

Information Agenda

Date: Friday, 18 October, 2024

Elected Members: His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Ken Couper
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Deborah Harding
Cr Patrick Holmes
Cr Scott McKenzie
Cr Marie Olsen
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid
Cr Phoenix Ruka
Cr Paul Yovich

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

1. Information Reports

1.1 Future Development Strategy - Hearings Process

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1.2 Knowledge Precinct Plan - Update October 2024

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2. Public Excluded Business

1.1 Future Development Strategy – Hearings Process Update

Agenda:	Information Agenda
Publish date:	18 October 2024
Reporting officer:	Bernadette Aperahama, Manager – Strategic Planning

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To update Elected Members on the public hearings for the Future Development Strategy (FDS) and to provide some background on the process for this project.

2 Background / Horopaki

The public hearings for the Future Development Strategy (FDS) were held on Friday 27th September 2024 in the Manaia Theatre, Te Iwitahi Civic Centre.

The Future Development Strategy Working Group have delegation through both Northland Regional Council (NRC) and Whangarei District Council (WDC) to hear and consider submissions on the FDS. The Future Development Strategy Working Group can then make appropriate recommendations to the partner Councils. Delegation to adopt the FDS remains with WDC and NRC.

The hearings were public and Elected Members from both Councils were invited to attend the hearings. The agenda report and submissions were supplied directly to the hearings panel. The agenda included:

- Agenda for the day
- Working Group Terms of Reference
- Paper to appoint chair, deputy chair, approves attachment 1 (Procedure Sheet) and for the Working Group to receive volumes.

The submissions received on the FDS are available online:

[Draft Future Development Strategy - Whangarei District Council \(wdc.govt.nz\)](https://www.wdc.govt.nz/Draft-Future-Development-Strategy)

The hearings report is available here:

[Hearings Report - Draft Future Development Strategy Working Group \(wdc.govt.nz\)](https://www.wdc.govt.nz/Hearings-Report-Draft-Future-Development-Strategy-Working-Group)

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

The hearings process for this project was somewhat unusual because the FDS is a statutory document under the Resource Management Act but it requires consultation to be undertaken using the Special Consultative Procedure of the Local Government Act. It is also a project that must be jointly prepared and adopted by both NRC and WDC. A standard hearings process does not exist for this situation and the general standing orders of either Council do

not apply. Accordingly, project staff worked alongside legal counsel and democracy staff to prepare a hearings and agenda process that was appropriate. Below is the summary of the order of proceedings:

Date: Friday 27 September, 2024

Venue: Te Iwitahi – Manaia Room

Introduction

Time: 8.30am

Agenda: Start meeting, conflicts of interest, apologies, appointment of chair and approval of procedure sheet (standing orders).

Chair and Deputy: Cr Amy Macdonald and Cr Scott McKenzie were formally confirmed at the start of the meeting.

Hearings: 9.00am – 2.00pm

Presentation process

- 5 minute speaking slots, with 5 speakers per 30 minutes.
- Presentations allowed if supplied to Council in advance.
- A Microsoft Teams link was provided to those presenting remotely.
- The Working Group, as the hearings panel was able to ask questions of submitters.

4 Financial/budget considerations / Ngā pānga pūtea/tahua

The delivery of the hearings was within the Strategic Planning department budget for this activity.

1.2 Knowledge Precinct Plan – Update October 2024

Agenda:	Information Agenda
Publish date:	18 October 2024
Reporting officer:	Aaron Taikato (General Manager – Strategy and Democracy)

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To update Council on the Knowledge Precinct Plan.

2 Background / Horopaki

The Knowledge Precinct Plan is the fourth and final precinct plan to be actioned under the Whangarei City Centre Plan 2017. During an Extraordinary Council meeting on 2 May 2024, Council approved a governance structure for the Knowledge Precinct Project Advisory Board (PAB). At the time of that meeting there were no Terms of Reference or other associated material to formally establish a governance structure. Council asked the Chief Executive to bring Terms of Reference (TOR) to the May Council meeting for adoption and to establish a PAB. These were presented to and adopted by Council on 23 May 2024.

One of the key responsibilities of the PAB, as set out in the TOR, is to report back to Council monthly. This is the first of these reports to provide an update for Council on the progress to date for the precinct plan. The pending employment of a Programme Manager will enable regular monthly reporting moving forward.

It should also be noted, and clarity provided to differentiate between the two main projects which make up the programme of work:

- a) The Knowledge Precinct Plan – Is the area in its entirety, inclusive of all infrastructure within the different workstreams under the plan.
- b) The Knowledge, Education and Arts (KEA) Hub – Includes the Forum North building which has funding to tend to the roofing issue, as well as partial funding for the proposed new Lyric Theatre.

Council have entered into three Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with Te Pūkenga, Forum North Trust, and The University of Auckland (UoA). The MOUs provide the foundation to explore future partnerships and collaborations, which will be vital in establishing a functional and thriving precinct.

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

Work continues to progress under the direction of the PAB. Staff have had to recalibrate their work plans to create the additional capacity needed for handling tasks as directed. This has placed unanticipated pressure on the team however, staff have settled into the extra workload well and continue to perform BAU while keeping momentum with the Precinct work.

3.1 Knowledge Precinct Plan

Matakohe Architecture and Urbanism and The Urban Advisory (TUA) have been contracted to project manage a spatial plan for the precinct. The importance of this exercise is to provide staff, Council and stakeholders with a spatial appreciation of what Council are able to do and where. The importance of this exercise is to provide staff, Council, PAB, stakeholders, hapu and the public with a spatial appreciation of what Council and others are able to do and where. Infrastructure sizing and integration of multiple infrastructure is pertinent to a successful plan of this size and nature.

Both Council and staff have provided feedback for conceptual spatial planning through interactive workshops facilitated by Matakohe and TUA on 19 September 2024. This interactive session was deemed a success, with valued considerations provided by Council and staff alike. There are future workshops planned, including with hapu, youth, as well as Council, PAB and staff.

It is envisaged the spatial plan will be informative at a high level from March and completed by the end of the financial term on June 30th. As negotiations take place, the spatial plan provides a base line for both Council and externals to work from. Examples of the current considerations the PAB and staff are reviewing, include well integrated vehicle parking, location of the Lyric theatre (inclusive of loading and unloading zone), and usage of Forum North by the University of Auckland.

3.2 Programme Coordinator Role

This work has been progressing well with oversight from the PAB, and staff have initiated an expression of interest process for a Programme Coordinator. This role will be critical to the coordination of the spatial plan and the drafting of a Programme Plan encapsulating the entire work in a sequential and strategic manner.

Expression of interest is now running and an appointment is expected by the end of October 2024. The successful candidate will be given 3 months to produce a draft programme plan for Council to consider. One of the challenges with this approach lies within the organic manner in which externals provide information to inform the plan. For example, staff are yet to meet with the University of Auckland to gather information pertaining to their feasibility plan for the Forum North building, or generally what their requirements would be to relocate providing a strong presence within the precinct. This is important as Council needs to ascertain whether proposed changes to the Forum North building will trigger engagement through our significance and engagement policy 2024. While a component of the building has been deregistered in-part from the strategic assets register, there is still the associated budget required to refurbish the building which could trigger public consultation. This risk won't be fully realised until we have clear insight of what UoA are considering for the Forum North Building. To this end, PAB will meet with Mr Neale upon his return from overseas.

3.3 Project Advisory Group (PAB)

The PAB continue their projected activities through engagement with potential stakeholders. They have been successful in their quest for an MOU with UoA and have directed staff to organize a post signing meeting with Mr Simon Neale, Director of Infrastructure for UoA. Mr Neale is currently abroad, it is however a priority at this point of time to understand their plan for the next 10 months.

The PAB continue to meet bi-monthly and there are weekly meetings with staff and externals to explore opportunities.

The hapū representative for the PAB is Mr. Taipari Munroe, who has been confirmed retrospectively by Te Huinga providing his name as their preferred representative. This appointment was confirmed at the last PAB meeting held on 17 September 2024. Mr. Munroe brings a suite of relevant knowledge, having a distinguished career in the tertiary sector and as an upstanding tribal leader and authority on cultural matters pertaining to the hapū of Whangarei District.

The PAB continue to engage Te Pukenga through its disestablishment process, with their Executive Director, Mr Toa Favena, attending the last PAB meeting as a guest. While Te Pukenga are still very interested in the potential of the Knowledge Precinct and see it in principle as a preferred site, they are yet to re-establish their structure and optimize their operations. Once they have settled, staff are hopeful the recalibrated Te Pukenga will engage this programme of work as a vested stakeholder.

The next scheduled PAB meeting is 21 November 2024.

4 Financial/budget considerations / Ngā pānga pūtea/tahua

It should be noted staff are working with only 50% of the original requested funding for the Knowledge Precinct and KEA hub. This was initiated to provide relief for already high proposed rates increases in year one of the LTP. This means the full contract with Matakohe and TUA cannot be delivered as originally planned. Staff are working through what aspects the consultants will support and what aspects staff will have to pick up to ensure we stay within budget constraints.

The employment of a Programme Coordinator will cost \$70k. Staff will divert any excess underspend from the Forum North Re-roofing budget (TBC) and the remaining deficit will be met by transferring the balance from Māori Outcomes Operational budget. This approach will not risk the Strategy and Democracy Group (Democracy, Maori Outcomes and Strategic Planning departments) meeting their strategic outcomes or managing an unbudgeted overspend.

5 Next Steps

With the appointment of a Programme Coordinator, it is expected momentum of the Knowledge Precinct plan will increase. There are two new opportunities currently being considered pertaining to potential land purchases which will assist in achieving the vision of the precinct but these are still being understood in full and if feasible, will be reported back to Council for consideration.