

## **Council Briefing Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Wednesday, 24 June, 2020  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.  
**Location:** Council Chamber  
Forum North, Rust Avenue  
Whangarei

**In Attendance**

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 Simon Reid

**Not in Attendance** Cr Carol Peters

**Scribe** Sue Reid (Democracy Adviser)

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### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cr Carol Peters.

Cr Greg Martin convened the briefing at 09:00 and handed over to Mr Jeff Devine (Strategy and Planning Manager NTA-WDC).

### **2. Reports**

#### **2.1 LTP Transportation Activity**

Mr Devine ran through the presentation (attached) to give Elected Members an overview of the Transportation activity which included what we manage, how we manage and the key issues.

Mr Devine highlighted the problems going forward for the coming year and next year with government funding which comes from petrol tax and road user charges. He said if the economy slows down the available money handed out by NZTA is reduced and indications are they will have less money for a number of years and some projects from the LTP may not get funded. The projects to be put forward have to be finalised by mid-December and the final result will be received in June or July 2021.

Mr Devine said Elected Members will get an opportunity to raise projects through the LTP process. He said a financial table for requests will come back to Council as part of the LTP and asked Elected Members to come and talk to him if they had specific projects, they wish to see included.

- In response to a question as to which projects are funded by central government, Mr Devine said some groups of projects are bulk funded and some are individually funded. Major projects are a lower priority to be funded by central government who want to fund walking, cycling and public transport projects. They are also very keen to fund speed management implementation and one of the key directives from the government is to show we have a programme for lowering deaths on the road.
- Responding to a question on the variation on environmental control depending on who the contractor is, Mr Devine said the onus is put on the contractor to maintain the vegetation envelope which is paid by an annual lump sum figure. He said there is also a noxious weed control spraying programme which is only funded by central government for six noxious weeds defined by the NRC. Council has to show they are meeting standards with NZTA scoring us over a whole range of activities which are benchmarked against other councils.
- Mr Devine was asked if, when looking at speed, they also have a discussion with the community about safety improvements. He responded that the process for speed review is to have a look at the whole environment to make it safer and out of that will come a list of safety improvements. Individual projects have to reach a priority in Council to get funded.
- Seat belts and child restraints in cars were also discussed as part of road safety and the need to keep working on this for a new generation.
- It was mentioned that transport is not just about roading and for the next ten years and going forward there is a need to spend more time looking at other aspects of transport, including public transport. Mr Devine was asked if there are plans for other aspects of the transport strategy. He responded that is correct and Council has put a lot of effort into walking and cycling. The walking and cycling strategy sets out plans going forward with a significant effort going to supporting public transport which

they are working on now. This included making travel for buses through the network much easier and making bus a viable choice for the community. He said they had not gone into a great deal of detail for this meeting as this was still being worked on, but is a major part of the transport strategy.

- The sealing of roads was discussed and Mr Devine said that because Council's funding approval was late in the process, it could not be used for last year's construction season. It will be spent this summer and there is additional funding in this year's Annual Plan. He said the construction season is from October to April as sealing cannot be done in the wet. By August, staff and contractors will have planned the year's work and it's difficult to pick up an additional big job. Mr Devine said Whangarei has more sealed roads than Kaipara and Far North Councils.
- Costs were discussed, where projects go over budget and that money was spent without delivery on the road itself and work should be done to national standards, not with all the extras.
- The purpose of this session was to cover off the building blocks of the LTP and understanding the assets. Transport is very important and needs to be strongly focused on as it the biggest asset owned by Council – worth \$1.25 billion.
- The new REG roading activity report cards and comparison with other councils was discussed and Mr Forlong said when this comes back to the next Infrastructure Committee some context will be given around the report card. Mr Calvin Thomas (Northland Transportation Alliance Manager) said the report card was based on 18/19 data and will be updated with the 19/20 data in December.
- In response to a question regarding the Tikipunga to Ngunguru cycleway, Mr Devine said there is a programme they are working on with developers to look at creating additional cycleways and a map will be coming back to Elected Members to show what is planned. He said there are no funded plans in the current programme for the cycleway to Ngunguru, but a number of applications have been made to central government for PGF and to CIP, and this is one of the future projects which will be promoted.
- Slow streets were discussed and Mr Devine said Council has funded these in the past but can only do one or two a year. Under the speed limit review, this is an outcome that they are looking at which might make access to funding easier. Mr Devine said changing the whole speed environment is about a total blanket approach to speed and pedestrian and cycle safety.
- There was discussion around roading being the number one piece of infrastructure as the vast bulk of our economy travels via roads and the roading network is a lifeline.

- It was also discussed that roading is only a part of transportation and was the balance right as this was an opportunity to do things a bit better with less congestion, cleaner air and safety with people cycling and walking more often. Mr Devine asked if an assessment was done before intersection upgrades to look at the impact on the quality of the lives of people living there. Mr Devine said resource consent is required which takes into account the environmental impact on the site. Provision for pedestrians and cyclists is made in the design of an intersection.
- Referring to the presentation, Mr Devine confirmed that one of the benefits of working with NTA was being able to utilise the various resources and functional groups across Northland together. He said potential barriers between councils have broken down and working together brings huge benefits to each council from those relationships.
- Mr Weston said it's important to look at which projects attract a subsidy and if they do not, are they important to us. He said if we do want to increase Levels of Service we need to consciously make that decision and get the balance right and further information on that would be brought to Elected Members to stimulate that discussion.

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

The briefing concluded at 10:57.