

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date:Tuesday, 17 April, 2018

Time:9:30 a.m.

Location:Council Chamber

Forum North, Rust Avenue

Whangarei

In Attendance

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai

Cr Stu Bell

Cr Crichton Christie (Chairperson)

Cr Tricia Cutforth

Cr Shelley Deeming

Cr Phil Halse

Cr Cherry Hermon

Cr Greg Innes

Cr Greg Martin

Cr Sharon Morgan

Cr Anna Murphy

Not in Attendance

Cr Gavin Benney

Cr Vince Cocurullo

Cr Sue Glen

Scribe

H Soo

Cr Christie convened the meeting at 9:30am.

1. Apologies

Cr Vince Cocurullo and Cr Sue Glen.

Cr Gavin Benney (leave of absence)

2. Reports

2.1 Grant, Concessions and Loans Policy Model Review

This report should be read in conjunction with the agenda report.

There are five fund allocations out of the \$1.577 million budget. Discussion is required on the following:

1. Whether to have five distinct funds or one single contestable fund;
2. The value of monthly or quarterly funding rounds;
3. The value of Participatory Grants (new) and whether to increase the Resident & Ratepayer funds from \$700 to \$1000 in line with the proposal;
4. The value of Discretionary Grants (new) to provide quick and response grants.

Sandra Boardman (General Manager – Community) advised that the proposal:

- outlines the guiding principles on how community funding should be delivered.
- places less emphasis on the constraints around what will and will not be funded.
- makes it simple for groups with sufficient legal status to apply for a diverse range of support.
- enables Council to see proposals for funding from a greater variety of applicants and assess them on merit rather than on current policy constraints.
- makes the application and reporting forms easier to help applicants as the application process is being simplified.

Discussion

1. Whether to have five distinct funds or one single contestable fund

Different opinions were expressed on the pros and cons of making the funds contestable. A tiered model was considered and how group funding could be protected for groups that some Councillors believe should receive a long-term commitment. Other Elected Members felt that there should be no long-term guarantee of funding but that it should be determined on how groups demonstrate the value they provide to the district on an on-going basis.

Some Councillors wanted assurance regarding continuous funding for certain organisations. Reference was made to how the funds are budgeted for between ratepayer and development contributions. Concern was raised on how the fund will be managed in one contestable fund. Multiple year funding was also discussed.

2. The value of monthly or quarterly funding rounds

There was discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of monthly versus quarterly funding rounds. Some Councillors favoured the monthly flexibility while others thought that it would be fairer to evaluate and assess organisations on a quarterly basis.

3. The value of Participatory Grants (new) and whether to increase the Resident & Ratepayer funds from \$700 to \$1000 in line with the proposal

Councillors rejected the idea of Participatory Grants. There was a suggestion that the Resident & Ratepayer be increased to \$1000 but only for on-going administration and operational requirements. Most Elected Members agreed that an increase to \$1000 for general administration and operating expenses would be appropriate.

4. The value of Discretionary Grants (new) to provide quick and response grants

The introduction of Discretionary Funds was discussed. Councillors were not in favour of providing delegated discretionary funding if there were monthly meetings to allocate funds.

Some Elected Members agreed that staff should be given authority to delegate up to \$25K funding to provide small quick response grants in support of building more agility into Council support.

Jonny Gritt (Manager – Community Development) explained that the proposal:

- was in response to the meetings and workshops conducted over the last six months to consider what the community identified as being inflexible or that could be improved.
- could provide more flexibility, agility and accessibility for community groups in line with the more Community centric model of the Community Development Framework.
- sought to provide greater equity amongst community groups across the district
- aligns with anticipated population growth.
- excludes concessions and community loans.

He added that the \$1.577million budget could be increased to \$1.8 million, subject to Long Term Plan (LTP) confirmation and that initial LTP feedback suggested many submitters supported increasing this further.

He also highlighted that as the Annual Operating Fund had just been determined, there was time to carefully consider Council's approach.

Sandra Boardman explained that the proposed model will not change how funds have been allocated historically. All the groups currently funded could continue to be so but the proposed approach would provide more flexibility and enable Councillors to have more input into the range of groups and activities supported.

Majority of Councillors were in favour of the following elements of the proposal:

- The Principles (Accessibility, Consistency, Diversity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Equity, Flexibility, Inclusion, Transparency)
- Simplified criteria consideration,
- Value of a single application form,
- Single pot of funding,
- Introduction of impact reporting,
- Support for use of concessions and development of community loans.

Councillors also expressed support for groups to be supported through the new Community Development Advisers (and the Community Funding Officer).

Other areas of discussion included:

1. The dedicated purpose and outcome Council wants to achieve.
2. Total funding amount should increase to reflect and represent Consumer Price Index (CPI).
3. Setting criteria so that expectations are clear to applicants.
4. Pre-meetings to be reintroduced with the Chair to discuss matters that might affect a certain Ward so that the Ward Councillor is aware and kept informed.
5. Having all Councillors at the Funding Committee and which committee Community Loans should be brought

It was concluded there was insufficient readiness at Council to progress the proposed changes at this stage and that the proposal should be refined for Council to consider at a subsequent workshop.

3. Closure of Meeting

The meeting concluded at 11:43am