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*SocialLink Western Bay of Plenty is a registered charity based at The Kollektive in 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Tauranga. It is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty.*

*Its vision is a resourced, skilled and cohesive for purpose sector enabling communities to flourish. Its purpose is to build the capability, confidence, sustainability and voice of community organisations in the Western Bay of Plenty.*

## **Submission on Tauranga City Council's Community Centres Action and Investment Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan. SocialLink would like to make the following comments and suggestions.

### **General Comments**

- We would like to congratulate the team which has worked on developing the community centres action and investment plan and the consultation it has undertaken with local communities and other stakeholders to inform the plans.
- We think the plan is comprehensive and insightful on the value and importance of community centres, the way in which they can contribute to a sense of place, community and belonging for people and the challenges and opportunities facing them.
- We acknowledge and support the Council's intention to underpin the plan by embracing Te Ao Māori values of manaakitanga (identified in the document as duty of care) and Whānaungatanga, or relationships and support systems.
- It is great to see the explicit acknowledgement of the significant role of marae, their implicit value to hapū and their importance to the wider community and the challenges they face in maintenance. We endorse the suggestion of further indepth engagement with marae about funding and other options and the intention to develop a Marae Support Plan and allocation of funding to address these (page 9).
- We support the primary shift in management approach is towards greater emphasis on onsite management and programming, with new centres intended to operate more like

Arataki Community Centre and charitably run local community centres, and less like the old community halls.

## **Other comments**

### **1. Priority Facilities focus on equity and low socio-economic areas.**

SociaLink endorses the intention to have a primary focus on upgrading and developing community centre facilities for areas that have complex socio-economic issues - the City Centre, Merivale and Gate Pa in the near future. (page 11 Priority Facilities)

### **2. Recommended development of hub in The Lakes/Pyes Pa/Omanawa area in the next five years and identification of residents' perceptions of their community to inform the location of community centres**

We recommend that a new community hub be developed in The Lakes/Pyes Pa area in the next five years rather than after 2033 (see Map titled Citywide Community Centres 2033 and beyond on page 37.

The Lakes and surrounding area has had a considerable population for some years and few community facilities. We note that one of the important elements the plan highlights is that:

‘People want to see new community centres, particularly in suburbs without existing accessible provision or with high needs (including social, cultural, economic and connectivity).’

The draft plan may be expecting The Lakes/Pyes Pa/Omanawa residents will use a new Tauriko based centre. We anticipate the new Tauriko housing area will need its own community hub to support its community development.

We think The Lakes, Pyes Pa and Omanawa area residents also require a community centre to enhance the feeling of belonging to that community and we believe they will not naturally be drawn to going to the Tauriko centre.

State Highway 29 and the complex roading system near The Crossing are physical and safety barriers to accessing the proposed Tauriko centre. (Based on the plan map, it looks like it will be sited on the land that Kainga Ora has purchased for housing northwest of State Highway 29/Cambridge Rd area).

Furthermore, we think it is unlikely people living at The Lakes, Pyes Pa and Omanawa areas will see the new Tauriko housing area as their local community. People are likely to prefer to go to a local facility in their community that is within a short travel distance and easily accessible.

As a general community development principle, it would be worthwhile for TCC to identify what geographical area The Lakes, Pyes Pa and Omanawa residents see as their natural local community. This would underpin the principles of community development that community centres and hubs help promote.

Finding out where people naturally gravitate to and identify with as their local community centre could be done in other parts of Tauranga as well. For example, are Bellevue residents more likely to gravitate to the proposed Brookfield Hub than the Matua peninsula centre which the plan indicates

is 'their local'? Finding out what people feel about and see as their local community would endorse the plan's intention to support people-led solutions.

### **3. Ensure location of community centre areas are overlaid on roading maps**

Further to our points above about community areas that people feel they belong to, following conversations with managers of community centres as part of SocialLink's collaborative practice service (see below for more information about that role) we recommend on their behalf that Tauranga City Council maps of community centre areas be clearly overlaid on roading maps. This will help centres to be more visible to their community areas.

### **4. Ensure Community Centres become part of emergency plans with secure lines of communication to Civil Defence/Emergency Operations Centre**

Centres are local go-to places for support for the local population. Ensuring Community Centres become part of emergency plans with secure lines of communication to Civil Defence/EOC will allow centres to inform locals of where local support can be reached etc, particularly if travel becomes impossible. This recommendation has also come from discussions with community centre managers as part of SocialLink's collaborative practice service.

### **5. Working in partnership and supporting collaboration initiatives that SocialLink can provide**

SocialLink is a partner of TCC and as such TCC funds SocialLink to help build capability of community organisations such as community centres so encourage TCC to utilise our services.

SocialLink currently offers services and initiatives in the community development area and would be pleased to support the implementation of the Community Centres Action and Investment Plan. Below are the initiatives we are leading and involved in.

We note that the TCC rightly intends to work in partnership with a range of facility providers, organisations and networks and has a number of guiding principles and strategic outcomes in its plan. Below are some of the particular principles and areas that we could support the effective implementation of the plan.

#### **- Principles: Connected Community Centres and Partnering and Collaboration (pg 29-30)**

We note the plan is placing importance on relationship building across the whole network of community centres and building connected Community Centres.

SocialLink is already working to support community centre managers as part of its collaborative community practice and support of community centre organisations such as Merivale through its organisational support advisory service.

#### **- Principle: Capability Building pg 31**

We note that 'Council will work proactively with all community centre providers (as required) to help increase capability, support governance and management and provide good practice resources.'

SocialLink provides training, mentoring and support opportunities for the social and community sector through its Training, Networking and Events service, Mentoring service, Volunteering Services and Organisational Support Service.

For example, our Organisational Support Advisor has supported Merivale Community Centre Incorporated with governance and operational development. We note in the plan that the Council will 'explore ways Council can more proactively support and enhance the governance capability of Merivale Community Centre Incorporated, the providers of the current community centre.' Pg 58.

We can assist with some of the opportunities identified on page 28 of the draft plan for example:

- Provide governance and management advisory service and good practice resources to support all community centres, regardless of ownership.
- Develop partnerships with other service providers (social, health).