



Central Otago District Council

Economic and Business Development Strategy, 2008-2011

“This Act provides for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities taking a sustainable development approach”

Section 3, Local Government Act 2002.

October 2008

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1. Introduction

1.1. *Mission Statement*

To proactively work with community groups, business and organisations to identify opportunities and facilitate initiatives in the area by providing a level of service that helps to build the Central Otago economy.

Pursuing this mission will result in:

- ❖ a thriving economy that has benefits both for businesses and residents alike;
- ❖ a successful business community, thus enhancing the values (and business potential) of Central Otago.

1.1.1. Key Priorities identified by the community to focus on¹:

- **Skills development:** the community wants clarification of employer requirements and programmes to be developed that will fill the gaps both in education and inward migration, and have an available workforce for industry.
- **Economic development:** the community wants to ensure that district is promoted as a good place to live, that development opportunities in the district are identified and that there is assistance to get through legislative requirements.
- **Housing:** the community wants quality affordable housing available, more accommodation for seasonal workers and a good supply of rental accommodation.
- **Education:** the community wants an accessible range and good quality education services for Central Otago, together with education and training programmes to meet industry needs.
- **Ease of doing business:** the business community wants user friendly services, consent processes streamlined, easy access to information from all agencies and a high level of leadership, advocacy and services from Council.
- **Transport and Communications:** the community wants a well connected and safe roading system, better telecommunications services throughout Central and improved public transport to enable people to get around.

¹ CODC Community Outcomes 2007/08 to 2013/14.

- **Heritage:** the community wants heritage associated tourism and business opportunities identified as well as clear guidelines for managing heritage sites.
- **Water:** the community wants adequate irrigation while ensuring sustainable waterways.
- **Tourism:** the community wants the focus to be on our natural environment and heritage, to have a well managed tourism industry and to have local marketing plans developed.

1.2. *The mandate for a strategy: LTCCP*

The Council's community outcomes and long term council community plan (LTCCP) provides the mandate and direction for the economic and business development strategy. The LTCCP sets out the main objectives of the Council's spending and proposed services over the next ten years, with specific actions costed and prioritised. The economic and business development strategy must be consistent with and supportive of the long term community plan.

1.3. *Sustainable businesses and communities*

Council has adopted the Central Otago Strategy for sustainability. It observes that Central Otago will be the first and worst affected by people purchasing based on distance impact and cost considerations.

An active response will result in the following benefits for the district:

- Reduction in both waste and cost,
- Improved trade opportunities,
- Loyalty and connection with Central Otago.

Economic systems, along with environmental and social systems, are a key component of ensuring that Central Otago becomes and remains a sustainable place to live and work.

A key platform of the strategy will be to reinforce sustainable solutions and opportunities.

1.4. *Consultation with sector groups*

A critical element of the economic and business development policy is the need to consult fully and on an ongoing basis with the appropriate business sector and community groups. This will ensure that the policy gains broad community support and that the workload in implementing the policy is shared.

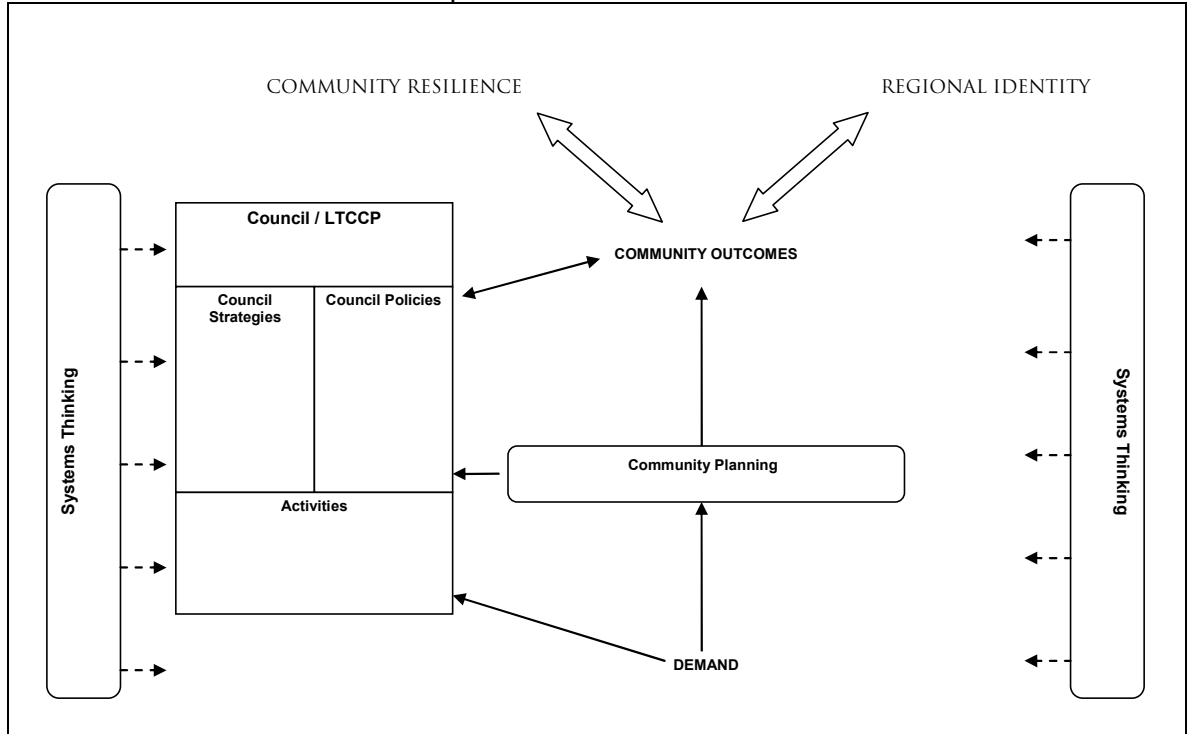
Project groups involving community or special interest groups may also be formed to provide relevant input or expertise with respect to specific projects.

As important as formal consultation is the need to maintain conversations with a wide range of business and community organisations and individuals.

1.5. Relationship structure

Table 1 demonstrates the linkages between the components that influence and drive Council activities and strategies.

Table 1: Council Relationship Structure



1.6. Integrated approach

An integrated approach will be undertaken under the umbrella of the District Development Committee to ensure that any activities undertaken in the context of the economic and business development policy are carried out in conjunction with Community Boards, Tourism Central Otago, the districts promotions groups and other business related interest groups. There will also be significant cross departmental co-operation with the Council's Planning and Environment and Assets Departments. This will ensure that there is ready access to a range of skills and expertise and the ability to form multi-skilled project teams and co-ordinated strategies.

Previous work, such as the Basin Blueprint Studies, has enabled Council to commence the task of translating the elements of the district's growth into infrastructure plans. The economic drivers studied highlighted the strong employment and construction growth in the district since 2001 and offered several growth scenarios (continuation, residential containment, and tourism plateaus scenarios) based on their analysis.

The development of the regional identity has been in response to concerns about the negative aspects of growth. Its purpose is to express those things that are

special about the district and as we come to understand these special differences we will protect those values unique to the area. Our regional identity is about reinforcing those values that are special to us as a place to live, work and play for now and in the future. To maintain these values businesses, community groups and even individuals are encouraged to use the brand and aspire to the following principles – making a difference, respecting others, embracing diversity, adding value, having integrity, learning from the past, making a sustainable difference, protecting our rich heritage and meeting obligations. Having a clear identity now assists in providing integration in management within the Council.

1.7. Background and scene-setting

Central Otago has a population of 17,450² (provisionally, as at July 2007). With an area of 9,947 square kilometres, population density across the district is very low. This gives rise to a number of quite distinct localities each with their own economic and social characteristics. This poses particular challenges for an integrated economic and business development policy.

Since the turn of the century Central Otago has been through a remarkable transformation. From a district of static population and marginal economic growth Central Otago has become a star economic performer, to the extent that for both the 2006 and 2007 years BERL rated the Central Otago district economy as the 2nd best performing in New Zealand (based on population, business unit, employment and value added / GDP growth³).

The 10 year performance⁴, compared to that of New Zealand is shown here:

Long-Term KPIs	%pa for 1997-2007	
	Central Otago District	New Zealand
Resident population growth	1.4	1.2
Real Value Added (GDP) growth	3.8	3.0
GDP per capita growth	2.3	1.8
Employment growth	3.4	2.4
Productivity growth	0.6	0.8
Business units growth	3.5	3.5
Business size growth	-0.1	-1.0

source: BERL Regional Database, Statistics NZ

As can be seen, over this period, the Central Otago economy has out-performed the national economy on virtually every measure reported on by BERL. Of some concern, however, is the per person productivity within the district. Labour productivity is only 88% that of the national average. The productivity of people employed in manufacturing and building, business services, recreation services and social services has actually declined over the last three years. What productivity growth there is has been mainly driven by the primary and to a lesser extent the retail and distribution

² Central Otago District Quarterly Review – Statistics New Zealand, March 2008.

³ BERL Regional Economic Indicators 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, May 2008.

⁴ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008

sectors. The overall productivity reflects that Central Otago remains a predominantly low wage economy!

On a larger scale, of concern is that world government and financial institutions are battling to avert a major global recession, potentially the largest since the great depression of the 1930's. At the time of writing, New Zealand has already experienced a technical recession (two successive quarters of economic contraction) and the world financial markets are under severe stress with many credit chains stretched to (and beyond) breaking.

Local drivers are also causes for concern. Central Otago house prices, falling across much of New Zealand, have continued to increase (at worst) or plateaued (at best) and remain largely unaffordable to new home buyers. Many commodity prices have increased significantly over the last two years, with petrol, dairy as well as fruit and vegetable prices receiving almost daily mention. The downward correction occurring at the time of writing will not restore prices to levels seen one to two years ago. Finally, indications are that the population growth that has contributed to (and resulted from) much of Central Otago's good performance of the last five has plateaued.

Offsetting this, in 2007 / 08 Central Otago experienced its best summer for horticulture and viticulture. After several years of decline, indications are that sheep farming, still the mainstay of Central Otago's primary industry, will return to profitability. Building consent numbers and values (both commercial and residential) remain at high levels compared to the late twentieth century.

Therefore, macro issues and local influences are engaged in a battle that may determine the economic performance of the district for the next few years. It is hard to see the local factors triumphing at this time of uncertainty; however it is likely that the fundamentals of the Central Otago economy have changed and matured to the extent that (barring some catastrophic event, that will make the state of the local economy inconsequential) it will ride the storm well and continue to flourish in the near to medium future.

Some additional comments on specific sectors follow in Section 2.

2. The Central Otago economy

2.1. Current Conditions

The significant negative factors are as follows:

- Indicatively, the Central Otago economy has peaked and is consolidating.
- The wine industry is facing a challenge with high production levels and an increasingly competitive world market. Grape production still exceeds wine production facilities.
- Tourism growth, though positive, is slowing. Foreign visitor numbers to NZ are likely to fall in the short term. The branding exercise is relevant.
- Telecommunications coverage in Central Otago, both cellphone and broadband, reflects the rural nature of the district – in other words, it is poor outside the immediate vicinity of the districts towns.
- Inward migration is slowing.
- The national economic outlook is sobering:
 - inflation about 4% - 5% annually,
 - the national debt is high, with only Iceland rating worse in the OECD on some measures⁵,
 - interest rates will remain high for the next year or so, with credit availability offsetting a falling official cash rate (OCR),
 - oil prices are historically high and unlikely to return to levels seen in the early part of the century.
- International commodity prices, while strong, will come under pressure with many of the world's major economies stuttering. However the current level of the NZD (at about 55 - 60 cents US) will help sustain confidence.
- Seasonality of industry in Central Otago.
- The expiration of mining rights (in effect, ownership of the right to use water) in 2021 is leading to some uncertainty within the rural community and new models are being developed to move beyond this point.

The bright spots include the following.

- Population increased by 15% between 2001 and 2006 and is estimated to have grown by a further 5% since.
- The tourism industry shows plenty of scope for new product development (e.g. wine tourism, high country activities, recreation).

⁵ Hansard Records (Hon Michael Cullen), 5 August 2008.

- Central Otago wines continue to win international awards, heightening the perception of the district as a producer of superior product.
- Central Otago's location relative to Queenstown-Lakes (tourism spin-off as well as supporting industries that are finding Queenstown too expensive to locate in).
- The construction sector is continuing to perform solidly in both residential and non-residential construction.
- Central Otago is still a popular domestic holiday and retirement destination.
- Central Otago is under-populated relative to available physical infrastructure.
- Central Otago's dependence on pastoral farming (and the ups and downs of the commodity cycle) is slowly declining as the economy diversifies and winegrowing provides continued growth impetus.
- Climate change is generally good news for the Central Otago District. Offsetting increased variability and occurrence of extreme conditions, an increase in mean annual temperature of 2° centigrade could see the area of land suitable for horticulture or viticulture increase significantly.

2.2. Sector comment

2.2.1. Primary (excluding winegrowing)

Pastoral farming remains the dominant component of the Central Otago economy. Record prices for milk products has seen a number of dairy conversions (as well as an increasing amount of land being used for stock winter grazing) in the Upper Taieri, Tarras, Teviot and Manuherikia catchments. This in turn has placed the spotlight on the importance of water availability and irrigation systems. With the associated expiration of mining privileges in 2021 the next few years is likely to see major changes in the intensity of farming on the valley floor areas in Central Otago.

After a number of poor years, indications are that sheep farming will return to profitability in 2008/9. However, agriculture remains subject to international commodity price cycles and international exchange rates.

The recent lowering of the NZD should also provide some relief for Central Otago farmers.

2.2.2. Horticulture

Central Otago has a range of horticulture businesses. The stone fruit sector (predominantly cherries and apricots) has enjoyed good returns in recent years, with FTE (full time equivalent) employment numbers almost doubling from 2005 to 2007⁶. The pipfruit sector, however, has slumped, reaching it nadir in 2005 with FTE employment numbers fewer than 100, only 33% of the people employed in 2001. The

⁶ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

big opportunity for the pipfruit sector comes from a NZ Trade & Enterprise (NZTE) report that identified Central Otago as the best location in New Zealand to grow low residue or organic apples⁷.

Central Otago's horticulture industry is also the basis for a burgeoning value added food processing sector. Central Otago's continental climate ensures that many flavours are cleaner and stronger than elsewhere in the Country. This climate also enables top end niche products such as olive oil and saffron can be produced locally to an exceptional standard.

2.2.3. Viticulture

Viticulture has been a headline performer for Central Otago. Central Otago Pinot Noir continues to win awards and accolades in most markets. New plantings have increased the stocked area at a rate of between 15% - 30% per annum for the last eight years, although new plantings are expected to decrease in the next two years⁸. Grape production continues to outstrip wine production capacity, with Central grapes being trucked around the country. This is a potential concern for the sector.

While the industry is well managed and generally well resourced one of the potential factors going forward will be the sustainability of the large number of boutique wineries and whether the industry will see some form of rationalisation.

2.2.4. Construction

General construction has experienced a boom over the last few years and now makes up almost twenty percent of the total fulltime employment in the district⁹. The year to the end of July 2008 saw the value of building consent applications reach a new level of \$106.5M¹⁰, an increase of 16% over the previous 12 months and an increase of 94% since 2003.

As with other industry sectors, indications are that the rate of increase of new commercial and residential development is slowing and now be declining. However, anecdotally, the building sector remains in reasonable health compared to some other areas of the Country.

A concern has been the lack of skilled staff for this sector. While this undoubtedly remains the case to some extent, the shortages of trades' people have become more manageable recently.

2.2.5. Tourism

The tourism sector continues to grow and to play an increasingly important part to the Central Otago economy. Central Otago continues to grow as a tourist destination, particularly with attractions such as the Otago Central Rail Trail. Tourism growth has been significant compared to the rest of New Zealand, bed nights increasing by 13.7% in the year to January 2008 compared to 2.7% for the remainder¹¹.

⁷ Regional Economic Impact of the Otago Pipfruit Industry. 2007, Economic Solutions Ltd.

⁸ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

⁹ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

¹⁰ Central Otago District Council building consents statistics, 2008.

¹¹ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

Central Otago includes a very significant DOC estate which continues to increase as a result of the land tenure review process. New high country parks such as the Oteake Recreation Area (on the Hawkdun Range) offer increasing recreational outdoor based tourist activities. In combination with the (to be completed) Outdoor Recreation Strategy it confirms the importance of the outdoor environment to Central Otago.

Golf Tourism is also a potential opportunity, with the Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago districts becoming the home to an increasing number of high end as well as exceptional second tier courses.

The Central Otago regional identity is also providing impetus to the industry by identifying our point of difference.

2.2.6. Retail and Distribution Services

Retail and distribution remains a significant employer (23.4% of total district employment in 2007) but is still some way behind the primary sector (31.9%) and about the same as manufacturing and building (19.3%)¹². This section of the economy has experienced steady growth over the last few years but may contract if personal spending levels decline and business activity contracts. This sector includes machinery and vehicles, personal and household goods wholesaling, food retailing and personal and household goods retailing, accommodation, cafes and restaurants and transport services.

2.2.7. Business Services

This sector is the largest contributor to district GDP (30.6% in 2007) but employs only 12.2% of the workforce¹³. This sector includes electricity and gas supply, communication services, finance, insurance, services to finance and insurance, property services and business services.

2.3. Potential sunrise industries

Industries that show long term potential include the following:

- **Education facilities:** the Otago Polytechnic is at the forefront of sustainable practice education for both tertiary study and as a consultant to business. It is also moving to cater increasingly for part time studies, where people already have work and life commitments that rule out the consideration for full time study
- **Film production:** this is already a thriving industry in and around Queenstown but there is a need for new production and set facilities in reasonable proximity to the Queenstown-based industry. Central Otago has been recognised as a Film Friendly district by Film NZ and the District Council is a member of a regional initiative, Film Otago Southland, the main objective of which is to grow film related activity in the south of the South Island;

¹² Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

¹³ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1997 – 2007 – Business & Economic Research Ltd, April 2008.

- **Motor sports and vehicle summer testing facilities:** the proposed motor sport park in Cromwell is currently working its way through the consents appeal process. Pending the outcome of this, the development of a facility, complimentary for testing with the Cardrona Snow Farm, means Cromwell has the potential to be the centre for an automotive testing centre of excellence.
- **Energy:** higher energy costs will improve the economic viability of methane gas extraction from the Maniototo's lignite coal deposits or alternate energy sources such as wind-farms or hydro. Some of these options have become much politicised as New Zealand looks to become more focused on issues of environment and sustainability; however there is the potential for an element of compromise at a national level as economic growth, community health and living standards also warrant some consideration.
- **Retirement housing and other infrastructure and services aimed at the retirement market:** many retirees are financially well off and are looking for an active 'lifestyle' retirement where they need not forego city amenities and services but can enjoy an excellent climate and a variety of outdoor pursuits.
- **Mineral exploration and mining:** with the increased price of gold and other minerals the viability of this activity is improving and there are several active prospecting programmes underway in the district at the time of writing. As with energy generation, the cost of moving from investigation to production is considerable and takes some time.

2.4. *Risks to the Central Otago economy*

The Central Otago economy shows several embedded features that point to underlying risk factors. These are:

- Continued skills shortages in the trades sectors.
- Increasing skill shortages in the primary sectors.
- Possible shortages of seasonal labour.
- High house and land prices.
- A skewed demographic profile with a higher than national average in the over 60 years cohort and a lower than average 20 to 39 cohort.
- Rapidly changing land use patterns and the emergence of some rural/urban tensions around land use and life-style development trends.
- The potential for Central Otago to lose its point of difference and become like anywhere else.
- Almost total reliance on external capital for major development projects.

- The impact of Queenstown and Wanaka's economic cycles on Central Otago.
- Central Otago's vulnerability to external factors such as interest rate and exchange rate movements, adverse international trading conditions and the like.
- Central Otago's vulnerability to natural disasters such as climatic aberrations, floods, earthquakes and plant diseases.

3. Economic and business development components

3.1. Essential features

In view of the cyclical nature of the Central Otago economy and its vulnerability to primary product commodity cycles, international monetary and trading conditions and imported energy prices, the revised three-year strategy should aim at:

- Maintaining business confidence in the current business conditions;
- Being supportive of economic diversification that results in a robust local economy;
- Being business-friendly by way of a simple and efficient compliance and consents process, and ready access to current statistics and economic analyses. The maintenance of close links with business groups and industry leaders is very important;
- Encouraging inward investment and new migrants;
- Enabling the Council to act as a business advocate with relevant government and business agencies that can provide funding and policy advice.
- Enabling the Council to focus its limited economic and business development resources in areas that are the most effective.

3.2. Action Plan

Below are the specific elements of the strategy:

3.2.1. Processing of business enquiries

Why do this?

Many enquiries are received from people interested in setting up businesses in Central Otago. Other enquiries are received from people, already in business, who need up to date and relevant information to assist their decision making. Meeting this need provides an opportunity to promote and encourage the regional identity and demonstrate the Council's interest in meeting businesses' needs.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Business groups
- Otago Chamber of Commerce
- Statistics New Zealand
- BERL

Key actions:

- Maintain and promote a community/business profile for the Central Otago District.

- Collate business indicator statistics and provide this information on the Council's website.
- Maintain and improve the business directory and website.
- Monitor national and local business conditions and ensure Council and business are kept up to date on current trends.
- Develop a co-ordinated response to start-up and other enquiries. Create networks of business contacts e.g. real estate, business advisors, marketing, accounting, law and associated businesses, so that when enquiries are received the appropriate information is readily available.

Tangible results:

- A stock of up-to-date information that is available for public and business enquiries.
- A website that contains all appropriate information for business inquiries.
- Improved relationships and information sharing with various sectors in the community.

3.2.2. Pan-Otago contribution

This refers to the Council's role to identify, participate and deliver strategic directions through pan-Otago initiatives that are of significant importance to the communities of Central Otago.

Why do this?

From time to time opportunities and issues will be identified where it is appropriate for Council to lead the development of strategy or a position or outcome that will benefit the entire community. These opportunities and issues are generally beyond the scope or ability of the local business and resident community to approach and may involve a pan-Otago approach. These generally fall under the banner of Otago Forward, the regional economic development forum, of which Central Otago is a member.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Otago Forward
- Businesses
- Community
- Sector Groups e.g. Film Otago Southland
- Government agencies e.g. Ministry for Social Development, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry of Economic Development
- Consultants

Key Actions:

- Where projects are identified that have significance and a regional or district wide basis the importance of any Council role will need to be determined.
- If there is an appropriate Council role it is likely that this might be defined through the development of a policy, strategy or membership and participation in organisations with specific purpose.
- Specific Council input will then be determined on a case by case basis.
- As a member of Otago Forward, Council will from time to time consider the level of input and discretion it exercises towards the Otago Forward programme.

Tangible results:

- Development of Council strategies and policies.
- Step change improvements to key components of the Central Otago District economy or significant initiatives undertaken.
- Benefits to the economy of Central Otago as a result of growth and benefit to the regional economy.

3.2.3. Business project facilitation

This refers to the Council's assistance with and/or co-ordination of projects that are judged to be of economic benefit to Central Otago.

Why do this?

From time to time projects may be identified that need Council input or leadership.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Businesses
- Community
- Government agencies e.g. Ministry for Social Development, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry of Economic Development
- Consultants

Key Actions:

- Where specialised skills are required, or a significant time and other resources are required that cannot be met by Council's staff, then specialist consultants may be brought in on a contract basis.
- The role of the business development manager will primarily be one of management of the contract or additional resources on behalf of Council to ensure the key aims of the project are met.
- Where additional resources or expertise is required this will be managed on a case by case basis, including application to Council for the necessary funding.

Tangible results:

- Participation in, or facilitation of, large projects or business proposals.
- Step change improvements to key components of the Central Otago District economy or community.

3.2.4. Applied research

This refers to the Council's role to develop programmes and to undertake economic impact and related applied research to develop or justify programmes that bolster the district's economy.

Why do this?

Outputs will be used to build understanding and knowledge as an improvement tool to ensure that good community decisions can be made and improvement opportunities identified. Also, by using applied research methodology Council will also be able to

use data to demonstrate the value of Council (rate payer) contributions to activities and events within Central Otago.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Businesses
- Community and community organisations
- Economic Research agencies (i.e. BERL)

Key Actions:

- Development of in-house expertise to develop, undertake and report research undertakings.
- Identification of suitable activities or events and a programme to undertake applied research for these.
- Reporting and analysis made available to both report on the state of these events and activities and to drive improvements.

Tangible results:

- Clearly defined outcomes and recommendations that demonstrate the impact of events or activities on the district, leading to appropriate allocation of Council funds and excellent advice to business and the community.

3.2.5. Business development

This refers to the identification and promotion of opportunities for new businesses and employment growth.

Why do this?

This will help broaden the Central Otago business base, facilitate economic diversification, and create new employment and training opportunities.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Businesses and business groups e.g. the processed foods cluster, Central Otago Winegrowers Assn
- Community
- Government agencies, in particular the Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry of Economic Development, Seasonal Solutions Co-operative Ltd
- Consultants
- Training providers such as the Otago Polytechnic and Otago Chamber of Commerce

Key Actions

- Periodically consult with the community to identify barriers to business.
- Take appropriate action to alleviate these concerns and facilitate solutions, for example, in the inward migration or international immigration area (if particular sectors or skills in the community are in short supply).

- Identify the skills required in the community (including involvement in skills audits or the labour force analyses) and participate in the development of programmes to meet these needs through appropriate education and training programmes.
- Encourage the creation of networks to build on business opportunities or be involved in various sector groups e.g. wine, horticulture, food networks.
- Establish a good working relationship with local training providers such as the Otago Polytechnic, Otago Southland Employers' Association and the Otago Chamber of Commerce.

Tangible results:

- Skills requirements are identified and met.
- New training programmes are developed to meet these needs.
- Facilitation of new industry clusters and business networks.

3.2.6. Promotion of the regional identity

This is aimed at building momentum in the use of Central Otago's identity and brand.

Why do this?

There is a need to ensure that work carried out in the economic and business development field is supportive and takes advantage of the regional brand and identity.

Who is involved?

- Council (including departments such as Planning and Environment, Assets, and Tourism Central Otago)
- Otago Chamber of Commerce
- Other community groups

Key actions:

- Promote the use and benefits of the brand to current and new businesses looking at establishing a presence in Central Otago.
- Ensure that new businesses assessing whether to set up in Central Otago are aware of the brand and its values.
- Identify businesses (existing and new) that would support the brand by producing products that reflect the values of the brand and would promote the Central Otago identity outside the region.
- Work with the Brand Manager on developing regional identity and brand strategies.
- Promote and advocate the Central Otago Awards.

Tangible results:

- Increased use of the brand and its values by local businesses.
- Businesses attracted to the area that support the values of the brand

3.2.7. Networking, Liaison and Communication

It is essential to understand the issues facing local business and to develop easy and productive working relationships with business groups and community agencies. This is as much based around conversations as it is around formal communication or consultation processes.

Why do this?

There is a critical need for Council to understand the issues and concerns local businesses are dealing with so that Council can advocate, or take actions on behalf of the business sector. Understanding regional and national trends, being knowledgeable about national government programmes and funding opportunities of interest to business, and reporting these to the business community will ensure good relations with business and the creation of an environment conducive to the creation of new businesses.

Who is involved?

- Council
- Government agencies – Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Economic Development
- Sector groups and organisations - Seasonal Solutions, primary industry associations
- Regional and national agencies – EDANZ, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Otago Forward
- Business community
- Media

Key actions:

- Create and maintain networks with local businesses to understand what services are available locally and what the issues are for these businesses.
- Create and maintain networking opportunities with regional and national agencies such as EDANZ, NZ Trade and Enterprise and Otago Forward.
- Act as an advocate for local businesses and the community.
- Communicate with the business and general community through visits, presentations, radio interviews, media releases and newsletters.
- Organise and / or promote annual awards that celebrate best practice.

Tangible results:

- High awareness of the importance of economic and business development in the district.
- Articulation of the opportunities and issues associated with Central Otago business.
- Creation of close relationships with national and regional economic development agencies and groups.
- Community recognition of business best practice and top performers in the community.

4. Strategy Commencement and Duration.

This strategy is in effect from 1 November 2008.

A subsequent strategy will be developed and adopted no later than November 2011.