

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 5 February, 2020
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

In Attendance

Cr Greg Innes (Chairperson)
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Vince Cocurullo
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Ken Couper
Cr Tricia Cutforth
Cr Shelley Deeming
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Greg Martin
Cr Anna Murphy
Cr Simon Reid

Not in Attendance

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
Cr Carol Peters

Scribe Sue Reid (Democracy Adviser)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Her Worship the Mayor and Cr Peters.

2. Reports

Cr Innes convened the meeting and advised there would be discussion on two key topics. He confirmed that no decisions are made at these briefings, they are for information and discussion and both of these items will go to the Strategy, Planning and Development Committee where a formal resolution will be made.

Dominic Kula (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy) welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year and briefly touched on how we had

got to this point. Mr Kula acknowledged this was a national process with legislation coming through and this council wanted to recognise the space it wants to be in, working with the Regional Council and other community stakeholders. Also, to work alongside all northern councils to make sure we have risk assessments and are well placed to respond to any national incidents.

Bernadette Aperahama (Senior Strategic Planner) introduced Matt de Boer from Northland Regional Council and Hamish Sykes (Graduate Strategic Planner). She also introduced Delaraine Armstrong and Rosie Wellington (Te Huinga representatives).

2.1 Climate Change Briefing

Ms Aperahama took councillors through the presentation which covered:

- Context and Climate change projections for Northland.
- Central Government Activity and transitional period.
- Whangarei District Council Timeline.
- Regional & District Adaptation, the work the council has been doing and the various options.
- Mr de Boer covered the Regional & District Adaptation and the collaboration between the councils to undertake a two-stage risk assessment to get an idea of the risks, then map them to see what the effects would be across the communities. The Tai Tokerau Councils Climate Change Adaptation Strategy aims to set out a vision of the planning work programme that is needed to make the right decisions now.

Ms Aperahama continued with the presentation:

- Climate change mitigation where council's ability and the opportunities to support action are quite extensive.
[At this point there was a councillor request to record this part of the presentation to share with the public, but it was noted that this presentation will be made available to the public with the minutes, via the website].
- Key messages to get consistency in what councils communicate to the community groups. Ms Aperahama said they would like to engage councillors support and comfort level with those key messages. The key messages were taken as read and the Chair advised comments would be taken on them later. Ms Aperahama said the messages put out to the public need to be consistent.
- Climate Change Action Plan and declaration of a climate emergency – recognising the emergency situation we are in and the need for this to be co-developed with hapu partners and the community.

- Climate Action Plan for the District – this includes touch points with elected members and Ms Aperahama went through it briefly and advised it will be coming to Elected Members for review and decision-making before going out to the community. Ms Aperahama also covered some of the areas of action and examples of local solutions.
- Next Steps – Ms Aperahama covered the Climate Change key messages and the Climate action Plan.

The presentation concluded at 9.33 and the Chair advised that through legislation a pragmatic approach needed to be taken. He said there needed to be facilitation in terms of the community taking ownership, understanding climate change and looking at the risks. This was crucially important for the community, including hapu and our business and investment within the region. The process should end up so the risk is monitored and understood with greater certainty for the community to respond to climate change.

Discussion and Questions from Councillors:

- If we are reducing our emissions what are the challenges and what are the emissions.

Ms Aperahama responded we do not have a complex picture of our emissions and it has been challenging to get information of carbon footprints from suppliers.

- When did central government start recording and what were the levels at the starting point.

Mr de Boer said Northland Regional Council use a base line and average this over a decade so that when we measure we can see emissions creep up over time. We want to say, from this point we are going to have a 25% reduction over 20 years or whatever but we will have to check the figures central government are using.

Ms Aperahama said there is a baseline on the 2017 level and the emissions stepping stones will be based on that.

- If the focus was shifted to the community, Council needs to be mindful they are work-ready but under-resourced and unable to respond to climate change.

The Chair advised they are looking at a balance between council and the community/public. The other issue is central government and when we start looking at a collaborative strategy to ensure there is strong ownership at hapu and community level which needs to be facilitated and looked at in terms of funding at a national and regional level.

- Council has a major role in infrastructure. We need the detail on what investment in infrastructure is required to assist the community to reduce emissions.
- Budget and changing resource consents were discussed and retrospectively fitting onto infrastructure that is already there.

The Chair advised the documents that go out would be in draft form and these will come formally to the Strategy, Planning and Development Committee as a council decision-making process to look at the financial implications.

- Are we running up a risk with doubling up with central government. Ms Aperahama said the action plan is for individuals or organisations to put their hands up for what they are going to do. Council already does things and have opportunities in day to day activities. She explained Council is already working with a sustainability network in Whangarei from a large number of sector representatives, but would appreciate councillors advising who the best contacts would be.
- There was a query about how we deal with development that has been approved.
Mr de Boer said Northland Regional Council have some significant examples of risk in the community but experience has shown there is no sense putting a hazard title on a property because you get a lot of pushback from the community. The only way is by working with the community to come up with an agreed plan and methodology around that.
- Mr Tony Horton (Manager – Strategy) said there is a hazard mapping process which will go within the District Plan and will look at regulation within the next two years. He said part of this also looks at the insurance industry and insurance in areas of buildings that are under risk. Mr Horton said there are mechanisms under the Resource Management Act to look at gross strategy and we want to include hazards within the District Plan.
- Communication with the public was commented on and the impact on projects already budgeted.
- There were queries around ETS.
- Forestry – will the harvesting of pine trees planted to offset emissions push the cost of paying for emissions onto future generations? Need a strategy for forestry.
- Do emitters based outside of New Zealand pay under the NZ ETS and contribute to the emissions profile of NZ or do they pay and contribute to the emissions framework of their own nation?
- Ms Aperahama was asked to fill out more about these matters.

The meeting adjourned at 10:03am and re-convened at 10:15.

2.2 Update on Whangarei District Growth Strategy

Mr Horton ran through the presentation which had been circulated with the agenda. He gave a recap of the briefings held on 4 December and 11 December 2019 and then handed over to Ms Alicia Lawrie (Strategic Urban Designer) who gave more detail around the Spatial Planning Programme.

Ms Lawrie outlined the delivery of the spatial plans and the two options presented.

Mr Horton discussed Marsden / Ruakaka and said that there were potentially some significant opportunities in that section if the port and naval base are given the green light. He said it was important to note the role of central government who are key to the success in this type of planning to get certainty of funding. Mr Horton wanted to bring this thinking to Councillors in order to prepare as much information as we can that is needed for this corridor. He referred to the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan and said he could send links and information to Councillors around this plan which showed the good things achieved through that programme.

The next steps were to bring the paper to the Strategy, Planning and Development Committee for a resolution. Based on the preferred option on that decision, work will start and engagement with community and stakeholders. Mr Horton said councillors will be kept up to date through meetings and workshops and more detail around what that programme looks like before coming to councillors for decision making.

Discussion and Questions from Councillors:

The Chair added that over the past three weeks there have been a number of meetings including a session in terms of infrastructure with LGNZ and the Minister of Local Government. He said a key interest is central government and the way that Council can work with them. He noted that a lot of the resources going into the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor are by central government and these needed to be looked at regarding Marsden. The Chair said tourism is having a major impact on infrastructure and there is a real need in the community for affordable housing which central government might be able to provide a solution for.

There was discussion around the process of spatial planning, what the community feels and that the type of housing that goes into areas is suitable for what is required over the whole district.

Mr Forlong said there were two issues – spatial planning and the emerging work programme. He said that with all the infrastructure coming into Whangarei, Council is going to have to work with relatively soon with both hapu and central government to start up the North Auckland Corridor Plan.

The need for infrastructure to keep up with growing areas was discussed and also the areas where the state highway splits a community.

Mr Dominic Kula (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy) said staff would give a recommendation to the Strategy, Planning and Development Committee in February.

3. Closure of Meeting

The meeting concluded at 11:12am.