

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 17 August, 2017
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

In Attendance	Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai (Chairperson) Cr Stu Bell Cr Crichton Christie Cr Vince Cocurullo Cr Tricia Cutforth Cr Shelley Deeming Cr Sue Glen Cr Phil Halse Cr Cherry Hermon Cr Greg Innes Cr Sharon Morgan Cr Anna Murphy
Not in Attendance	Cr Jayne Golightly Cr Greg Martin

Also in attendance: Rob Forlong (Chief Executive), Jill McPherson (General Manager- Strategy and Democracy), Sandra Boardman (General Manager – Community), Jeff Devine (Roading Manager), Alan Adcock (General Manager, Corporate), Dominic Kula (Manager, Infrastructure Development), Jennie Thomas (Democracy Advisor) and Nicolene Pestana (Team Leader – Democracy).

Facilitators: Jill McPherson and Sandra Boardman

1. Apologies

Cr Greg Martin and Cr Jayne Golightly

Her Worship the Mayor convened the briefing and welcomed the public to the briefing. Councillor Martin's apology was noted.

2. Reports

2.1 Community Outcomes and Prioritising new spending

Council is being asked to consider the community outcomes to be included in the 2018-2028 LTP as well as the approach, methods and tools to be used to prioritise projects and spend in the development of the 2018-2028 LTP.

The purpose of this briefing is to facilitate a discussion on these two matters.

Community Outcomes

Sandra Boardman ran through the section of the presentation relating to community outcomes.

As part of the development of the 2018-2028 LTP, Council is required to decide on whether to change the community outcomes used for the 2015-25 LTP.

The LTP 2015-25 community outcomes were compared to the results from the previous Council workshop. The ideas put forward in that workshop revealed several alternative outcomes to those used in the 2015-25 LTP.

Three options were put to the Elected Members:

- Option 1: To retain the 2015-25 LTP set of community outcomes;
- Option 2: To amend the 2015-25 LTP set of community outcomes incorporating some feedback from the previous Council workshop;
- Option 3: To build and agree on a new set of community outcomes.

Discussion

The section of the presentation relating to community outcomes was opened for discussion.

A view was expressed that there isn't much difference between the proposed new set of outcomes and the previous set. Sandra Boardman advised that the difference between the two is quite subtle. The essential difference is that the new set of Community Outcomes highlights the feelings of the community as opposed to the previous set which focused on services delivered to the community. Council was also advised that the previous set of outcomes had a strong focus on technology.

It was noted that the 2015-25 LTP outcomes make provision for a “growing and resilient economy”, whilst the new set does not adequately address the key issue of economic growth but instead refers to “prosperity”. The opinion was expressed that economic growth is a key issue. Whangarei must embrace growth and the question is whether the district is capturing the ability to grow, specifically in relation to asset management. Jill McPherson advised that in the briefings she has attended, the focus is on local development and prosperity which will lead to growth being generated.

The wording of proposed set of outcomes met with the approval of some elected members. It was stated that the proposed wording reflects the views of the community as put forth in the early engagement process, instils a sense of pride and connectivity in the district and has a fresh flavour. The emphasis on nature and the environment also met with approval. The ability to get around the district and the safety of the district were agreed as being important aspects. It was put that the community could relate to the new set as these suggestions come directly from the community.

In general, there was overall support shown for the “proud to be local” idea put forth in the proposed set. It was stated that this concept transcends across all community outcomes. There was general consensus amongst the elected members that the sense of place resulting from the “Love it here” campaign has been wonderful and added a sense of pride in the district.

The elected members stated that in addition to the outcomes listed in the new set, further emphasis should be placed on:

- Being open and explorative to new ideas;
- Prosperity in the sense of using our resources to our advantage, as opposed to wealth;
- Resilience and productivity;
- Economic growth, particularly in infrastructure and financial planning;
- Support for rural and urban communities by enabling communities to function independently.

Other elected members preferred tweaking the existing outcomes. A comment was made that the proposed set of outcomes are very loosely worded and there is a disconnection between what is envisaged in the LTP and the outcomes.

A question was raised as to whether there are any gaps that need to be addressed either in the LTP or in the outcomes. Council was advised that the outcomes can be community based or service driven and that the key determination is what the community wants to receive as a service. Council should consider the types of outcomes the community expects and how these can be achieved for the community.

A view was expressed that the outcomes should reflect what we are hearing from the community and whether these same outcomes will be reflected in three years. This statement was supported and it was stated that the outcomes must develop and grow.

A comment was made that a simple balance between the new set of outcomes and the current LTP outcomes would be the best way forward. It was stated that Council must be cautious when changing plans as the LTP may not fit the outcome. Concerns were raised as to whether some outcomes listed in the new set are aspects within the jurisdiction of the NRC and should not form part of the WDC outcomes.

Her Worship the Mayor advised that Council must be wary of stipulating a specific plan for community outcomes which are meant to be descriptive as opposed to detailed.

Prioritising new spending

Jill McPherson led the presentation and discussion on the uses of a prioritisation tool for 2018-2028 LTP to prioritise new spending. On the 12th – 13th September 2017, council will get a list of potential new spending areas coming from various sources and that list will be used to decide what can be included in the 2018-2028 LTP.

Elected Members were reminded that there is only so much money available.

A method of assessment with criteria was suggested as a way of prioritising spending. Irrespective of the process used to assess, council will still vote on the spend.

Several tools were utilised to gauge public opinion on which core services should rank the highest. These methods included:

- Survey Monkey – Ranking 1-10

A question was asked about much weight should be given to the results of the survey. Council was advised that the survey was small and the results should be interpreted cautiously.

- Interim Themes – public meetings

These are the themes received from the public at the early engagement meetings. The issue of safety featured quite predominantly and should be added into any core service.

- Council themes

These themes came out of the Council workshop and are on par with the community views.

- Earlier prioritisation framework

A pyramid was used to illustrate the prioritisation framework in the earlier briefing which did not meet with approval from Elected Members. The new diagram of interconnected circles was accepted as a better illustration of the prioritisation framework.

- Potential assessment criteria

Criteria could be measured utilising a table format with scores given for each project undertaken by Council. Elected members were advised that they would be asked to provide weighting to criteria which would be discussed at future Council briefings. Council was advised that the elected members would have an input in how the different projects are ranked and which projects are prioritised.

Discussion

The weighting of the outcomes was then opened for discussion.

A viewpoint was expressed that Council is here to make decisions of behalf of the community. Elected members are not averse to having assessment criteria but the community's views should tie up with the outcomes. There was a discussion on the process used to weight the priorities, which is a concern for the elected members. A comment was made that too much weight was placed on the assessment. Confirmation was sought as to who sets the scores and would the scores only be placed before Council once they have been worked out. This would curtail Council's decision-making powers. Council was advised that the table format suggested for the assessment criteria was drafted to support the elected members and act as a guide to remind them what they based their decisions on.

The elected members then stated their preference for the method used to determine the assessment criteria. A view was expressed that the table of assessment criteria is preferable as Council can be guided by the assessment criteria and it is helpful to new elected members to aid in decision making. Another member felt that the assessment criteria makes sense and is robust. A further comment was made that it is consistent and considering that there is not a lot of extra money to spend, there needs to be a robust, fair and equitable way to decide what to spend money on.

Financial Envelope

Jill McPherson advised the Financial Envelope section had been added to the presentation as a third item and would be dealt with by Alan Adcock.

Alan ran through the Financial Envelope results from the matrix from the previous briefing on Rates Movement and the Debt Profile.

The results reflected a Rates Movement of LGCI +2% + Growth with an initial Debt Level of \$160m. The second matrix reflected the Debt profile over the ten years, with

a majority supporting 'maintaining purchasing power until 2028' by having the debt increasing over 10 years in line with growth and inflation. Several elected members indicated that they would be prepared to increase debt beyond this for one off projects. Some of the elected members, however preferred an approach reflecting consistency of debt. Council was advised that this was only a starting point to allow us to start financial modelling, and further discussion would be needed before a draft position for consultation is determined.

3. Closure of Meeting

The meeting closed at 12h19pm.