

## Council Briefing Agenda

**Date:** 29 September, 2021

**Time:** 9:00 am

**Location:** Council Chamber  
Forum North, Rust Avenue  
Whangarei

**Elected Members:** 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  
Cr Simon Reid

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact  
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

**1. Apologies**

**2. Reports**

2.1. Freedom Camping Enforcement Options 2021-22 Season 1

**3. Closure of Meeting**

## 2.1 Freedom Camping Enforcement Options 2021/22 Season

**Meeting:** Council Briefing  
**Date of meeting:** 29 September 2021  
**Reporting officer:** Reiner Mussle

### 1 Purpose

To update Council and seek direction on its preferred option (if any) for education, monitoring and/or enforcement over the upcoming 2021/22 season.

### 2 Background

Council's Camping in Public Places Bylaw was initially adopted on 28 September 2017.

Due to the timing of bylaw adoption no funding for monitoring and enforcement was able to be budgeted through the 2017/18 Annual Plan (the Annual Plan was adopted in June 2017). As such monitoring and enforcement undertaken in the 2017/18 season was unbudgeted overspend (approx \$150k).

However, in subsequent years the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has provided contestable funding through its Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador Programme. This has provided for an externally funded level of service around bylaw monitoring, enforcement and education. In order to maintain eligibility for funding and minimize costs on ratepayers Council budgeted for ongoing MBIE funding through the 2021/31 Long Term Plan.

Recently, MBIE confirmed that there won't be any freedom camping funding for the upcoming 2021/22 season. However, MBIE have indicated that further funding application rounds will be made available prior to start of the 2022/23 freedom camping summer season.

As such there will be a reduction of levels of service for the 2021/22 financial year if Council does not fund a monitoring and enforcement programme. This Agenda outlines options for enforcement and monitoring for the 2021/22 season, noting that while savings will be sought where ever possible this will be unbudgeted overspend.

### 3 Discussion

#### **Armourguard led Education, Monitoring & Enforcement programme**

Last season MBIE funded the total cost of our education, monitoring & enforcement programme. While a summary of initiatives/costs is provided below some initiatives would not be recommended from a constrained budget:

1. Ambassador Programme = \$75,331.68 (total cost of full programme, including coordination)
2. Improved Monitoring & Enforcement programme = \$99,478.92 (total enforcement cost)
3. Additional Operating costs = \$51,790.80 (additional toilet hire and cleaning costs)
4. Campsite Maintenance = \$31,230.00 (cost of hard surfacing of campsite entrances)
5. Education = \$2,168.60 (cost of educational materials)

However, given feedback on the recent review and amendment of the Camping in Public Places bylaw it is likely that there will be an expectation for at least monitoring and enforcement in the community. There will also be an expectation around timeliness of response to complaints. In short, while undertaking no action is always an option (and as such will be included for completeness) it is not likely to meet community expectations.

As such options are provided below for monitoring and enforcement for the upcoming season (3 December 18 April 2022, with each day being 8hrs). In providing these options staff have taken into account the reduced number of international visitors last season (due to Covid) and that fewer complaints were received during March and April of 2021.

Option	Est Cost	Scope	Pro's	Con's
Option 1	\$58k	One officer visiting each site every second day	Limits cost Targets resourcing	Potential for delays in responding to complaints Potential for dissatisfaction / increased complaints Likely to be insufficient staffing
Option 2 <b>(recommended)</b>	\$86k	Two officers, 3/12/21 – 7/2/22, with one officer and site visits every second day 8/2/22 – 18/4/22	Focusses coverage to demand (high season) Limits costs during autumn shoulder	May not meet customer expectations (i.e. peak period) Potentially insufficient coverage during autumn
Option 3	\$114k	Two officers between across the season visiting each site / complaint daily	Provides coverage across season Proactive complaint management	Higher cost Increased resourcing during shoulder period may not be required
Option 4	\$0k	No monitoring and enforcement	No unbudgeted cost	Unlikely to meet expectations Potential for increased complaints Inability to respond to complaints

### Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador programme

Over the last three seasons MBIE funding has also allowed us to roll out a responsible freedom camping ambassador programme. This programme was planned, co-ordinated and facilitated by a contracted Programme Coordinator (Sue Halliwell).

The provision of a 'Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador' programme for the 2021/22 season is considered to be a 'nice to have', rather than essential (especially in the absence of MBIE funding). However, options are provided below for completeness.

Option	Est Cost	Scope
Option 1	\$46k	Full programme as in previous years, including coordination and media liaison, but excluding the Tutukaka coast due to Bylaw changes. Four Ambassadors
Option 2	\$37k	As per option one but with three Ambassadors and removing the Ruakaka coast
Option 3	\$27k	One ambassador focusing solely on the City, Onerahi, and Whangarei Heads freedom camping areas.
Option 4 <b>(recommended)</b>	\$0k	Defer the Ambassador programme for the 2021/22 financial year and seek MBIE funding (if available) for 2022/23

The pros and cons of these options can be broadly summarised as a tradeoff between the extent of Ambassador cover provided and relative cost. Note, if Council does wish to fund an 'Ambassador' programme Option 3 is considered to provide the most benefit at the least cost.

### **Financial consequences**

We are conscious that providing a programme of monitoring, enforcement and/or education is another additional cost on Council at a difficult time.

As such staff will endeavour to minimise the overspend by utilising other budgets where possible and actively managing the services provided across the season (particularly in the shoulder periods where demand may drop off).