



**WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

MINUTES

**Strategy and Finance Committee Meeting
6 October 2020**

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**MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 101 GUYTON STREET, WHANGANUI
ON 6 OCTOBER 2020 AT 1.00PM**

PRESENT: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay (Chair), Cr Charlie Anderson, Cr Philippa Baker-Hogan, Cr James Barron, Cr Brent Crossan, Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan, Mayor Hamish McDouall, Cr Hadleigh Reid, Cr Alan Taylor, Cr Rob Vinsen, Cr Graeme Young, Whanganui Rural Community Board Member David Wells.

APOLOGIES: Cr Helen Craig.
Cr Kate Joblin (Leave of absence 15 September to 15 December 2020)

IN ATTENDANCE: Kym Fell (Chief Executive), Stephanie Macdonald-Rose (Group Manager – Corporate), Mike Fermor (Chief Financial Officer), Anna Palamountain (Democracy Advisor), Karyn Turner (Senior Governance Services Officer), Justin Walters (Senior Policy Analyst), Will Johnston (Policy Advisor), Sandy Lee (Policy Advisor), Hamish Lampp (Group Manager - Regulatory & Planning), Leayne Huirua (Planning Administrator), Simon Nitz (GIS Lead), Darryl Couper (GIS Officer), Lauren Tamehana (Community Wellbeing Manager), Sarah Pomeroy (Communications & Marketing Manager), Peter Oskam (Whanganui Rural Community Board Member).

1 OPENING KARAKIA AND WAIATA

Cr James Barron read a karakia.

Cr Baker-Hogan joined the meeting at 1.02pm.

Ngāwai Matthews (Operations Support Officer) led the Committee with waiata *E rere re Awa Tupua*.

2 APOLOGIES

Apology

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/51

Moved: Cr Alan Taylor

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

That the Strategy and Finance Committee accepts the apology of Cr Helen Craig and grants leave of absence for this meeting.

CARRIED

Cr Kate Joblin's approved leave of absence was noted.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cr Alan Taylor – Item 8.2: Financial Commitments – Confidential

Mayor McDouall joined the meeting at 1.04pm.

Cr Vinsen left the meeting at 1.04pm.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2020

Author: Karyn Turner - Senior Governance Services Officer

Authoriser: Kate Barnes - Senior Democracy Advisor

Significance of decision – In terms of the Significance and Engagement Policy 2018, the decision is not significant.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/52

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

Seconded: Cr James Barron

That the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee Meeting held on 25 August 2020 are confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

Cr Vinsen rejoined the meeting at 1.05pm.

5 REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

5.1 COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY RESULTS 2020

Author: Will Johnston - Policy Advisor

Authoriser: Stephanie Macdonald-Rose - Group Manager - Corporate

Jasmine Hessel - Team Leader Policy

Cr Brent Crossan joined the meeting at 1.06pm.

Discussion

Emma Pottinger and Natalie Richards (Versus Research) presented the results of the 2020 Community Views Survey via Zoom. The presentation included a summary of the survey mixed method of telephone and online interviewing of 500 residents with a sample overview of gender, age and suburbs. Key results for Services and Facilities and Community and Council Measures were provided. The graphs included trends from 2010 to 2020. The survey had been conducted either side of the COVID-19 lockdown and it was considered that this may have had some impact on the results. The margin of error was estimated at +/- 4.38%.

Comments on Services and Facilities included:

- Participation in recreational activities had increased with the exception of visiting a beach, using a playground, visiting Cooks Gardens, or activities on the Whanganui River.
- Results from cultural activities were mixed however, visiting a historic site, the Regional Museum, libraries and being involved in a community organisation had increased.
- Satisfaction with the Regional Museum and standard of toilet facilities had increased.
- There was a decrease in user satisfaction with the District's libraries, the Royal Whanganui Opera House and the District's sportsgrounds.

Comments on Community and Council Measures included:

- Apart from the survival kit measure, emergency response ratings had all increased.
- Perceptions of safety remain similar year-on-year.
- Living in Whanganui measures had seen slight increases.
- Community wellbeing and pride in neighbourhood measures had increased.
- Council performance and community involvement ratings had declined.

The presenters from Versus Research and Justin Walters (Senior Policy Analyst) and Will Johnston (Policy Advisor) responded to questions.

While there was general agreement that the survey results be used to inform the Long Term Plan, Cr Reid said some of the numbers were strange and believed COVID-19 had had an impact on these. He believed the Council needed to be mindful of this when it used them to guide the Long Term Plan. Cr Taylor said while it was clear some figures had been distorted by COVID-19, what was important was the trend lines and he considered this is what Council officers should be looking at.

Mayor McDouall considered the survey had brought some really good results. He did however believe there was a need to be mindful of the perception of Mayor and Councillors. For the third time in a decade a score under 50% should be of concern to all Elected Members. He said while COVID-19 may have had an impact, he queried whether there were other reasons, and asked all Elected Members to think about why the perception of their performance had gone down. He was disappointed in the decline in ratings for community involvement in decision making but this was a challenge not unique to this Council.

Cr Chandulal-Mackay referred to the Policy and Communications Teams' Long Term Plan pre-engagement programme and said over the next four to six weeks every councillor would have an opportunity to be out in the community. He considered if visibility was the issue, this would be the chance for all councillors to be seen in various parts of the community.

Cr Barron strongly recommended continuing the availability of Zoom and said it was important, particularly for Long Term Plan and Annual Plan, to provide people with the ability to Zoom in from wherever they are to speak. All meetings were held in the Municipal Building and Cr Barron believed the Council could do better at this level. He hoped that people would approach the Council to bring meetings out into their communities.

Cr Vinsen said results from two core areas of Council business had deteriorated in the survey. The target for 'satisfaction that toilet facilities met user needs' was 70% and had managed 50%. While the Council was actively trying to improve this, there was a long way to go. The other was 'satisfaction with availability of on-street parking', with a target of 80% but sat at 52%. He said

Central Business District parking was no longer up to standard and believed this needed investigation at the upcoming Long Term Plan.

David Wells, Whanganui Rural Community Board member, said the survey did not reflect well on the Community Board. While the Board had made significant progress on a number of issues and had received national awards with its security camera initiative and rural broadband, the community was unaware of the Community Board. Its visibility in the community needed to be improved and the Board was currently engaging with Council officers to work on this.

Significance of decision – In terms of the Significance and Engagement Policy 2018, the decision is not significant.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/53

Moved: Mayor Hamish McDouall

Seconded: Cr Charlie Anderson

That Council Officers use the results of the Community Views Survey to inform the Long Term Plan.

CARRIED

5.2 DISTRICT PLAN - NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Author: Leayne Huirua - Planning Administrator

Authoriser: Hamish Lampp - Group Manager - Regulatory & Planning

Discussion

Hamish Lampp (Group Manager – Regulatory and Planning) said district plans throughout the country all looked different in overall format and navigation. The Government had sought to address this through releasing a set of national planning standards (NPS). One main change was the requirement to have an ePlan, electronic and interactive via council websites.

The District Plan currently on the Council's website was in a static PDF format. The District Plan maps however were in an electronic interactive format so therefore partially NPS compliant. Group Manager - Regulatory and Planning acknowledged the Council's two Geographic Information System (GIS) officers for their work in this area.

The Group Manager - Regulatory and Planning said no changes to policies, rules or content would be made, i.e. policy neutral. The change was focussed on the District Plan's navigation and how it was used. He believed Whanganui would be one of the first in New Zealand to take its adopted plan and translate it into the NPS format. Public notice would be given once the NPS compliant District Plan was complete.

In response to questions, the Group Manager - Regulatory and Planning said funding was already approved in the Annual Plan. While not totally in favour of District Plan rolling reviews, there were advantages of doing so. Having both the current and proposed District Plans together on the website when undertaking a proposed plan change was one real advantage of the ePlan process. One NPS rule was that the District Plan must be accessible from a council's website home-page. Improvements could always be made in promoting other types of planning information such as

asset maps and aerial photography. Opportunity could be taken when adopting the District Plan to include a reference to this type of information.

Significance of decision – In terms of the Significance and Engagement Policy 2018, the decision is not significant.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/54

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

Seconded: Cr Alan Taylor

That the Strategy and Finance Committee recommends:

That the Council:

- a) Adopts the amended Whanganui District Plan, consistent with the National Planning Standards and including any consequential amendments
- b) Produces the Whanganui District Plan in electronic form (ePlan)
- c) Publicly notifies the Whanganui District Plan (ePlan) within five (5) working days of approval.

CARRIED

5.3 REVIEW OF GAMBLING VENUES POLICY

Author: Will Johnston - Policy Advisor

Justin Walters - Senior Policy Analyst

Authoriser: Jasmine Hessel - Team Leader Policy

Stephanie Macdonald-Rose - Group Manager - Corporate

Significance of decision – In terms of the Significance and Engagement Policy 2018, the decision is not significant.

Discussion

Will Johnston (Policy Advisor) and Justin Walters (Senior Policy Analyst) responded to questions.

Concern was expressed that in 2019 only 28% (\$1.26M) had been donated back to community organisations within Whanganui District. Under the Gambling Act 2003, at least 40% of Class 4 gaming intake was required to be contributed to community causes. In 2019, player losses on Class 4 machines in Whanganui District totalled \$11.3M; 40% of that was \$4.52M. In response, the Policy Advisor said the 40% return was based on organisations rather than specific venues. A percentage was taken by organisations such as the New Zealand Community Trust and funding taken from a local community did not necessarily go back to that local community. Responding to a query whether lobbying New Zealand Community Trust and Pub Charities may provide some insight into this inequity, the Senior Policy Analyst said reasons why different types of organisations received funding was currently being discussed. There were gaps in this information and one reason could be an ability to fill in funding applications.

Mayor McDouall said the report advised the 'sinking lid' policy was largely effective but gaming proceeds continued to rise and he queried whether the policy was in fact 'fit for purpose'. In response, the Senior Policy Analyst said within legislation the policy was as stringent as it could be.

Cr Baker-Hogan said that while there had been a reduction in gaming machines under the sinking lid policy, she was concerned that gaming proceeds had continued to rise. She also queried whether there had been an increase in online gambling. In response the Policy Advisor said the increase in Class 4 gambling was not entirely clear. The number of gambling venues had more impact than the number of machines and it could be the same people gambling more money. Statistics from the Department of Internal Affairs showed gaming revenue down this year compared to 2019. That could be relevant to COVID-19. Data was not collected for online gambling with the majority of this outside of New Zealand.

Cr Taylor queried whether there was any indication from Problem Gambling Foundation or the New Zealand Gaming Commission that sinking lid policies were causing a transfer to online gambling. In response, the Policy Advisor said the Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand had concerns about online gambling. It was more convenient, less regulated, more money was spent and the methods used more enticing. This however was outside the boundaries of what the Council could do, although from a report received it would appear the vast move to online gambling did not seem to be happening.

Cr Taylor said a former Gaming Commissioner had said sinking lid policies were causing a shift to online gambling and he queried whether the Council was wasting its time with a Gambling Venues Policy if the eventual outcome made no difference to the amount of money gambled. The Senior Policy Analyst said the purpose of the Gambling Act and the Council's policy was to effectively try and reduce problem gambling. The sinking lid policy did not have the ability to combat online gambling.

Cr Barron referred to the allocation of gaming proceeds and considered this was more to sports organisations rather than to those who gambled. He queried whether the Council should widely publicise these figures. In response the Senior Policy Analyst said there were opportunities for these figures to be made available such as when the social impact assessment was being discussed, or while consulting on the policy. He further noted that the Problem Gambling Foundation, Salvation Army and Safer Whanganui were all involved in bringing forward issues. Supporting them in what they were doing was far more effective than what the Council could specifically do.

In response to the Chair's question, Lauren Tamehana (Community Wellbeing Manager) said Safer Whanganui had reviewed the revised Gambling Venues Policy with comment provided back to the Policy Advisor. Safer Whanganui was supportive of any opportunity to tighten up the current policy.

Speaking to the motion, Cr Baker-Hogan said the Council needed to do what it could to control problem gambling and this was an opportunity to hear from all sides of the argument including organisations involved in Class 4 gaming. This was also an opportunity to consider the white paper produced by the PGF Group, Hāpai Te Hauora and the Salvation Army that may well provide other ways to have some influence.

Crs Vinsen and Duncan also spoke to the motion. While supporting the Sinking Lid Policy, Cr Vinsen said this policy was of concern to a number of sporting organisations who relied on NZCT funding. He was however concerned at the small amount that was returned to Whanganui. Cr Duncan believed the system was 'broken'. Problem gamblers were usually addicted to gambling and

compulsive, gambling hard earned money beyond their control. On the other side, sports clubs were reliant on an abhorrent addiction to gambling. Cr Duncan believed the small amount of funding coming back into the community was a Central Government issue, not one for the Council. Its mandate was to reduce the number of gambling machines.

Cr Taylor said he intended to abstain from voting on this issue believing that this should reflect the portion of Whanganui that believed there was sufficient social engineering occurring without this policy.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/55

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

That the Strategy and Finance Committee:

- (a) Adopt the amended Gambling Venues Policy and statement of proposal for public consultation.

CARRIED

Cr Alan Taylor abstained from voting.

5.4 LEADING EDGE STRATEGY UPDATE - OCTOBER 2020

Author: Stephanie Macdonald-Rose - Group Manager - Corporate

Authoriser: Bryan Nicholson - Chief Operating Officer

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/56

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

Seconded: Cr James Barron

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Leading Edge Strategy Update - October 2020.

CARRIED

5.5 STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - OCTOBER 2020

Author: Stephanie Macdonald-Rose - Group Manager - Corporate

Authoriser: Bryan Nicholson - Chief Operating Officer

Discussion

In reply to a question, Stephanie Macdonald-Rose (Group Manager - Corporate) said the Waste Minimisation Strategy was not part of the Strategy and Finance Committee's work programme. She agreed this strategy was a big task and resourcing issues were to be considered.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/57

Moved: Cr Charlie Anderson

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Strategy and Finance Committee Work Programme - October 2020.

CARRIED

5.6 QUARTERLY POLICY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE - OCTOBER 2020

Author: Stephanie Macdonald-Rose - Group Manager - Corporate

Authoriser: Bryan Nicholson - Chief Operating Officer

Discussion

Responding to a comment on 'no capacity' for the Youth Strategic Plan, Stephanie Macdonald-Rose (Group Manager – Corporate) said the Youth Strategic Plan was more than just the Youth Committee which had its own strategic plan. The Youth Committee Review Working Party determined that the Youth Committee was just one avenue for Council to contribute to youth support and engagement. The Youth Strategic Plan would take a broader view of youth within the District. Considerable support was needed in terms of delivering this and while it was recognised as important the reality was it was not something that currently could be resourced. Preparation was in place to do so in 2021.

The Group Manager – Corporate further noted that the Youth Hub work currently being undertaken would provide a good opportunity to further conversations about the way in which the Council could support some of the work for young people. It would not just look across Council but a variety of areas and the way in which people worked with other agencies.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/58

Moved: Mayor Hamish McDouall

Seconded: Cr Rob Vinsen

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Quarterly Policy Work Programme Update - October 2020.

CARRIED

5.7 FINANCE ACTIVITY REPORT - OCTOBER 2020

Author: Mike Fermor - Chief Financial Officer

Authoriser: Kym Fell - Chief Executive

Discussion

In reply to questions, Mike Fermor (Chief Financial Officer) said the income abatement threshold of \$26,150 was per household. The rates rebate worked on a sliding scale with a maximum allowable rates rebate of \$655.00. Rates rebate information was included with rates notices. Revenue Officers tracked those who used the rebate scheme, contacting them and also visited rest homes to ensure the best uptake possible of the rate rebate scheme.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/59

Moved: Cr Charlie Anderson

Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Finance Activity Report - October 2020.

CARRIED

5.8 FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS - AUGUST 2020 TO SEPTEMBER 2020

Author: Lana Treen - Senior Procurement Officer

Authoriser: Mike Fermor - Chief Financial Officer

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/60

Moved: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

Seconded: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Financial Commitments - August 2020 to September 2020.

CARRIED

5.9 ACTIONS ARISING

Author: Karyn Turner - Senior Governance Services Officer

Authoriser: Kate Barnes - Senior Democracy Advisor

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/61

Moved: Deputy Mayor Jenny Duncan

Seconded: Mayor Hamish McDouall

That the Strategy and Finance Committee receive the report – Actions Arising.

CARRIED

6 MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC**RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

Section 48, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/62

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay

Seconded: Cr Charlie Anderson

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely items listed overleaf.

Reason for passing this resolution: good reason to withhold exists under section 7. Specific grounds under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution: Section 48(1)(a)

CARRIED

Note

Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

- “(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):
- (a) Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and
 - (b) Shall form part of the minutes of the local authority.”

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 relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

ITEM NO.	GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	SECTION	SUBCLAUSE AND REASON UNDER THE ACT	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON	WHEN REPORTS CAN BE RELEASED
7.1	Public Excluded Minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee Meeting held on 25 August 2020			Refer to the public excluded reasons in the agenda for 25 August 2020 meeting.	
8.1	Debtors Report - October 2020	s7(2)(a)	Privacy	Protect the identity of named individuals and entities	
8.2	Financial Commitments – Confidential - August to September 2020	s7(2)(b)(ii), s7(2)(h), s7(2)(i), s7(2)(j)	Commercial Position, Commercial Activities, Negotiations, Improper Gain or Improper Advantage	Commercially and financially confidential contract information.	
8.3	Actions Arising - Confidential			Refer to the previous public excluded reasons in the agenda for this meeting	

Committee Resolution SFC/2020/63

Moved: Cr Josh Chandulal-Mackay
Seconded: Cr Charlie Anderson

That Peter Oskam be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of his knowledge of rural community. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matter to be discussed, is relevant to that matter because Peter Oskam is a member of the Whanganui Rural Community Board.

CARRIED

The meeting reopened to the public at 3.18pm.

Cr James Barron recited a karakia.

The meeting closed at 3:20pm

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Strategy and Finance Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2020.



Deputy CHAIRPERSON