



# 'Tipping point' for coastal Christchurch communities

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STACY SQUIRES/STUFF

Southshore Residents Association chairwoman Lynda Burdekin says residents have been frustrated it has taken Regenerate Christchurch this long talk to the public about a regeneration strategy.

Frustrated residents in coastal Christchurch suburbs are hopeful they have reached a "tipping point" toward the regeneration of their area.

Government planning agency Regenerate Christchurch will on Sunday start public engagement for a Southshore and South New Brighton regeneration strategy, and has already begun meeting with community groups.

The strategy would look at short, medium and long term solutions for the coastal suburbs to help them adapt to climate change issues, and would also look at issues which remain from the Christchurch earthquakes.

Iain McGregor/Stuff

Southshore and South Brighton residents hope a regeneration strategy for their area will lead to some action.

It would cover the area from Rodney St to the end of Southshore spit, and would effectively provide advice to the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, the Crown and the community. It does not have any legal weight but could lead to a formal regeneration plan, which would have statutory power under the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Act.

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Regenerate Christchurch chief executive Ivan Iafeta said the project was "one of the first examples of adaptive planning in New Zealand".

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Southshore and South New Brighton are both expected to feel the effects of climate change in the future.

"Climate change, including sea level rise, could significantly affect many coastal areas, and these conversations about possible options for adaptation and implementation could benefit Canterbury, and even other parts of New Zealand."

Adaptive planning combines guidance from four Government-developed climate scenarios with local observations to decide when pre-agreed actions need to be put into place.

Iafeta said a number of groups had been invited to meet with them, including residents associations from Southshore and South Brighton, Christchurch Coastal Residents United and Sustain New Brighton.

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South New Brighton looking towards Southshore from the air.

The Southshore Residents Association had a meeting on Thursday afternoon. Chairwoman Lynda Burdekin said it was a chance for them to ask some questions and ensure their "top of mind" issues would be covered.

She said residents had been "very frustrated" at the length of time it had taken to get to this point, but felt the strategy was their best chance to get things moving. There was a feeling it was a "tipping point" where things started to happen.

Burdekin said the main issues for residents getting flood protection including at the estuary edge, issues around District Plan restrictions for new buildings and extensions, and an "overall nervousness about where we're going" in relation to maintaining insurance and mortgages on houses in the area.

She said residents wanted a chance to take an adaptive approach to the effects of climate change and sea level rise, possibly as a series of measures over time, as opposed to a blanket response to something that would take affect over 30 or 40 years.

"We're very keen to be seen to be leading the way in a community that's got to face up to climate change challenges."

A community hub will open at 82 Estuary Rd on Sunday so residents can contribute to the

regeneration strategy.

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Regenerate was at the early stages of developing the regeneration strategy, but hoped to come up with options by October. These would be evaluated before the strategy was written and made available to the public in early 2019.

The Christchurch City Council has been working on a study of the high groundwater problems in South New Brighton. Strategy and transformation general manager Brendan Anstiss said the report would be "presented to the council in the near future in a publicly excluded session" and would not be released to the public at this stage.

"We will await the council's decisions on the report, and work with Regenerate Christchurch to determine the timing of the release of information."

He said information from the report was due to be released in the engagement stage of Regenerate's work on the Southshore and South New Brighton regeneration strategy.

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