

Council Briefing Agenda

Date: Thursday, 7 May, 2020

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting Room

Elected Members: Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
(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 Innes
Cr Greg Martin
Cr Anna Murphy
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

1. Apologies

2. Reports

2.1 LTP Reset Post COVID-19

1

3. Closure of Meeting

2.1 Long Term Plan Reset Post COVID-19

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 7 May 2020
Reporting officer: Dominic Kula (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy)

1 Purpose

To discuss the post COVID-19 approach the 2021-31 Long Term Plan

2 Background

Prior to COVID-19, Elected Members and staff had begun the process to develop the 2021-31 Long Term Plan (LTP). At Council Briefings on 5 March and 10 March, the following matters were covered:

- Overview of the building blocks of an LTP
- Proposed timeline
- Vision statement
- Strategic drivers
- Early engagement

The events of COVID-19 have fundamentally changed how we operate. In response to COVID-19, Council has moved swiftly to implement a mix of short and medium term responses, these include

1. Endorsing an initial Economic Recovery Strategy
2. Endorsing a COVID-19 Relief Package
3. Endorsing a reduction in the planned rates increase for consultation through the 2020-21 Annual Plan
4. Releasing a draft COVID-19 Response Strategy

The Economic Recovery Strategy (response 1) set an initial framework for Council's response to COVID-19, noting that further work would be done on the planning required to implement its actions.

Through the Annual Plan process Council has built on this, endorsing consultation on a reduction in planned rates for 2020/21, and \$3m for targeted relief (responses 2 and 3). Decisions made on these responses will set the direction of Council over the next 12 months.

However, and as acknowledged in the COVID-19 Response Strategy (response 4) to be considered at the Council meeting of 14 May, the recovery and reset of our local economy will extend beyond the next 12 months.

Our 2021-31 LTP will therefore need to build on the Response Strategy when setting strategic direction for the next 10 years.

3 Discussion

Through the Annual Plan process, Elected Members have had to make difficult decisions on our rates and budget for 2020-21. As Council progresses through the development of the 2021-31 LTP, further challenging decisions, direction setting and trade-offs will be required. These will include:

- Rating direction (including the rates “catchup”)
- Revenue and financing policy settings
- Development Contributions
- Levels of service
- Capital works programme and key projects
- Operational budgets

The actions that Council has already committed to through set a foundation for the decision making leading into the LTP.

3.1 Vision statement and strategic drivers

One of the first stages in the LTP process is to discuss the vision and strategic drivers. The vision statement sets out a high-level outcome for the District. This will inform and guide the decision making process for the LTP, as well as the broader Council decision making.

Elected Member feedback from Briefing on the 10 March supported retaining the existing vision but changing our strategic drivers to:

- Getting the basics right (focus on core business)
- Delivering on our commitments (deliver on levels of service)
- Raising the bar (seeking new or increased levels of service)

However, given the impacts of COVID-19 it is necessary to revisit the vision and strategic drivers to ensure the LTP is focused on the recovery and reset of our District.

Through this briefing feedback will sought from elected members on potential changes to the vision statement and strategic drivers to reflect outcomes of the COVID-19 Response Strategy.

3.2 Early engagement

A key early decision for the LTP programme is whether or not to have early engagement with our community.

Prior to COVID-19, early engagement was proposed for July 2020 to inform a Draft LTP, with formal consultation in March 2021. The exact format of any early engagement had not been determined.

The proposed early engagement was also a response to the fact that we were not consulting on the 2020-21 Annual Plan and, in the absence of any Annual Plan consultation, there was a window for early engagement.

However, in response to COVID-19 Council is now undertaking consultation on the Annual Plan. This is occurring very late in the process and will likely result in late adoption of the Annual Plan. This will mean there will be less time between formal consultation on the Annual Plan and early engagement on the LTP (if it were to occur in July 2020). This may cause confusion and consultation fatigue with our community.

Furthermore, consultation on the Annual Plan will be targeted towards Council's response to COVID-19. Feedback from the Annual Plan consultation will provide invaluable information to

guide the development of the LTP priorities, as will taking the time to see the real (as opposed to forecast) impacts of COVID19 before we develop a plan for consultation in March 2021.

These matters will be worked through in this Briefing, with feedback being sought from Elected Members.

3.3 Timeline

COVID-19 has had an impact on the proposed timeframes for the LTP that were shared with Elected Members on 10 March. A revised programme will be presented at the Council Briefing. Key impacts/changes include:

- Information Briefings on the Infrastructure Strategy and Asset Management Plans have been delayed
- Changes to the timing of early direction setting for the LTP (Revenue and Finance Policy, Development Contributions, Infrastructure Strategy)
- Challenging timeframes later on in the programme

As Central government has not provided any relief around the Local Government Act we will need ensure the process and timeframes meet our statutory obligations.