

Minutes of a meeting of the Sustainability and Wellbeing Committee of the Waikato District Council held in the Council Chambers, District Office, 15 Galileo Street, Ngaruawahia on **WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2023** commencing at **9.30AM**.

Present:

Cr L Thomson (Chairperson)
Her Worship the Mayor, Mrs JA Church
Cr C Beavis
Cr CA Eyre (Deputy Mayor)
Cr JM Gibb
Cr K Ngataki
Cr EM Patterson
Cr M Raumati
Cr LR Thomson
Cr P Thomson
Cr T Turner
Cr D Whyte

Attending:

Mr G Ion (Chief Executive)
Mr C Morgan (General Manager Community Growth)
Mr K Abbott (Executive Manager, Projects and Innovation)
Mr J Ebenhoh (Planning and Policy Manager)
Mr R Turner (Customer Experience Manager)
Ms J Dolan (Economic and Community Led Development Manager)
Mrs G Kanawa (Democracy Manager)
Ms K Rhind (Senior Community Engagement Advisor)
Ms R Goddard (Senior Advisor Climate Action)
Ms L Van Den Bemd (Community-Led Development Advisor)
Ms A McPhee (Business Resilience Advisor)
Ms E Saunders (Democracy Advisor)
Ms G Shaw (Democracy Advisor)

APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Resolved: (Crs Gibb/Patterson)

THAT the Sustainability and Wellbeing Committee accepts the apologies from:

- a. Cr Keir, Cr Matatahi-Poutapu and Cr Reeve for non-attendance.**

CARRIED

S&W2302/01

CONFIRMATION OF STATUS OF AGENDA ITEMS

Resolved: (Cr Eyre/Her Worship the Mayor, Mrs JA Church)

THAT:

- a. the agenda for a meeting of the Sustainability and Wellbeing Committee held on Wednesday, 22 February 2023 be confirmed;
- b. all items therein be considered in open meeting, with the exception of those items detailed at agenda item 7, which shall be considered with the public excluded; and
- c. all reports be received.

CARRIED

S&W2302/02

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

REPORTS

Emergency Management Framework and Update
Agenda Item 4.1

The report was received [*S&W2302/02 refers*] and the following discussion was held:

- The Executive Manager, Projects and Innovation provided an update.
- On Friday 27 January 2023, Council activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in response to the severe weather event impacting the North Island.
- At the time of the meeting, Council had red stickered seven (7) properties, yellow stickered thirteen (13) properties and had also white-stickered multiple other properties that had been affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.
- Council was working to support families/individuals displaced by the damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.
- Council was working with communities to identify and assist with welfare needs and recovery, specifically Miranda, Tuakau, Raglan, Ruapuke, Rangiriri, Huntly and Port Waikato.
- Recovery planning requires a holistic view, affecting multiple teams/lines of work.

- Noted that Council staff had been fatigued and under considerable pressure since late 2022. Point was raised that staff were responding to a state of emergency but were also expected to manage business as usual.
- Suggested staff hold a series of workshops for community boards and committees to discuss community response plans, provide an overview of how these should be managed and required actions/next steps. Staff confirmed that discussions had been initiated, noting communities sought bespoke templates targeted to their unique requirements. In response, staff were looking to create an easily adaptable template.
- Councillors requested staff explain what each category of sticker (red, yellow, white) meant for affected properties/owners. Staff provided an explanation.

ACTION: Staff to provide Councillors with a written explanation/outline of what the red, yellow and white stickers mean for affected properties/owners.

- Marae within the district had been challenged to produce effective local emergency management plans.
- *How could we capture learnings from recent events to ensure we have appropriate capacity to address future disaster events?* Council required to have a broad-scale discussion in this regard.
- It was noted that single elderly individuals were particularly vulnerable and often did not seek assistance. Raised a point that Council needed to become more aware of, and raise greater awareness around, vulnerable groups in the community.
- Council needed to also work on mitigation strategies as weather events were occurring with increased frequency and severity.
- Suggested that an updated communications plan was required to better utilise the website and ensure all relevant information was compiled/available in once space for affected communities to seamlessly access. Council needed to build this capacity as soon as possible.

ACTION: Staff to create an updated communications plan to better utilise the website and ensure all relevant emergency response information was compiled/available in once space for affected communities to seamlessly access.

- Staff were encouraged to ensure they were taking care of themselves while assisting communities through this crisis. We cannot clearly see what other people's state of mind is from the outside looking in, so needed to be mindful of what may be occurring underneath the surface.
- Council commended staff on a nimble response.
- Council needed to ensure it could adapt and react to situations of this kind; it appears adverse weather events would occur with greater frequency and severity in the future.

Resolved: (Crs Raumati/Peter Thomson)

THAT the Sustainability and Wellbeing Committee endorses the 2023 Emergency Management Work Programme.

CARRIED

S&W2302/03

Climate Action Progress Update
Agenda Item 4.2

The report was received [*S&W2302/02 refers*] and the following discussion was held:

- Recent climate related events had highlighted the district's vulnerability to climate change.
- There had been a five-fold increase in extreme weather events over the last ten (10) years.
- Impact of increased climate related events were expected to be significant in areas of health, economy, and culture, therefore, it was imperative we act and become more prepared through the establishment and implementation of consistent frameworks and systems.
- Councillors noted that climate action should be a high priority and expressed concern that staff resource was insufficient to tackle the proposed workload in this area.
- Noted there was a lack of robust data in the waste section. For example, landfills on private properties were rarely monitored. Opportunity for more comprehensive data in this space.
- The suggested 'think tank' was felt to be a great idea. Suggested it should be led by the Senior Advisor, Climate Action.
- Staff would need to determine if the think tank session would be district-wide, regional or national.

ACTION: Senior Advisor, Climate Action would provide a synopsis/business case for a climate action think tank session to the Executive Leadership Team.

- Staff were investigating the possibility of a Sustainability and Climate Response Unit within Council as the work required in this space is broad and multi-faceted. Important for the Executive Leadership Team to get this right and well resourced. Staff were working through how to make it work from a funding perspective, against other priorities. Suggested longer term resourcing would be a Long-Term Plan (LTP) decision.
- It was suggested that competing funding priorities should not prevent progressing a climate response and sustainability direction. Suggested that Council endeavour to find a tangible funding solution.

- Some councillors urged that the Chief Executive and ELT urgently resource climate action.
- Waiting for the next LTP for a business case that is already in front of us is self-defeating. Stated it was critical to resource this now for the greater good, and future, of our communities.
- Staff noted that we would need to educate the entire organisation as all teams should be working towards climate and sustainability goals.

ACTION: Staff to investigate funding options for increased climate change and sustainability staff.

Economic and Community Led Development Work Programme Agenda Item 4.3

The report was received [*S&W2302/02 refers*] and the following discussion was held:

- The Economic and Community-Led Development Team introduced themselves to Councillors.
- Considering recent adverse weather events across the district, it was important to remember people and communities affected by damaged infrastructure.
- *What mahi could the Economic and Community-Led Development Team undertake to prevent drug testing from creating employment barriers for young people who occasionally use marijuana?* Understood it had been a concern, and there were several ideas and projects the team could investigate in this space.
- Work was underway for the Ngaruawahia, Hopuhopu and Taupiri Structure Plan. Noted that the Community-Led Development Team needed to align their work with this plan, particularly from the economic perspective. Staff advised that they had been supporting other teams with this piece of work.
- A discussion was held highlighting the importance for Council to build knowledge and understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and its impact on cultural heritage and identity. Staff confirmed that they would seek a hui with Maori Councillors around this topic.
- *Did the team have an update regarding enquiries in the renewable energy sector?* Little could be discussed from a confidentiality perspective. Acknowledgement that economic development is about investment, but further work is required regarding sustainable development.
- It was suggested that all Councillors and the Mayor should be involved in hui regarding iwi engagement, not just Maori Councillors.

ACTION: Community-Led Development Team to involve all Councillors and the Mayor in iwi engagement hui.

Blueprint Implementation Progress Update

Agenda Item 4.4

The report was received [*S&W2302/02 refers*] and the following discussion was held:

- The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an update on implementation progress on each Blueprint initiative and at a summary level across both Council-led and Community-led initiatives.
- Using the same reporting software as was used for quarterly reporting on non-financial key performance indicators, implementation progress updates were obtained for the approximately 260 Blueprint initiatives, contained in the Districtwide Blueprint and the 15 existing Local Area Blueprints.
- Noted tension between realistically being able to have a truly ‘alive’ document versus maintaining consistency with the overall framework. Council had grown to understand this tension since the inception of the Blueprints.
- Intent for the Blueprints to be a suitable base of community priorities. Appreciated that change could be rapid, therefore, the team was still figuring out how to maintain the integrity of the document for planning processes and changing community needs.
- *How do we truth test this document to ensure all information presented is accurate?* A check-in with Community Board Chairs had been added to assess/check staff progress updates.
- *How do Councillors assist staff with feedback on their community’s Blueprint?* Staff would contact Councillors offline with suggestions/answers to this query.

ACTION: Staff to provide Councillors with an update regarding how they could provide assistance/feedback regarding community blueprints in their ward/s.

Community Engagement Report

Agenda Item 4.5

The report was received [*S&W2302/02 refers*] and the following discussion was held:

- The Senior Community Engagement Advisor presented the report.
- The role of the Senior Community Engagement Advisor was created and filled late 2022 in response to Councils direction to better understand its community engagement needs and to improve how staff carry out engagement.
- Initial focus since commencement had been to build knowledge of Council systems, processes and functions and the varying parts within, that intersect with our communities.

