

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 18 May, 2021
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 Phil Halse
Cr Greg Innes
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid

Not in Attendance

Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Greg Martin
Cr Anna Murphy

Scribe

Danielle Garner (Trainee Democracy Adviser)

Her Worship the Mayor facilitated the briefing.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Crs Golightly and Martin. Cr Murphy was absent. An early departure notice was received from Cr Peters.

2. Reports

2.1 Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme

Her Worship introduced the guest speakers Tame Te Rangi (Chair of the Kaipara Moana Remediation Joint Committee) and Penny Pirrit (Northland Regional Council Management Representative). Tame Te Rangi commenced the presentation which contained an overview of the Kaipara Moana, sediment issues, deed of funding,

conditions and contributions of funding, years 1 and 2 work plans, proposed operations vehicle, joint committees recommended option, processes and timeframes and future updates and involvement.

Penny Pirrit said the quickest way of setting up the operation unit was to house it at NRC. This also means that service level agreements can be arranged with NRC.

Cr Deeming arrived 09:22.

Questions and feedback from Elected Members included:

- *Is this programme dependant on receiving funding from the crown?* Tame Te Rangi said some options for funding and negotiation to consider would be incentivising landowners to better manage their land, by way of potential tax breaks, rate relief, property valuations according to productivity and that being converted into a form of contribution. He also noted that other factors such as pest management need addressing from the Ministry of Environment. Penny Pirrit said not receiving funding is one of the biggest risks to the programme and that an accountant has done modelling for this scenario. The year 2 and 3 work programmes will be a testing the willingness to take up grant schemes that will be on offer, but this will be a work in progress until appetite is understood. The programme has taken up a sediment reduction programme as, at a national level, it is still unknown what the full programme would look like. The sediment reduction programme can be morphed into a more comprehensive plan in the future.
- *As it might be more cost effective to retire the land in some cases, is there opportunity to do this and how is that funded?* Tame Te Rangi said they would need to look into those options further. Their response should be about connecting what a natural area is capable of doing, relative to the level of production being maintained.
- *Regarding areas of significance, for example, wetlands, if they have been drained are they still considered areas of significance?* Tame Te Rangi said that currently, those sorts of practices are driven by production as opposed to what nature can sustain. The work of the Kaipara Remediation Programme will inform the priorities for restoration of areas such as wetlands, building on work that has already been done by Auckland Council and NRC.
- Penny Pirrit noted a draft deed of settlement should be signed by the end of 2021. This is followed by an approximately 12 to 18 month period where the draft is converted into a bill for its first reading at a parliamentary level. Penny Pirrit was hopeful to achieve a joint committee by July 2022.
- An Elected Member noted a key point regarding the Kaipara Moana strategy, is it can be placed directly into the regional plan or policy statement and would require district plans to align with it.

- Tame Te Rangi said the Forest Build Trust is coordinating a group of approximately 60 landowners. They have been part of the studies Auckland Council have done on river banks and geology.
- In response to a question, Dominic Kula (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy) provided context for newer Elected Members and said that a number of briefings and workshops lead Council to this point. When crown funding was announced in 2020, there was discussion around what that would mean. Elected Members then landed on specifying that the treaty settlement process should continue, and Council would continue to be party to that. WDC is involved and by being so, have an opportunity for input. Council decided to recognise the function of Auckland and Regional Council and to keep receiving updates.
- Tame Te Rangi said the programme should be seen as operational and not in competition with other water improvement projects.
- In response to a question, Tame Te Rangi said he does not feel funding will be prioritised to Auckland. He said the plan is for a 50/50 strategic partnership with Kaipara Uri and the local government. The current structure has a number of people from different locations. Penny Pirrit said that from an operational point of view, Auckland are paying the same amount in grants as Northland. There is specific criteria in the grant scheme to make sure money is spent wisely, which has been signed off by the committee. There is currently no indication Auckland would prefer more money spent there. Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the catchment is in the Northland region and Northland has been clear it is fundamental to achieving outcomes.
- Penny Pirrit acknowledged they had not kept Dominic Kula and Tony Horton (Manager - Strategy) as informed as they could have, but assured that once things have settled, communication of updates will improve.
- *Is there going to be something within the business case to help businesses take the right steps in order to align with the programme outcomes?* Tame Te Rangi said there have been discussions around the level of land use and decision making and how a stronger balance can be created between land use across the district to generate a regime that the landowner can work with. Provisions have been made around the level of advice on how they focus on sediment management.
- Penny Pirrit said this programme does not have any regulatory functions. Part of the programme is growing understanding, with some projects looking at what kind of trees will best suit a river bank environment. People will be communicated with in a way that makes sense to them and advisory people will go out and work with landowners. Te Uri will also become part of the process. Education and advice on best way of doing things will be a key part of this programme and will happen in a number of different ways to accommodate the vast number of people involved.

- Her Worship said some points to consider are what research is going into the programme, what are the potential objectives and if they will be met.

2.2 Draft Waterfront Precinct Plan

Injoo Riehl (Strategic Planner) commenced a short presentation, which covered the plan development process, summary from a previous workshop, structure, second round of engagement tools, feedback on stakeholders and groups and future steps. Injoo Riehl said a summary of today's feedback from Elected Members will be provided in July or August 2021.

Questions and feedback from Elected Members included:

- An Elected Member felt that all user groups should be included in the stakeholder list. Injoo Riehl said the working group consists of 14 events staff and Sue Hodge (Manager – Parks and Recreation), who have been working collaboratively and have represented the groups not listed on the stakeholder list, but agreed to add the remaining groups.
- An Elected Member suggested businesses from the Parihaka side of the river and businesses along Reyburn House Lane be included on the stakeholder list and be given the opportunity to share their concerns.
- Dominic Kula confirmed that funding had been increased to \$37 million for improving shared cycle and walkways with specific mention of city centre linkages.
- An Elected Member noted they did not want the shared lane from the Hihiaua precinct plan to be shown on green/open space. Injoo Riehl confirmed some of the images are conceptual and will make the appropriate changes.
- Injoo Riehl clarified that Council do not own all structures and pontoons but that the structures graphic refers to the overall action to the waterfront.
- In response to a question regarding lead, responsibility for action 28, Dominic Kula confirmed that it is the responsibility of Whangarei District Council to fund infrastructure and Northland Regional Council are responsible for environmental issues and stormwater management.

3. Closure of Meeting

The briefing concluded at 10:58.