

## **Council Briefing Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Thursday, 12 August, 2021  
**Time:** 10:30 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 Jayne Golightly  
Cr Phil Halse  
Cr Greg Innes  
Cr Greg Martin  
Cr Anna Murphy  
Cr Carol Peters  
Cr Simon Reid

**Not in Attendance** Cr Shelley Deeming

**Scribe** Sue Reid (Democracy Adviser)

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### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cr Deeming.

Her Worship the Mayor convened the briefing at 10:30 and handed over to Ms Sarah Irwin (Team Leader – Infrastructure Planning).

### **2. Reports**

#### **2.1 Norfolk St - Reotahi Reserve Classification**

Ms Irwin provided the background and gave an update on the progress with formalising access across reserves administered by the Council's Parks and Recreation Department at Norfolk Road, Reotahi.

She said they had received two submissions, both of which were in support of the classification and they were now looking at the next steps which would be to work with affected residents to come up with conditions.

## **2.2 Blue Green Network Programme Update**

Ms Shelley Wharton (Manager – Infrastructure Planning & Capital Works) gave an update on the overall status of the Blue Green Network and the various projects that sit under the programme which has been in the Long Term Plan since last year.

She explained the budgeting and funding before giving highlights of the projects which have been prioritised over the next three years and which they want to ensure are aligned to the Blue Green Programme.

The GIS Programme Management and Communications Tool has been developed as a management tool to keep all pieces of work up to date. Ms Wharton demonstrated the link to the programme and explained the layers and the green, yellow and red colour coding. This is a collaborative programme of work and the tool ensures that pieces of information are aligned to check we are on the right track.

This is an internal view but they want to get to the point where there is a public version which can be put on the website.

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

- Ms Wharton was asked if they are measuring to see if the outcomes are being achieved. She responded that they need to work a bit more on how some of the outcomes are measured, for example streams and the health of streams. She said it would be good to have a wider measure which is a work in progress. Discussions have been held on how they could tie in with NRC monitoring for past history data and data moving forward.
- It was important to get the community involved, for example with community planting days and this tool enables Council to show NRC that there is a programme in place.
- There was concern about the recent storms sending vegetation down the Hatea River into the marina and a need to be careful of the vegetation that was planted.
- An Elected Member suggested that a detailed presentation should be given to the Whangarei Harbour Catchment Group.
- Ms Wharton was asked about the area behind the Water Street car park and whether that was part of the Civic Centre development and Cafler Park.

She responded that was a complicated area and they cannot make decisions on the work that has to be done until they have modelling to test the options as the stream channel is very restricted. There are a lot of flooding issues and they will probably have to change the stream channel shape so that when flooding occurs it is within a dedicated floodplain.

- Ms Wharton was asked what was going to be done around safety in some very unsafe situations as the Blue Green network was initially designed for interaction between the public and nature.  
She was not able to respond about the monitoring of CCTV cameras in the State Highway 1 underpass at Tarewa but, as a matter of course, they are using Safety in Design as they go through all projects. This includes sight lines and lighting.
- In response to a comment that the Waiarohia project should be socialised, Ms Wharton said they are looking at what arrangements people currently have with council around authorised structures and the use of council land, including leases. They have been working on how they obtain access to areas and if certain areas may need a boardwalk.
- Ms Wharton was asked about the interaction between stormwater modelling, climate change, coastal hazard maps and projects. She said it is a balancing act between protection of the structures but it draws out into a much wider conversation about how to protect Whangarei as a city centre. She said this is a massive issue and detailed modelling needs to be done and aligned with regional climate change adaptation work.
- Elected Members expressed support for the approach and were very impressed with the computer modelling presented.

### **2.3 Stormwater Catchment Planning Update**

Ms Wharton said she wanted this agenda item to be alongside the previous one as it related to the Blue Green Network.

She commenced the presentation and gave Elected Members a background on what was covered by stormwater management.

Ms Wharton explained the requirements under the National Policy Statement Freshwater Management 2020 which she said adds some complexity and time to the process. There are also cost implications as they have to engage with a wider group of people.

She said Te Mana o te Wai imposes a hierarchy of obligations and is moving in the direction of being an environmental activity, making sure the health and wellbeing of water is the most important thing. Ms Wharton listed the priorities and explained the six principles which help understand how to implement Te Mana o te Wai.

Te Mana o Te Wai as it relates to the Stormwater Catchment Planning Work Programme is part of a much wider conversation that needs to be had with council and the wider industry about how Te Mana o Te Wai is worked through and what it means from governance to operational level.

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

- Ms Wharton was asked about the responsibilities of organisations and individuals if Te Mana o te Wai was not given effect to. She responded she would need to get some advice on that.  
Mr Weston said they have just got a revised version of the Drinking Water Bill which has gone to second reading and they will give an update on the changes to Elected Members at the next briefing. The Bill includes Te Mana o Te Wai as a legislative requirement.
- Ms Wharton was asked what the difference was in what was being suggested as it was standard practice for farmers and mana whenua to work with communities in the past.  
She said the main difference was that tangata whenua would have to be included in decision making from the outset, rather than just consulted on. In relation to stormwater catchment planning, in her experience, what was done in the past was a collection of information and surveying the community to see the current issues in relation to stormwater management. Then it was very much an engineering based process to look at flood modelling and other data to make decisions about what projects would solve the network or flooding issues. Te Mana o Te Wai moves to a service where tangata whenua would be included every time in the decision making, rather than just an engineering process and is a very different process to what was done in the past.
- Ms Wharton was asked if there was budget to include tangata whenua in the decision making and Mr Weston responded this had been recognised and it is a piece of work that needs to be done.  
Ms Wharton said they do have a budget for catchment planning and to continue work down this path and have to figure out how to make this happen.

Ms Wharton continued with the presentation and gave some examples of enabling projects completed for the Stormwater Catchment Planning Programme, the work underway and explained the future work over the next six months.

A technical paper written for the Stormwater Conference 2021 which shared the journey WDC have been on so far with the stormwater industry was included for Elected Members' information. Ms Wharton said the report had been well-received and they were happy with the feedback.

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

- Ms Wharton was asked what information was available to the public and she responded that NRC publishes maps which can be accessed but some information is sensitive and this is kept confidential unless they have confidence in the information. She said climate change scenarios are already on the hazard maps when people apply for a LIM and this is a process to see how we update what we already have. There were many papers about climate change at the stormwater conference and, at this

stage, it's more of a discussion around what it will mean for infrastructure that is at risk.

- Responding to a question on discharge consents and timeframes, Ms Wharton said it is expected there will be some national standards on water quality but they have not been released yet. There is a lot of peripheral stuff happening that can impact on the process of network discharge consents and they will need to work closely with NRC as there is no set standard that has to be met in the regional plan. She said it will probably be a year before we are able to make a formal application.
- There was discussion around 3 waters including stormwater and how it would be dealt with by an inter-regional organisation. Ms Wharton said the extent of the stormwater activity that would go into the 3 waters entity has not been finalised. Discussions are happening in the background about whether the 3 waters entity will have only stormwater pipes to look after or everything to do with stormwater. Ms Wharton said it is a financial, environmental, and land use discussion which is complex. Mr Weston said there is a stormwater advisory group working for Department of Internal Affairs on stormwater activities and it will be interesting to see how it will be managed and funded. Traditionally stormwater is not an enamouring word and he could see a big change in the future in the way the word stormwater is used.

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

The briefing concluded at 11:50.