

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 26 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 Anna Murphy
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid

Not in Attendance Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Greg Martin

Scribe Sue Reid (Democracy Adviser)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Crs Golightly and Martin.

Her Worship the Mayor convened the briefing at 09:00 and said clear feedback for direction setting was required from the briefing today.

2. Reports

2.1 Review of the Animals bylaw

Ms Vita Strohush (Strategic Planner – Bylaws) said the purpose of the briefing was to provide an overview of the 2017 Animals Bylaw, discuss key issues for review and get direction from Elected Members regarding the management of

cats. She gave a quick overview of the bylaw and what was covered and not covered.

Ms Strohush highlighted what worked well in the implementation of the bylaw and explained the issues which were cat management and the boundary issues between urban and rural.

She covered the current general provisions which apply to cats and said enforcement officers have authority to require that owners comply with these obligations including, if directed, to remove the animals from the property within a specified period.

The bylaw only applies to owned cats and there are specific non-bylaw tools for managing feral and stray cats:

- Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan 2017-2027 which has limited funding;
- Health Act 1956 covers health, noise and odour; and
- Snip and chip, where \$15,000 per annum has been confirmed through the LTP deliberations and has the support of the SPCA and Whangarei Cat Rescue. has limited funding. Options for cat management – highlighted. Imperative to bear in mind legal constraints under LGA (listed on slide) but went thru them and gave examples.

Ms Strohush covered the options for cat management and the approach other councils were taking in their cat related policies. She went through the proposed timeline and said they were looking for feedback from Elected Members on the following:

- Proceed with the review of the Animals bylaw
- Begin development options for the management of cats as a part of the review
- Not undertake formal pre-engagement and proceed with the statutory review process

Elected members feedback and discussion included:

- There was discussion around having an informal consultation survey so close to the LTP as it could be confusing. Also, that Hutt City Council were awaiting the outcome of the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity and the revised Biodiversity Act. Ms Strohush referred to the timeline and said there was always an option to amend the bylaw again in the future.
- NRC's role in terms of the impact on biosecurity was discussed and, when asked, Ms Strohush confirmed that NRC chose to limit the role they had on feral and stray cats in urban areas under their current cat management plan.

- It was suggested there may be an option for WDC to support NRC's predator free plan. Ms Strohush confirmed the bylaw relates to animals and stray cats becomes blurry. If a cat has a connection with humans it is essentially owned by someone and could fall under the bylaw. If a cat is a stray and providing for itself, it is a pest and falls under biosecurity.
- Ms Strohush confirmed that NRC is the correct agency for cat complaints in terms of unowned cats and wildlife and that outside of that there is national legislation about responsible cat ownership and wellbeing of cats and the agency for this is the SPCA.
- Microchipping and registration of cats similar to dog registration was discussed. Ms Strohush said there is no cat management act so it is not the same as dogs. There is a national register for cats and they have 8,157 cats registered in the Whangarei area but it is estimated there are about 23,000 pet cats.
- There was support to:
 - Proceed with the review of the Animals Bylaw
 - Begin development options for the management of cats as a part of the review
 - Not undertake formal pre-engagement and proceed with the statutory review process.
- However there had been problems with people who were cat hoarding which have been difficult for staff to deal with and causing major distress for neighbours.

Mr Tony Horton (Manager – Strategy) summed up and said workable options, acknowledging the restraints, would be provided to Elected Members. He said the report will be refined to give the best possible suites to look at whilst being cognisant of the Local Government Act and not putting Council at risk through any options put forward. He said the options will be linked to costs associated to any decisions.

2.2 Review of the Class 4 Gambling Policy and Board Venue Policy

Crs Benney and Reid declared an interest in this item.

Mr Dominic Kula (General Manager – Planning and Development) said there had been discussion which linked back to the initial broader societal issues and that lotteries and online gambling fall outside of what Council can deal with.

Ms Strohush gave background on the two policies which are coming up for review and a recap on Class 4 Gambling and said the Social Impact Report which was attachment 3 of the agenda should be considered.

She covered the Board Venue Policy and explained about sports bars, what Council can regulate and highlighted the review process.

The Policy Options for Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy outlined the current policy and the options which were shown in full in Attachment 2 of the agenda. There were six options with Option 4 being the current one.

The Policy Options for the Board Venue Policy showed the current policy and outlined other possible options under the legislation.

Elected members feedback and discussion included:

- There was a query as to whether Class 4 was relevant today as a lot of gambling is done online. Mr Kula responded that they have to be reviewed every three years recognising the broader societal issues.
- There discussion around the option to have no TABs and change the cap on venues policy but after discussion there was support for continuing with the current policies.

Mr Horton said both these policies would need to go to Council to get a formal decision not to change them and to review them again in three years.

3. Closure of Meeting

The Meeting concluded at 10:15.