and collective action with designated executive support. This would be similar to Council's current commitment to restore the harbour, although the form may be different.
- Engage local people with relevant expertise and experience to review the data that is already available and propose options for investment over the next ten years. This would provide an opportunity to extend participation in the *Shine* process.
- Ask major public agencies to clarify their investment intentions for the same ten year period, beginning with the Ministry of Education and Tertiary Education Commission.

This can be achieved by focussing the current resources Council has committed to education, youth and community development, aligning the investments and activities of other public providers and funders, and brokering community led solutions¹. A coherent core of public activity would provide a more stable framework for contributions from communities and commercial interests that support the strategic priorities.

¹ e.g. <http://www.productivity.govt.nz/news/social-services-decision-making-needs-to-be-closer-to-communities>

Collective Impact

1. Common agenda

The LTP consultation has brought educational priorities to the centre of local democratic decision making. This was an essential step. We appreciate this leadership by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

When the Council consolidates the outcomes of the LTP consultation we ask that it:

- Includes the priorities proposed at the *Shine* summit in June 2013 (<http://shineporirua.org.nz/uploads/sites/shineporirua/files/PDFs/Nine%20priority%20headlines.pdf>)
- Acknowledges the community action taken to address priorities related to literacy and digital enablement (<http://shineporirua.org.nz/Activities?src=nav>).

2. Shared measurement

The proposed ‘status report’ (Consultation Document p.13) fills a long standing gap in local information. Preliminary work on one aspect of the report was done before the *Shine* summit (<http://shineporirua.org.nz/The+Educational+Landscape>). That version of the ‘Education Landscape’ aimed to focus the contributions of educators and communities on (a) achieving successful transitions as children and young people move through formal education and select vocational pathways, and (b) assuring communities that education provided locally was of good quality.

More importantly, data is not self-explanatory. A primary function of the Council is ‘to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities (Local Government Act 2002 s10(1)(a). Sub-section (b) also applies.). This mandate provides a basis for the Council to ensure public data and other information is interpreted carefully from the relevant range of perspectives and expertise, and that practical options are generated to address any shortfall in the local system.

3. Mutually reinforcing activities

Well considered interpretation of shared indicators can then be used to identify and select the core contributions required to obtain realistic, equitable and sustainable improvements in educational achievement. Attempts to improve educational outcomes in Porirua are severely hampered by a proliferation of roles and funding arrangements formed during several decades of autonomous action by organisations and funders. A common agenda and shared measurement provides a basis for aligning and using current resources more effectively. Steps in that direction are listed in the Summary above.

4. Continuous communication

The challenge in the strategic framework you have proposed is to place ‘children and young people *at the centre of city decisions*’. There is no capacity to do this in the education sector at present. Information does not flow consistently through the system to support a common agenda and restore confidence. This is a general and long standing issue, not specific to Porirua (<http://www.nzcer.org.nz/nzcerpress/vital-connections>). It is, however, a constraint on local action which has been addressed much more energetically in some other cities.

Feedback generated by communities that have engaged with *Shine* indicates families and communities need and want more information about the outcomes of education in Porirua.

There is increasing concern and a perception that a lower standard is accepted in Porirua. In the absence of coherent governance that supports teachers and parents consistently across the city the onus for decision making shifts to households. Consequently, school selection becomes a key decision for local parents and young people when options are available to them. About 1500 secondary students leave Porirua to attend colleges elsewhere. Not only are there negative consequences such as wasted time, disconnection from roots in communities, and economic loss for the city, school viability is also threatened. Boards of Trustees have made a tentative start to identifying factors that contribute to this situation. That process can be strengthened by providing a more purposeful meeting point, as noted above.

5. Backbone functions

The CI approach does not require the Council to take on additional functions. It provides a way of doing things differently based on information about its constituency and identifying the right set of resources to target the issues. This does not mean it is Council's role to do the work; it may mean identifying who is responsible and putting energy into a different set of functions. Backbone support can be provided by a carefully selected set of organisations within the city to support the priorities and principles you have proposed in the strategic framework for 2015-2025.

The Council has taken initial steps to assign backbone functions such as defining roles for Porirua Healthy Safer City Trust and Partners Porirua. It has also moved to upgrade its own core functions of consultation, planning, monitoring, reporting and advocacy, and signalled an intention to review relevant Council services including the library and recreational facilities.

We now need a step change to create a reliable core capacity to align community, commercial and professional interests. Participants in the *Shine* process are willing to contribute to a process that improves the educational and employment opportunities available to children and young people, and increases confidence in the local education system.

1 May 2015