

Council Briefing Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 14 February, 2019
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

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| In Attendance | Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai (Chairperson) Cr Stu Bell Cr Gavin Benney Cr Vince Cocurullo Cr Tricia Cutforth Cr Shelley Deeming Cr Sue Glen Cr Phil Halse Cr Cherry Hermon Cr Greg Innes Cr Greg Martin Cr Sharon Morgan Cr Anna Murphy Cr Crichton Christie |
| Not in Attendance | |

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| Scribe | Nicolene Pestana (Team Leader, Democracy) |
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The briefing commenced at 9.00am. Cr Chrichton Christie was absent.

Dominic Kula (General Manager, Strategy and Democracy) provided an overview of the purpose of the briefing which is to provide:

- An update on the Annual Plan 2019-2020 consultation and supporting documents
- Information on rates for the 2019-2020 draft annual plan and the impact of the 2018 general revaluation on general rates

1. Draft Annual Plan 2019-2020 consultation and supporting documents

Dominic Kula recapped the process from November 2018 to the briefing today, which involved a number of key steps, including:

- Identifying potential changes from Year 2 of the LTP
- Considering whether these changes are material or significant, in which case statutory consultation requirements would be triggered
- If consultation is not triggered, considering how to engage with our community

At the Council meeting on 13 December 2018, Council resolved to both formally consult on the Annual Plan while also undertaking to develop a communication and engagement programme.

At the briefing on 7 February, feedback was obtained from the elected members on the proposed communication and engagement plan which focuses on communicating what Council does and telling a story of Councils plans for the 2019-2020 financial year.

The plan will compliment a more traditional consultation process centred on a consultation document and supporting documents. Feedback on the content of the draft consultation document and supporting materials will be used to finalise the consultation document and supporting documents for adoption by Council at the February Council meeting.

Dominic Kula went through the presentation updating the elected members on the approach to Consultation and Engagement and communications. The meeting schedule is still being worked through but 23 events have been confirmed. There will be three key areas:

- Waters
- Going Places
- Keeping our District attractive

A video using residents to showcase projects under each area will “tell our story”. A more informal meeting format and room layout is proposed.

Feedback from Elected Members

- There were mixed views on whether an informal room layout would be effective for consulting with the communities.
- Having staff there to keep a record of meetings is very useful.

Elected Members went through the Consultation Document, page by page and provided the following feedback:

Key message

- The key message should be clearer. The key message should be that we are not changing much, should be a simple message, here are the changes and why.

Community Outcomes

- We should clarify that the community outcomes come from the community and is what the community asked for.

Interactive map

- The interactive map must be accurate. The street names could be removed from the map to avoid raising expectations.
- Under Council services we should include the effort we are putting in to maintain what we already have.
- There is a good differentiation between operations and capital projects.
- Diagrams of how much we spend on services should be included.

Major Council projects for 2019-20

- The Whau Valley Water Treatment Plant is not part of 2019-2020 key projects list.
- The language used in the key projects list is inconsistent.
- There could be more accuracy around the civic centre.

Water

- The message around waters is not conveyed clearly and the three waters are not clearly identified.
- We do not say what we are doing to keep rubbish out of water and harbours, the community wants to know what we are doing in this space.
- We should also highlight that we are spending money on maintaining water networks for the future.

Going places

- It is only a spend of 12.5c ratepayer money due to subsidies we receive.
- We should mention reducing carbon emissions as well as congestion on our roads.

- We should not quote too many figures.
- There needs to be consistency on how many kilometres of road we are sealing.

Investing in our community

- Reference to this year is confusing, should clarify that the projects are for 2019-2020.
- Community led projects should be prominently displayed.
- The Recreational Strategy should be mentioned.

What is changing?

- We adopted the LTP, these changes must be clearly communicated to the public. The message of what is changing is not clear, the message conveyed is more about what we are doing that the changes we are making. Dominic Kula advised that this is a two-fold approach – it is about communication with communities and consulting but also about balancing and managing expectations.
- The district being a high growth area is important in context to changes and challenges and this should be highlighted.
- We should be meeting the criteria set in LTP for reducing debt and should be careful of wording around reducing debt. Alan Adcock advised that within the context of the overall LTP, debt is lower than forecasted.

Have your say and feedback

- The questions we should be asking the community are what do we want from community and are we on the right track? Is there something we can do differently or better? Are there any projects that we have missed?

General Feedback

- Consider restructuring the headings
- Include page numbers.
- The document focuses on town, projects in rural areas should be highlighted as well.

2. Financial update – supporting documents to Consultation document

Alan Adcock (General Manager, Corporate) and Delyse Henwood (Manager, Finance) went through the financial update with the intention of providing the elected members with a summary to interpret the supporting documents to Consultation Document.

The supporting documents include the underlying assumptions made by council and the financial benchmarks to which council is measured to ensure that it is prudently managing its revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities and general financial dealings.

Feedback from Elected Members

- The community may interpret waterfront upgrades as upgrades for Hundertwasser as it doesn't specifically state that these upgrades are for the cruise ships. Dominic Kula advised that this can be clarified in the Consultation Document. Rob Furlong advised that there is no further financial commitment from this council to Hundertwasser but we have a commitment to the outcome of the referendum. The cruise ships with extra tourists are coming for Hundertwasser which is why we need to upgrade the bus facilities.
- There was a view that depreciation should be recognised in the area where the assets have depreciated as opposed to a general pot. Alan Adcock advised that depreciation of every asset, renewal and expenditure is tracked and pinned down to the asset group and depreciation will then fund the renewals program.

3. Rates – draft Annual Plan 2019-2020

Alison Puchaux (Manager, Revenue) went through the presentation on the impact of the 2018 general revaluation on land values and how these movements have impacted on rates for 2019-2020.

Feedback from Elected Members

- There was a question as to whether we are still adjusting rates when property moves from one type of rating unit to another? Alan Adcock advised that this is done on a regular basis.
- NRC's rates are going to go up immensely this year and we must be cognisant that we are going to be dealing with the complaints on this as we send out rates on their behalf. There was a discussion on this and whether we could split NRC and WDC rates as this is confusing to the public. Alan Adcock advised that this can be investigated but there is limited scope as this is statutory defined and there will be costs involved. Other elected members felt that we should make NRC charge their own rates.
- Lifestyle properties have increased the most and we should be concerned about interest in lifestyle properties and levels of service.
- We must differentiate between change in value of land and impact on rates.
- A rates increase will impact low socio economic properties.

Alison Puchaux advised that the rural sector has the most fluctuations, to date 600 objections have come in, 88 have asked for their rating category to be changed.

Closure of Meeting

The briefing closed at 10.57am.