

Council Briefing Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 15 July, 2020
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

In Attendance

Cr Shelley Deeming (Chairperson)
Cr Vince Cocurullo
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Ken Couper
Cr Tricia Cutforth
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Anna Murphy
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid

Not in Attendance

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Greg Innes
Cr Greg Martin

Scribe

Nicolene Pestana (Team Leader
Democracy)

Cr Shelley Deeming facilitated the briefing.

Jeff Copstick, Jim Makaweo and Vaughan Cooper, representatives from Northland Inc were in attendance.

Apologies

Her Worship the Mayor, Cr Greg Innes, Cr Gavin Benney and Cr Greg Martin.

1. Reports

1.1 Regional Economic Development 2020

Tony Collins (Manager, District Development) covered the content of the briefing as outlined in the agenda report and presentation.

Martin Jenkins Consultants undertook a review of Northland economic development functions and activities in 2017.

The subsequent report (“the Martin Jenkins report”) found:

- There are no major gaps in the types of economic development activities provided by Northland Councils and Northland Inc.
- There is little overlap of economic development activities.
- There are five key opportunities for the Northland Councils to work more effectively and efficiently together to increase regional economic development.

The Martin Jenkins report recommended that Northland Inc, currently a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) of Northland Regional Council, become a jointly owned CCO, with a joint shareholding across the Northland Councils.

The purpose of the briefing is to seek feedback on the recommended service delivery model, governance arrangements and indicative funding model, following endorsement by the Mayoral Forum at their meeting on 24 February 2020.

Discussion and feedback

- Generally, elected members expressed discomfort in investing ratepayers’ money in the proposal. It was felt that ratepayers would be rated by both Northland Regional Council and Whangarei District Council for the same service.
- Who will appoint the Board of Directors of the joint CCO? Tony Collins advised that an appointment committee across all four Councils will be set up with input from Whangarei District Council elected members. Currently, the board of Northland Inc is solely appointed by Northland Regional Council. The appointment committee will appoint the Board of Directors of the joint CCO. Elected members felt that there should be iwi, hapū and community representation on the Board of Directors.
- There was a discussion on the benefits to District Councils in investing in the proposal. Elected members felt that the suggested benefits of having a joint CCO are all benefits that Northland Inc are currently able to deliver without a joint CCO and that Whangarei District Council is already providing significant funding and staffing. Representatives from Northland Inc suggested that some of the benefits would be that a broad regional strategy and regional priorities could be developed, Northland Inc’s current action plan is not supported by all the Councils and iwi and hapū. Once a regional set of priorities is agreed upon, there would be a strong collective voice to communicate these priorities to Central Government. If there was a joint CCO, Whangarei District Council would benefit from setting expectations to Northland Inc and would be able to exert significant influence on the activities of Northland Inc.

- There was a discussion on the types of models identified in the Martin Jenkins report. Elected Members felt that a joint CCO model was not necessarily the best model. There was a view that the Centre of Excellence model was more appropriate as it is more transparent and in line with local government processes. Another view was that a company with equal shares across the four Councils would be a better model as this would be a collective and equal way of moving Northland forward collectively.

Next steps

- Copies of the Martin Jenkins report will be sent to new elected members who have not had insight into the report and its recommendations.
- The proposal will be discussed at the Northland Forward Together meeting at the end of July. Northland Regional Council and Far North District Council have approved the recommendations and Kaipara District Council will consider this at their July 2020 meeting.
- The proposal will be brought to Whangarei District Council at a later date for decision.

3. Closure of Meeting

The briefing concluded at 14.07pm.