

Minutes for a meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee of the Waikato District Council held Audio Visually on **MONDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2021** commencing at **9:30am**

Present:

Cr JM Gibb (Chairperson)
His Worship the Mayor, Mr AM Sanson
Cr AD Bech
Cr JA Church
Cr CA Eyre
Cr SL Henderson
Cr SD Lynch
Mrs Maxine Moana-Tuwhangai [*until 10:30am*]
Cr FM McNally
Cr RC McGuire
Cr EM Patterson
Cr JD Sedgwick
Cr NMD Smith
Cr LR Thomson
Cr CT Woolerton

Attending:

Mr T Whittaker (Chief Operating Officer)
Ms A Diaz (Chief Financial Officer)
Mr R MacCulloch (General Manager Service Delivery)
Mr V Ramduny (Strategic Projects Manager)
Mr J Ebenhoh (Planning & Policy Manager)
Mr M Horsfield (Democracy Advisor)

APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

All members were present.

CONFIRMATION OF STATUS OF AGENDA ITEMS

Resolved: (Crs Thomson/Sedgwick)

THAT the agenda for a meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee held on Monday, 6 September 2021 be confirmed and all items therein be considered in open meeting with the exception of those items detailed at agenda item 8 which shall be considered with the public excluded;

AND THAT all reports be received.

CARRIED

S&F2109/01

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Resolved: (Crs Patterson/Eyre)

THAT the minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee held on Monday, 26 July 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

S&F2109/02

REPORTS

Action Register – August 2021

Agenda Item 5

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and discussion was held.

- A date had not been confirmed for the workshop relating to the Treasury Risk Management Policy Review.

Climate Action Progress – August 2021

Agenda Item 6.1

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and discussion was held.

- Progress had been made in the last 18 months with Climate Action using business as usual budgeting. Various provisions were included in the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan to make further progress.
- Climate Change Co-ordinator role had been advertised and interviews were underway.
- Council had made emissions targets for the district as an aspirational goal.
- Council had direct levers to help meet emissions targets such as land use policy, decisions in transport, education and conservation.
- LED street lighting programme had paused as funding from Waka Kotahi was no longer available.

ACTION: General Manager Service Delivery to update members on the status of the LED street lighting programme and how it would be funded.

- A Local Government New Zealand remit has requested Government to standardise the measuring of CO2 throughout Councils.
- Questions raised regarding employees working from home, and if reduced it reduced Council's overall energy use.
- COVID lockdowns had not impeded the progress of climate action by the Council.
- Questions raised regarding Council possibly entering the area of forestry planting.
- Council was building an emergency climate change action fund over time for \$5 million.
- It was important to look at the big picture for climate change and ensure that Council works with the community to achieve results.

- Important to include the protection of wetlands, and the important role they play with biodiversity and carbon storage.
- Discussion regarding tourism emissions in the district and whether those emissions were included in the overall emissions result for the district.
- Council's waste minimisation plans need to be robust to support communities with reducing visitor impact. Also need to consider landfills in our district and the waste the district takes from other regions, and how the Council measures its own progress while taking in waste.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism Annual Report to Waikato District Council – 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

Agenda Item 6.2

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and discussion was held.

- Regenerative tourism programme was underway within the Waikato region. It accounts for emissions and helps businesses achieve carbon offsets, or become carbon positive.
- Hamilton & Waikato Tourism had worked with Raglan Naturally to look at low emissions alternatives for areas such as transport.
- Waikato District had rebounded well from the March 2020 lockdown until the recent August 2021 lockdown.
- There had been a 11% increase in visitor expenditure last year, but the Waikato District is still down \$185 million in visitor expenditure from 2019.
- Waikato is the second busiest region for business expenditure.
- There was a lack of hotel accommodation capacity due to MIQ facilities and emergency housing.
- There had been a strong media focus on the Waikato, through publications such as Air New Zealand's Kia Ora Magazine. Stuff, NZ Herald and Cuisine Magazine.
- 1200 international travel agents had been trained via Zoom with live tours and merchandise sent out to them.
- Average visitor nights in the district were 1.6 nights, with large spikes in Raglan and seasonality is beginning to spread out.
- Mighty Local website had been relaunched under the current lockdown.
- Only four (4) businesses had closed across the region during COVID. There had been access to Government funds to help businesses and ambassador programmes and new initiatives such as West Coast journeys.

- Noted it was important that businesses regularly update their digital networks and marketing.
- Accommodation shortages were still a problem with MIQ facilities. Hamilton & Waikato Tourism were working with three (3) hotel developers to see new opportunities for accommodation facilities.
- Alternative accommodation options such as temporary campervan parks were partially meeting demands for events but it was not a long term solution.
- Growth in Airbnb accommodation in the district had rebounded and increased.

Changes to Default Growth – High Growth Projection from Waikato Projections 2018-2068 Agenda Item 6.3

The report was received [S&F2109/01 refers] and discussion was held.

- Currently Council was following the 2020 Waikato University growth projection forecast. Forecasting typically gives three (3) trend projections being high, medium and low. Waikato District was currently following the medium trend projection.
- This report was looking to change to the 2021 Waikato University high growth projection, inline with future proof partners. The differences between the high and medium projections were minimal.
- Questions – why were there variances in the growth projections and levels of growth in the north of the district. Migration, births and deaths had a large influence on projections and COVID had an effect.
- Regardless of the modelling used, projections were not predictions of the future. Modelling would never be completely accurate but is monitored and adjusted to increase the accuracy of the projections. Inaccurate growth forecasting had been identified as a strategic risk and there would be a deep dive report going to Audit & Risk in September 2021.
- Robust methodologies were used to predict modelling, with contingencies and controls in place.
- Waikato University modelling showed that the Waikato District's growth wasn't as affected by COVID as other regions, and was less sensitive to reduced international immigration.

Resolved: (His Worship the Mayor/Cr Sedgwick)

THAT the Strategy and Finance Committee recommends to Council that the Changes to Default Growth – High Growth Projection from Waikato Projections 2018-2068 be adopted as Council’s default growth scenario from 21 September 2021.

CARRIED

S&F2109/03

Mrs Moana-Tuwhangai left the meeting 10:30am during the above item and was not present when voting took place.

Economic and Community Development Work Programme Update – August 2021
Agenda Item 6.4

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and discussion was held.

- The economic impacts from the current lockdown would likely be felt after lockdown had ended.
- New operations manager had been employed at Te Waka, and Te Waka would be looking at how they can better support the District.
- Interviews were underway for Community Development Adviser roles. The positions would be based both in Tuakau and Ngaruawahia.
- A Funding review report would come to the Strategy & Finance Committee in the near future. Staff would be working with Community Boards to give training for processing discretionary funding applications.

Approved Counter Party Review
Agenda Item 7.1

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and no discussion was held.

General rate position for the year ended 30 June 2021

Agenda Item 7.2

The report was received [*S&F2109/01 refers*] and discussion was held.

- Council had tried to move away from high general rate surpluses. The current position is much lower than previous years.
- The general account reserve fund had been accounted for through the long-term plan.
- At the end of the 2020/21 financial year, there was only \$5.2 million of carry forward budget relating to projects that had not been rewarded.
- There were roughly 400 valuation objections, and there be a detailed report would be presented at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting in September 2021. The capital value associated with the objections is equates to approximately \$44 million.

Resolved: (Crs Smith/Church)

THAT the Strategy & Finance Committee recommends to Council that the 2020/21 general rate surplus of \$35,502 is transferred to the general accounting reserve fund.

CARRIED

S&F2109/04

Exclusion of the Public

Agenda Item 8

Resolved: (Crs Thomson/McInally)

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
Item number 1 – Confirmation of Public Excluded Minutes	Good reason to withhold exists under Section 7 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)
Item 2.1 2020/2021 Unpaid Dog Registration Fees write-off	Good reason to withhold exists under Section 7 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)

