

Strategy, Planning and Development Committee Supplementary Agenda

Date: Thursday, 21 November, 2024

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Civic Centre, Te Iwitahi, 9 Rust Avenue

Elected Members: Cr Ken Couper (Chairperson)
Cr Scott McKenzie (Deputy Chairperson)
His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Deborah Harding
Cr Patrick Holmes
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.

4. Decision Reports / Whakatauripoata

4.7 Camping in Public Places Bylaw – Enforcement options

7

Strategy, Planning and Development Committee – Terms of Reference

Membership

Chairperson	Councillor Ken Couper
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Scott McKenzie
Members	His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo Councillors Gavin Benney, Nicholas Connop, Jayne Golightly, Phil Halse, Deborah Harding, Patrick Holmes, Marie Olsen, Carol Peters, Simon Reid, Phoenix Ruka and Paul Yovich

Meetings Monthly

Quorum 7

Purpose

To oversee planning, monitoring, education and enforcement activities, and guide the economic and physical development and growth of Whangarei District.

Key responsibilities

- Regulatory and compliance
 - Environmental health
 - General bylaw administration
 - Animal (dog and stock control)
 - Hazardous substances and new organism control
 - Parking enforcement (vehicles registrations and warrant of fitness)
 - Noise control
 - Food Act
- Building Control
 - Property Information and Land Information Memoranda
 - Consents and inspections
 - Monitoring and compliance
- Resource Consents
 - Subdivision, land use and development control
 - Development contributions
 - Monitoring and compliance
- District Plan
 - Plan changes
 - District Plan administration

- Strategic Planning
 - Place based strategies (city centre), functional strategies (climate change)
 - Climate Adaptation
 - Growth planning
 - Urban design
 - Strategic alignment of infrastructure
 - Reporting strategic trends and analysis
- Economic Development
 - District marketing and promotions
 - Developer engagement
- Marinas
- Airport
- Forestry
- Operational accountability of performance including:
 - Health and Safety
 - Regular reporting on service delivery
 - Compliance
 - Sustainability
 - Finance
- Reporting on capital projects.
- Operational reporting for the Strategy and Democracy and Planning and Development groups within Council where their functions are not covered by other Committees.
- Procurement – general procurement relating to the areas of business of this committee, within delegations.
- Shared Services – investigate opportunities for Shared Services for recommendation to council.
- Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) – monitoring the financial and non-financial performance of CCOs whose functions would otherwise fall under the scope of this committee. Includes trading CCOs (CCTOs) and those CCOs exempted under the LGA. Responsibilities include:
 - advising on the content of annual Statement of Expectations to CCOs
 - agreement of the Statement of Intent
 - monitoring against the Statement of Intent
 - for exempted CCOs, monitoring and reporting as agreed between Council and the organisation
 - quarterly reporting on performance

CCO accountable to this committee:

- Whangarei District Airport – CCO

Delegations

- (i) All powers necessary to perform the committee's responsibilities, including, but not limited to:
 - a) the approval of expenditure of less than \$5 million plus GST.
 - b) approval of a submission to an external body.
 - c) establishment of working parties or steering groups.
 - d) adoption of strategies and policies relating to the key responsibilities of this committee (except for those that cannot be delegated by Council under Clause 32(1)(f) of Schedule 7 of the LGA).
 - e) the power to adopt the Special Consultative Procedure provided for in Section 83 to 88 of the LGA in respect of matters under its jurisdiction (this allows for setting of fees and bylaw making processes up to but not including adoption).
 - f) the power to delegate any of its powers to any joint committee established for any relevant purpose under clause 32, Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002.

The Committee does not have:

- i. The power to establish sub-committees.
- ii. The powers Council is expressly prohibited from delegating as outlined in Clause 32(1)(a)-(h) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002; being:
 - the power to make a rate
 - the power to make a bylaw
 - the power to borrow money, or purchase or dispose of assets, other than in accordance with the long-term plan
 - the power to adopt a long-term plan, annual plan or annual report
 - the power to appoint a chief executive the power to adopt policies required to be adopted and consulted on under the Local Government 2002 in association with the long-term plan or developed for the purpose of the local governance statement
 - the power to adopt a remuneration and employment policy.

4.7 Camping in Public Places Bylaw – Enforcement options

Meeting: Strategy, Planning & Development Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2024
Reporting officer: Reiner Mussle (Manager Health and Bylaws)

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To present a range of options for monitoring and enforcing Council's Camping in Public Places Bylaw going forward, as directed by Council through the 2024/34 Long Term Plan (LTP) process.

2 Recommendations / Whakataunga

That the Committee:

1. Notes the work done by staff to identify unbudgeted revenue streams that could be used to fund a reduced Freedom Camping Monitoring and Enforcement service, as directed by Council through the 2024/34 LTP process
2. Approves a reduced/core \$120k p.a. (inflation adjusted) budget for an ongoing monitoring and enforcement service for freedom camping, noting that ongoing funding beyond 2026/27 would be reviewed by Council for approval through the next LTP
3. Notes that procurement and contractual arrangements for the service will be considered under Chief Executive delegation

3 Background / Horopaki

Council's Camping in Public Places Bylaw was initially adopted on 28 September 2017. Due to the timing of bylaw no funding for education, monitoring and enforcement was able to be budgeted through the 2017/18 Annual Plan (the Annual Plan was adopted in June 2017). As such education, monitoring and enforcement undertaken in the 2017/18 season was unbudgeted overspend (approx. \$150k).

In subsequent years the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) provided contestable funding through its Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador Programme. This provided for an externally funded service around bylaw monitoring, education, and enforcement. These programs were facilitated through variations to the Regulatory Services contract with Armourguard, but outside the contract's total value (while it had been proposed, including through the 2023/24 Council resolution, to increase the contract value by the corresponding amount this did not occur in order to enable costs to be separately accounted for/recovered from MBIE).

In order to maintain eligibility for funding and minimize costs on ratepayers Council has not budgeted for this service since that time. While this has been extremely beneficial for our ratepayers and community, it has put Council in the position of having to consider how/if it

would fund the service as it became increasingly clear that contestable funding from MBIE would no longer be available

Last season (2023/24), Council received \$167,823.48 from MBIE which funded both an Armourguard led monitoring and enforcement program, and an ambassador led education program. This allowed both teams to proactively connect with 10,392 campers. As a direct result of which only 24 genuine freedom camping complaints were received over the period 21 October 2023 to 14 April 2024.

This extremely low number of formal complaints is seen as a direct result of many years of proactive monitoring, education and enforcement in this space (for the full report on that season, please see Attachment 1).

With MBIE having earlier signalled that freedom camping funding would be unlikely for the coming season, and with no dedicated annual plan budget existing, Council considered funding this through its 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP) process. Funding for the service was not included in draft budgets, with Council asking the public its views on the following options through the consultation process:

Option 1, “we keep service at a slightly reduced level”

Option 2, “we stop this service”

Of the 293 submissions received, 199 (68%) supported option 1 - “we keep service at a slightly reduced level”, with 94 submitters (32%) supporting Option 2 “we stop this service”. Through deliberations Council opted not to increase the general rate to fund freedom camping enforcement to the value of up to \$140k, directing staff to “*continue to investigate options for external funding for a reduced Freedom Camping Monitoring and Compliance enforcement service, along with any unbudgeted revenue streams that could be used to fund this service*”.

In doing so Council noted that *‘unless funding can be secured from external parties, and/or increased revenue can be secured, this will result in Council not responding to Freedom Camping enquiries and complaints going forward’*. This item provides an update on these matters, seeking direction on options for this service going forward.

4 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

As stated in the LTP / AP decision above, Council directed staff to continue to investigate options for external funding, for a reduced freedom camping monitoring and compliance enforcement service, along with any unbudgeted revenue streams that could be used to fund this service.

On 13 September 2024, MBIE confirmed that no funding for the 2024/25 season will be available. In addition, no alternative external funding streams have been identified. Since that time, and with increasing certainty around unbudgeted revenue streams of Council, staff have been working through options for the delivery/funding of the service, should Council wish to do so.

4.1 Options

Staff have identified four options for the service going forward:

1. Reactive - complaint only
2. Core service – monitoring and enforcement
3. Proactive – monitoring, enforcement and funded community education
4. No service

These options, along with their advantages and disadvantages, are summarised in the table below, with financial implications outlined under section 4.2.

Options	Benefits	Risks	Cost
<p><u>Option 1.</u></p> <p>Complaint only response from 2 December 2024 to 27 April 2025 (no proactive monitoring)</p>	<p>Provides complaint only response</p> <p>Aims to avoid escalation of complaints</p> <p>Aims to avoid public dissatisfaction</p> <p>Slightly lower cost than option 2</p>	<p>Only provides coverage by one Compliance Officer per day but with a seven day / week coverage, which may not be sufficient to deal with all complaints if numbers increase drastically, as expected</p> <p>Not all complaints will be able to be responded to within a 24-hour period</p> <p>No proactive monitoring of freedom camping sites will lead to an increase in complaints</p> <p>Increased non-compliance with the rules</p> <p>No proactive education</p>	\$80k
<p><u>Option 2.</u></p> <p>Full monitoring & enforcement program (including complaint response) from 2 December 2024 to 27 April 2025</p> <p>Recommended option</p>	<p>Provides both proactive monitoring and complaint response</p> <p>All priority sites visited daily during main summer season and every second day during autumn shoulder season</p> <p>Builds on successes from previous years</p> <p>Continues to educate the public</p> <p>Avoids escalation of complaints</p> <p>Avoids general public dissatisfaction</p>	Higher cost	\$120k
<p><u>Option 3.</u></p> <p>Full monitoring & enforcement program (including complaint response) from 2 December 2024 to 27 April 2025</p>	<p>In addition to the benefits highlighted under option 2, the ambassador program will provide additional Ambassadors at a number of dedicated sites proactively</p>	<p>Much higher cost</p> <p>A 'nice to have' service, but not essential</p> <p>Duplication of the services provided by the Armourguard program at the Ambassador sites, as those sites</p>	\$180k

Plus, the roll out of a comprehensive Ambassador coordinated monitoring & education program from 7 December 2024 to 9 February 2025	engaging with and educating freedom campers	will be visited by both Armourguard and the Ambassadors Ambassador Coordinator availability to coordinate the program this season is unlikely. No suitable Coordinator replacement has been identified and existing workload prevents council staff from performing this function.	
<u>Option 4.</u> No monitoring or enforcement or complaint response	No direct cost	No ability to respond to complaints No monitoring Escalation of complaints without the ability to physically respond Will lead to general public dissatisfaction with Council for not enforcing its bylaw	\$0

In light of the above, and the fact that sufficient additional revenue will be obtained to fund the service outside of existing budgets (as discussed under 4.2 below), staff recommend that Council approves Option 2 – Core Service. This is considered to be the lowest risk option, while recognising the need to be prudent in expenditure going forward.

It is important to note that this option does not preclude Council from working with local communities to deliver some components of the Ambassador programme outlined under Option 3, and previously funded through MBIE. However, there would need to be oversight and careful management of this to ensure that community involvement is focussed on education, and that the risk of unwarranted members stepping into enforcement is managed.

These matters are discussed in relation to potential contract arrangements under section 4.3 of this report.

4.2 Financial/budget considerations

With regard to potentially funding this from alternative (internal) sources, staff have identified that based on current forecasting the additional costs of providing this service could be largely offset by higher than budgeted income from both parking infringements fees and vehicle registration (Rego) and warrant of fitness (WoF) infringement income.

Below follows a table which for the years from 2023/24 through to 2026/27 shows the budget set, the actual/anticipated expense, the actual/anticipated revenue, and the achieved or anticipated surplus. Please note that the below values are combined values for both Parking enforcement and Rego/WoF infringements fees, which are rounded up or down to the nearest \$1,000.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Budget	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget
Revenue	\$1,629m	\$1,665m	\$1,916m	\$1,666m	\$1,666m

Expenses	\$1,090m	\$1,132m	\$1,301m	\$1,160m	\$1,184m
Surplus	\$539k	\$533k	\$615k	\$506k	\$482k

In relation to the above table it is important to note that:

- The anticipated full year surplus (as at October) is forecast at \$615k, meaning that we are forecasting a favourable variance to budget of \$82k.
- The Health and Bylaws department's current month full year forecast is showing a further favourable variance to budget of \$595k, however (and as discussed below) this is offset by other variances across the Planning and Development Group.
- The above does not take into account the roughly 70% increase in the values of infringement fees, applicable as of 1 October 2024, which is estimated to bring in around \$330k of additional income for the remainder of the 2024/25 financial year.
- The total number of infringements issued annually have been stable at around 24,000 per year, based upon the current number of Parking Wardens and it is in reaching the above estimate it is assumed that a similar number of infringements will again be issued this year. While increased fees may have a tempering effect on parking behaviour, it is reasonable to assume additional unbudgeted revenue from these going forward.
- Staff were conservative during budget setting processes and in the determination of anticipated revenue and likely surpluses in order to avoid funding activities through revenue that may not eventuate. At the time when the last LTP was set, we did not know whether revenue would continue at 2023/24 levels (which was an increase on previous years)
- There is more certainty now, even without the likely increase in revenue due to the central government mandated infringement fees increase as of 1 October 2024, as previously reported. As such there is a level of confidence that unbudgeted revenue to fund this service will be available going forward.

However, it is important to recognise adverse variances in other areas within the Planning and Development Group, and to ensure that we are looking at the bottom line when we consider whether revenue streams will be sustainable going forward. Within Building we are currently forecasting an adverse variance of \$740k, largely driven by lower than anticipated inspections.

This will be addressed by resetting budgets and revenue projections (and associated fees, although in balancing revenue and expenses changes may be cost neutral) through the upcoming Annual Plan in order to ensure that we stay within the funding parameters of the Revenue and Financing Policy. Once that is done any surplus revenue can more accurately be considered, taking into account the bottom line for budgets across the Planning and Development Group.

In the meantime, additional revenue streams will be offset by negative variances in other areas of the Group. Taking that into account, the Group is currently forecasting a \$256k positive variance for the 2024/25 financial year. As indicated above we now have a level of confidence that increased revenue will continue given increases to parking infringements set by Government, and as such are comfortable that this revenue could fund the service going forward, if Council chooses to do so.

4.3 Procurement and contractual arrangements

As outlined above the monitoring and enforcement service has historically been delivered through MBIE funding, by way of a variation to the Armourguard contract. While Council resolved to increase the contract amount to cover this service in 2023/24 this was not possible due to the need ensure separate accounting/cost recovery from MBIE. As such

these services were provided through a separate purchase order outside of the main regulatory contract.

Given this, and that there are no KPIs for the delivery of the service in the Armourguard contract (freedom camping monitoring and enforcement are excluded from the core contract services) a separate contract is recommended if the service is to be provided going forward. This would also enable options/KPIs for the oversight/co-ordination of any organised community groups interested in supporting educational activities, noting that any oversight provided through contractual arrangements would ultimately reduce the level of monitoring and enforcement that could be undertaken through the contract.

Should Council wish to fund the service for this season (which has already commenced) a variation to procurement would be required to enable direct appointment of a provider. While this, and any subsequent contract, would be considered under delegation to the Chief Executive, it is likely that there are limited (if any) providers outside of the incumbent that could provide the service within this timeframe. These matters will be worked through if funding is approved by the Committee.

4.4 Risks

Risks associated with funding/not funding this service going forward are covered in the options discussed under section 4.1 of this report. Funding this enforcement, using anticipated future income streams, risks (whilst considered extremely unlikely based on the analysis undertaken) that if the expected income is not achieved, that any budgetary shortfalls will have to be treated as an unbudgeted overspend.

5 Significance and engagement / Te Hira me te Arawhiti

The decisions or matters of this Agenda do not trigger the significance criteria outlined in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. Freedom camping monitoring and enforcement is not an identified level of service within the LTP and consultation on this topic is not considered to have generated a high level of interest.

The financial value of this service does not trigger financial thresholds within Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, noting that ongoing funding beyond 2026/27 would be reviewed by Council for approval through the next LTP. No other criteria within the policy are considered to be relevant.

Regardless of this it is noted that Council has consulted on the recommended option (a reduced service) through the LTP, along with the options of discontinuing the service. The public will be informed of this decision via Agenda publication on the website.

6 Attachments / Ngā Tāpiritanga

Attachment 1 – Camping in Public Places End of Season Report 2023/24

5.1 Camping in Public Places End of Season Report 2023/24

Meeting:	Strategy, Planning and Development Committee
Date of meeting:	20 June 2024
Reporting officer:	Reiner Mussle - Manager Health and Bylaws Zane Kumar - Bylaw Enforcement Co-ordinator

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To report on the outcomes of the camping in public places monitoring and enforcement programme for the 2023/24 summer season.

2 Recommendation / Whakataunga

That the Strategy, Planning and Development Committee:

1. Notes the report on the outcomes of the camping in public places education, monitoring and enforcement programme for the 2023/24 summer.

3 Background / Horopaki

This report provides an update on the education, monitoring and enforcement activity for the most recent Freedom Camping summer season of 2023/24.

As has been the case during previous years, staff were again able to secure contestable freedom camping transition funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to the total maximum value of \$200,000.

This funding again allowed us to develop both a Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador a Education Programme and an Armourguard led Monitoring & Enforcement Programme.

This funding is highly unlikely to be available for the 2024/25 financial year, and funding for monitoring and enforcement has not been included within the LTP. Staff will report back on this matter prior to commencement of the 2024/25 season.

4 Discussion / Whakawhiti korero

4.1 Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassador and Education Programme

Local volunteer ambassadors, co-ordinated by the Responsible Freedom Camping Co-ordinator visited fourteen targeted sites spread across the town, at Bream Bay, Onerahi and at Whangarei Heads from 9 December 2023 to 6 February 2024.

As the Tutukaka beach sites are now freedom camping prohibited between 18 December and 8 February each year, these sites were excluded from the ambassador program and were patrolled solely by Council's Regulatory Enforcement Services contractor, Armourguard.

Ambassadors distributed freedom camper information, which was funded by this season's MBIE grant. This included:

- WDC 'Freedom Camping in Whangarei' brochure
- 'Know the Rules' flier
- Commercial camp-ground contact details
- Information on Whangarei rubbish transfer and dump stations
- Sustainable camping information sheet

Ambassadors connected with campers in a total of 1777 camper vehicles and tents during the season.

In addition to co-ordinating the volunteer ambassador program, the Responsible Freedom Camping Co-ordinator also managed and executed a communications plan. This included: developing media releases, news stories, co-ordinating social media messaging, and providing liaison with the commercial campgrounds. A flyer listing commercial campgrounds was made available to enforcement officers to assist in discussions with non-compliant campers around moving them on. This was also made available to i-site staff.

4.2 Compliance and Enforcement

Armourguard monitoring and enforcement programme – 2023/24 season

29 sites were subject to proactive monitoring visits throughout the season from 21 October 2023 to 14 April 2024.

The enforcement programme provided by Council's Regulatory Enforcement Services contractor (Armourguard) was split into three seasons equating to two different monitoring frequencies at key sites. The main summer season was from 11 December 2023 to 2 March 2024. There were two shoulder seasons comprising 21 October to 10 December 2023 and 3 March 2024 to 14 April 2024.

Daily monitoring was carried out during the main season. During shoulder seasons monitoring was every other day.

Camper vehicle numbers

Recorded vehicle numbers reached a peak in the season immediately prior to the first Covid-19 lockdown, before falling in the following two seasons. Since the 2022/23 season, vehicle numbers have tracked back upwards so that the numbers this season of 8615 vehicles were similar to those seen in 2018/19.

	2018/19 (19 sites)	2019/20 (23 sites)	2020/21 (25 sites)	2021/22 (25 sites)	2022/23 (26 sites)	2023/24 (29 sites)
Total number of vehicles recorded	8124	13411	5548	2662	6146	8615

Compliance

During site visits, enforcement officers record the time and date at the site, the type of vehicle, and whether or not they are compliant.

Vacationing camper compliance has historically been high overall. The recent season is no exception, with overall compliance of 92%.

The two seasons prior to the current one saw a drop in compliance. This was impacted mainly by a 'settling-in' period as campers adjusted to the new high season prohibition at the Tutukaka beach sites from October 2021.

	2018/19 (19 sites)	2019/20 (23 sites)	2020/21 (25 sites)	2021/22 (25 sites)	2022/23 (26 sites)	2023/24 (29 sites)
Percentage of vehicles compliant* (including vehicles stated as being 'day visitors')	92%	98%	97%	86%	87%	92%

Enforcement for non-compliance

Initially, Council took a predominantly educative approach to non-compliance. Commencing with the 2022/23 season, however, Council began to balance this with enforcement (infringements) where warranted. Typically, non-compliant campers are infringed for being uncooperative (failing to move on when requested) or are knowingly camping in specifically prohibited areas.

Across the 2023/24 season, 50 infringements were issued. This compares to 71 infringements issued over the 2022/23 season. For all previous seasons, negligible numbers of infringements were issued.

Reason for non-compliance	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Parking outside designated site or in prohibited area	81%	27%	39%	39%	68%	66%
Non-self-contained in a self-contained only site	3%	6%	14%	18%	5%	6%
Exceeded maximum night	11.5%	65%	45%	23%	5%	22%
Other	4.5%	2%	2%	20%	22%	6%

Self-containment

Self-containment is a key issue contributing to the sustainability of freedom camping and protecting the environment. Since its inception, Council's bylaw has stipulated that vehicles camping in our District must do so in a self-contained vehicle. The only exception to this is those camping in designated sites with 24-hour toilet provision where non-self-contained camping is specifically allowed.

As a result of the Self-contained Motor Vehicles Legislation 2023, camping on local authority land nationwide is now likewise only permitted in self-contained vehicles. This is except for where specific provision is made for non-self-contained camping under a bylaw as is the case in this District.

Self-containment standards have also been strengthened through the legislation with the requirement for a fixed, as opposed to a portable, toilet. This is a requirement for all new self-contained vehicles and is being phased in for existing certified self-contained vehicles. Currently the expectation is that all self-contained vehicles will be required to be certified to the new standard by 7 June 2025.

As illustrated in the table below, the presence of self-contained vehicles in our District has continued to trend upwards since data collection commenced. The recent legislative change should further support this trend.

Of the monitored sites that allowed for both self-contained and non-self-contained vehicles the percentage of vehicles that were self-contained:					
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
53%	73%	75%	68%	70%	77%

4.3 Complaints and other Feedback

Between 21 October 2023 and 14 April 2024 there were a total of 116 complaints received by Council in relation 'camping' in public places. Of these 53 complaints or 46% related to genuine freedom camping, as defined under the Freedom Camping Act. However, 54% related to homeless persons and/or permanent vehicle dwellers, which are not covered by this legislation and indeed are specifically excluded from it.

Where the complaints concerned freedom camping these were generally spread broadly throughout the district. There were two exceptions to this, with nine (9) complaints centred on Matapouri (Wehiwehi Road) and six (6) complaints centred on Ruakaka Beach Reserve.

Beyond this, Marsden Bay Reserve featured in three specific complaints as did Wellington's Bay/Whangamu.

Rubbish/toilets

As per previous summers, Grant Alsop, Field Officer, Parks and Recreation has not raised any significant concerns regarding toilets and water use at the designated camping sites.

Signs

In 2021/22 a significant amount of signage was updated following to the Camping in Public Places bylaw review to reflect changes made through that process. For subsequent seasons, including the most recent season, signage has been maintained and replaced on an as required basis following feedback from ambassadors, enforcement officers, and members of the public.

In addition, signage at the Tutukaka Beach sites has been progressively upgraded to highlight the prohibited high season period with large 'Check the Date' signs installed during this season.

4.4 2024/25 Season

For the coming season, staff expect that freedom camper numbers will continue to track upwards towards peak pre Covid- 19 levels.

MBIE has advised that a funding round for 2024/25 is not anticipated and therefore Councils who wish to continue to enforce freedom camping rules and their related bylaws in their Districts must fund that enforcement themselves.

As a result, and through its 2024-34 LTP public consultation process Council asked the public to submit on two options for the upcoming 2024/25 freedom camping season. These were:

Option 1, “we keep service at a slightly reduced level”

Option 2, “we stop this service”

Of the 293 submissions received, 199 (68%) supported option 1 - “we keep service at a slightly reduced level”, with 94 submitters (32%) supporting Option 2 “we stop this service”.

Despite that, Council decided against a general rates increase to fund freedom camping enforcement to the value of \$140k. Instead, Council asked staff to continue to look for cost savings elsewhere both within the Planning & Development group and the Health & Bylaws department, including the current Regulatory Services contract.

Whilst staff will continue to look for additional income / savings elsewhere, the risk remains that for the coming 2024/25 season no funding will be found to fund freedom camping enforcement. This in turn risks both the integrity of the related Camping in Public Places bylaw and widespread dissatisfaction when council is unable to enforce its related rules or respond to complaints.

4.5 Risks

In the absence of staff being able to identify savings/income for freedom camping monitoring and enforcement programme funding, there will be an inability to enforce the Camping in Public Places bylaw and to monitor or respond to related complaints, which risks community dissatisfaction.

5 Significance and engagement / Te Hira me te Arawhiti

The decisions or matters of this Agenda do not trigger the significance criteria outlined in Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy, and the public will be informed via the agenda publication on Council’s website.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**Move/Second**

That the public be excluded from the following parts of proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for passing this resolution
1.1 Confidential Minutes Strategy, Planning and Development Committee 17 October 2024	Good reason to withhold information exists under Section 7 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 6 or Section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public, are as follows:

Item	Grounds	Section
1.1	For the reasons as stated in the open minutes.	

Resolution to allow members of the public to remain

If the committee wishes members of the public to remain during discussion of confidential items the following additional recommendation will need to be passed:

Move/Second

“That _____ be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of his/her/their knowledge of Item _____.

This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matter to be discussed, is relevant to that matter because _____.