

## **Council Briefing Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Thursday, 20 August, 2020  
**Time:** 1:00 p.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 Carol Peters

**Not in Attendance** Cr Simon Reid

**Scribe** Sue Reid (Democracy Adviser)

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### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cr Reid.

Her Worship the Mayor convened the briefing at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed Mr Thomas Biss (Chair – Whangarei Art Museum Trust) and Ms Kathleen Drumm (Chief Executive – Whangarei Art Museum Trust).

### **2. Reports**

#### **2.1 Update on Hundertwasser August 2020**

Ms Drumm opened the presentation and said it was an opportunity to talk about plans and where things are going with the Hundertwasser Art Centre project and, following this, Mr Biss would talk about the Art Gallery itself.

### **Elected Members feedback and discussion included:**

- Mr Biss was asked about underwriting the operating shortfall and how that underlines the request the Trust is making. Mr Biss said there are aspects of the underwriting that they will have to revisit. He said they will lose money in the first year because of no international tourists and there is funding available for that, but they need to ensure survival on a long term basis.
- Responding to a query about the halving of domestic and local visitors, Mr Biss said they were trying to put realistic budgets together. Ms Drumm said they were trying to be pragmatic about the pandemic and not being over-optimistic about the number of domestic and local people who will have money to spend on visiting an art gallery. They were also looking at their break even figure and what they need to achieve.
- The signage and 'feeling invisible' aspect of the art gallery was discussed and Ms Drumm was asked whether they had looked at changing the frontage and making it brighter and more attractive to visitors. Ms Drumm said the roof over the walkway is a barrier and obscures the front of the gallery. She said they have limited access to the windows and space on the walls to place artwork. They have been working with a brand strategist and have a whole new look which they would like to be in a position to roll out. Mr Biss added that the property belongs to the i-SITE not to the art museum and the premises are not designed for an art gallery. He said there is more that can be done better with some assistance and that the staff need encouragement and to feel valued.
- Ms Drumm said if the front space became available to the art museum, they would take it on as a lease and they have an architect willing to design it at no cost.
- Responding to a question about what help the art museum needed, Mr Biss responded that the Trust cannot afford to pay more for the lease or for capital works. Ms Drumm said they would like to be seen as collaborators to help Council to achieve and to be part of the conversation with other businesses in the town centre so that the art museum is not forgotten.
- When asked why Reyburn House had not been included in the Hatea Art Precinct Group, Ms Drumm responded that they are not involved with them but would take the lead from Council if they wished to include them and broaden the precinct.
- Ms Drumm was asked if the Trust has a vision to present to council and she responded that, if there was enthusiasm from the Council, they would come back with a proposal.
- It was felt that there was a need to look at the recommendations and potential and to include other changes in the area that could fit together.

- In response to a question, Ms Drumm said the Trust wanted to set up Friends of Whangarei Art Museum but they do not have the staff to do so. She said they have created a whole strategic framework for the Hatea Art Precinct (which is the rebranding of the Hundertwasser Art Centre, Wairau Maori Art Gallery and Whangarei Art Museum) for the next three years which they would like to share with Council.

## **2.2 LTP Strategy and Democracy Group Briefing**

Prior to the presentation from the Strategy and Democracy Group, there was a presentation on the Electoral System Review by Dale Ofoske, Electoral Office, which was followed by a discussion with Elected Members.

The briefing continued with presentations from the Strategy and Democracy and Assurance departments. Mr Dominic Kula (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy) said there was strong support for Maori wards and this would be brought to another briefing.

Ms Tracey Schiebli (Manager – Democracy and Assurance) ran through the presentation providing Elected Members with an overview of the Democracy and Assurance activity which included:

- What we do;
- The key assets;
- Levels of service; and
- Key issues

Mr Tony Horton (Manager – Strategy) ran through the presentation providing Elected Members with an overview of the Strategy Department activity which included:

- What we do;
- Levels of service; and
- Key issues;

### **Elected Members feedback and discussion included:**

- When asked if there was a strategy for rural development to ensure the needs of the rural community are looked after, Mr Horton responded that Council put together a rural grant strategy a few years ago which was a RMA focused document. He said the Placemaking Programme will also look at rural investment.

Mr Kula said he acknowledged there was a lot of discussion around the rural areas and that sessions could be held with Elected Members to target and prioritise funding in rural areas.

- It was felt there was much to learn from looking at growth issues from other areas such as Tauranga and how they handled them and to meet with those other governance people to talk about issues. The RMA is going towards spatial planning and it was important to ensure Council had the capacity to undertake that work.

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

The briefing concluded at 15:01.