

# 1. Report: Whangarei District Council Briefing Wednesday 26 April 2017

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*Report of a Briefing to the Whangarei District Council held in the Council Chamber, Forum North on Wednesday 26 April 2017 at 9.00am*

## **Present:**

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai, Crs Stu Bell, Vince Cocurullo, Tricia Cutforth, Shelley Deeming, Sue Glen, Jayne Golightly, Cherry Hermon, Greg Innes, Greg Martin, Sharon Morgan and Anna Murphy

## **Apologies/Absent**

Crs Christie and Halse (absent)  
Cr Hermon (late arrival 9.18am)

## **In Attendance:**

Chief Executive (Rob Forlong), General Manager Corporate (Alan Adcock), General Manager Governance and Strategy (Jill McPherson), General Manager Community (Sandra Boardman), General Manager Infrastructure (Simon Weston), General Manager Planning and Development (Alison Geddes), Governance Manager (Jason Marris), Media Relations Adviser (Ann Midson), Strategic Co ordinator (Gina Chapman) and Senior Meeting Co-ordinator (C Brindle)

## **1 Long Term Plan 2018-2028 Early Engagement Detail**

Facilitators: Her Worship the Mayor  
Alan Adcock

Her Worship the Mayor convened the meeting.

Alan Adcock outlined the objectives of the Briefing:

- Agree the approach to early engagement
- Understand the purpose and focus of early engagement
- Indicate the desired level of elected member participation in early community engagement.
- Agree on the preferred LTP 'theme'
- Understand the agreed timeframes for LTP engagement
- Understand the focus and purpose of the LTP consultation document (formal consultation) and the role of elected members.

Mr Adcock then covered the content of the briefing as outlined in the agenda report and attached presentation including:

- Engagement approaches – spectrum ranges from 'open ended' to 'more directed'
- Timeline of key LTP activities
- Considerations
- Reaching a wide range of people
- Potential discussion flow
- Foundation –
  - communication methods/mechanisms - Expo vs Virtual Expos – comparison, social media, public meetings, Have Your Say Events, community events, engagement with Maori

- Budget estimates
- Early engagement schedule
- LTP theme?
- Engagement process
- Consultation document
  - difference between consultation document and early engagement
  - key issues in the CD
  - Elected members and the CD.

## **Questions and feedback**

### Engagement approaches

Council discussed where on the spectrum of engagement approaches does council sit, open-ended or more directed, comments/feedback included:

- important to manage expectations and show the reality of the situation, be clear about the constraints we operate under, what we can and can't do. Explain what council's basic requirement is under the LGA; for example 80% of rates are used on what 'have' to do and 20% is available for what we'd 'like or want' to do.
- information provided to the public should be educational and 'real'
- show linkage to the 30/50 Growth Strategy
- be more 'open ended' when asking about long term views – this is the opportunity to be more visionary
- use language, terms that are easily understood by average person (no jargon/acronyms etc).

There was general support for the 'guided' approach as depicted in the presentation.

### Community input

Comments / feedback included:

- staff will review submission summaries for previous 3 years. Seal extension, footpaths, public toilets will be included.
- paint the picture – what is do-able, what people have said in the past, and this is where we're at now.
- feedback from hapu - Te Huinga have advised they hold regular scheduled meetings on marae, council will be invited to hui to discuss (as opposed to council organising). Ratepayer / hapu meetings in some Wards could be combined.
- Consultation document – significant issues – ensure community understand the definition of 'significant'.

### Timeline of key LTP activities

Council considered extending the 4 week consultation to a 6 week consultation period.

There was some concern the 4 week consultation period wouldn't allow community organisations that don't meet monthly sufficient time to provide feedback.

The majority supported a 4 week consultation period for the following reasons:

- 4 weeks is sufficient – make sure well in advance that everyone is aware the consultation period is for only for a month.
- Resident & Ratepayer Associations' are aware of the timeframe and can accommodate
- Council are now holding more 'open' Briefings (public can attend and the Briefing agenda is published to the website), therefore the Plan will be more visible to the public earlier than has been in the past.

- Elected members can also use their community meetings and community newsletters as a mechanism for communicating early. It was agreed later in the debate that community magazines be listed as one of the 'channels' for reaching people.
- The Plan will be available on the web soon after adoption – communities will be able to view the Plan on the web within a few days of the adoption meeting.

### Considerations

Council were considerate of the need to represent the district 'as a whole' and not just their Ward. They difficulties urban Councillors face in reaching a diverse community was acknowledged. Cognisance was also give to representation review and how it aligns with the process.

### Reaching a wide range of people

A broad-reach programme has been devised proposing the following channels:

- Social media (Facebook & Neighbourly)
- Getting out and about (e.g. pop-ups at markets & other community events)
- Public meetings and Have Your Say Events
- Radio and media (news releases to all media, features in Council News)
- Website (videos, links and pages).

Council debated a suggested new initiative proposing staff visit business and some of the larger organisations such as schools etc? This idea was generally not supported by the wider council due to limited resources. Council is conscious of the need to be 'smart' with the limited resources available. Utilising Accountants to spread the word was also suggested.

There were mixed views on the new initiative to communicate with the community - 'voice to camera by ward councillors'; examples from other local authorities were requested.

A WDC kiosk at the A & P Show was put forward.

Elected members will have the opportunity to attend all meetings, important to get a sense of the district perspective. Meetings will be facilitated by staff and elected members.

### Potential discussion flow

Language/explanations used in document - often people don't understand the local government terminology e.g. service levels. Use concepts that the average person can easily understand, such as the explanation used for the 80%/20% split e.g. 80% is what we have to do and 20% is what we would like, or want, to do.

It was suggested the 'community outcomes' be listed under 'X% of our money'.

### Proposed content

Maintain political neutrality. Consider using a public figure (not a politician) to front. Examples of models used by other council's requested.

## The website & WDC Expo

A virtual expo as opposed to a 'physical' expo was supported by the majority this is largely due to resources and the cost involved in holding a physical expo.

Information provided for a virtual expo can be built on and this resource will become a permanent educational resource for the future.

Requested for the next Council Briefing – what a 'launch' of the virtual expos would involve.

## Budget estimates

Mail out – budget allows for a brochure mail out to all households.

It was noted that including the brochure with the rates notice ensures the ratepayers get the information but not renters.

Costly exercise – need to consider if this is best value for money.

Format - questioned whether other non standard formats could be used and it suggested formatting be consistent.

The brochure should be clear in communicating the change to the process e.g. at this stage it is about early engagement, not consultation.

## Early engagement schedule

Preliminary list at this stage, a more detailed list will be provided in due course.

Members requested:

- Separate meetings for Tikipunga & Ruatangata
- Where practicable encourage separate meetings (noting these are the community group's preferred dates & changing dates can result in reduced attendance)
- Public meetings in Okara Ward
- HYSE Onerahi – recommend change to Raumanga / Morningside

## LTP theme

Members were asked to indicate their preferred theme to GM Jill McPherson.

**The meeting closed at 11.56am**