

## Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, 26 June, 2019  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Council Chamber  
 Forum North, Rust Avenue  
 Whangarei

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Cr Cherry Hermon (Chairperson)</b> <b>Cr Gavin Benney</b> <b>Cr Crichton Christie</b> <b>Cr Vince Cocurullo</b> <b>Cr Tricia Cutforth</b> <b>Cr Shelley Deeming</b> <b>Cr Phil Halse</b> <b>Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai</b> <b>Cr Greg Innes</b> <b>Cr Greg Martin</b> <b>Cr Sharon Morgan</b> <b>Cr Anna Murphy</b>
<b>Not in Attendance</b>	<b>Cr Sue Glen</b>

**Scribe**                      **N Pestana (Team Leader Democracy)**

Cr Cherry Hermon convened the briefing at 2pm.

**1. Apologies**  
 Cr Sue Glen

**2. Reports**

**2.1 New Theatre Options**

The purpose of the workshop is to provide Elected Members with an opportunity to discuss theatre design, with input from local experts, to inform future decisions about theatre / expo / conference centre investment.

Elected Members received a presentation from Ian Pritchard, Lachie McLean, Roger McClean and James Franklin.

**Discussion and Feedback**

### Requirements for a theatre

Ian Pritchard and his team took Elected Members through the requirements for a modern purpose built theatre.

- There needs to be space for loading and unloading, specific requirements for voice and music acoustics and dressing rooms.
- A flytower is essential as this enables a stage crew to hoist stage effects, quickly and quietly out of the view of the audience into the tower above the stage, rigging is the essence of a good theatre.
- It is possible to have a conference centre within the theatre but the requirements for a theatre must be met above the technical requirements for a conference centre.
- It is possible for the seating arrangements in the theatre to be arranged to make it multi-purpose.
- One full time technician would be required, casual staff could be used for the shows.
- The ability to host a variety of different shows and attract promoters is key.
- Ideally 600 – 800 seats but closer to 800 would be optimum.
- Some councillors held that the view that the space should be beautiful as going to the theatre is a special occasion.
- The ASB Theatre in Marlborough is the closest to the ideal model, there is a good partnership with ASB, good use for conventions, good usage numbers. The ASB Theatre in Marlborough cost \$24 million to build.
- Fringe hospitality attractions such as restaurants and hotels for before and after the show would make the theatre profitable.

### Site

There was discussion on where would be the best place for the theatre, at Forum North or as part of the Riverside Development.

- Some Elected Members felt that an Arts precinct at Forum North would be a benefit, particularly if there was an educational aspect which could be included. The theatre at Forum North would help the connection with the CBD and is a good way to repurpose the Forum North site. Parking would not be an issue.
- There were also some views that the theatre should be built as part of the Riverside Development as all the amenities would be there. The Hihiaua Cultural Centre and the Town Basin would also be a draw card. It was felt that there should be negotiations with the Riverside development team as to whether a theatre with the technical requirements could be built as part of the development as the hotel development is also crucial.

### Demographics

There was discussion on the demographics of the district and whether this would translate to use of the theatre which council would have to maintain. The theatre would have to be futureproofed. Ian Pritchard advised that a modern theatre would provide opportunities to reach a younger audience and education in creative industries. The venue can also be used by communities.

Does Council see this a social investment or an economic investment?

There was consensus that the theatre is a social or civic investment but there should be a legal entity separate from council that could apply for funding.

### **3. Closure of Meeting**

The workshop concluded at 15.53pm.