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Minutes for a Hearing Panel meeting of the Sustainability & Wellbeing Committee held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, District Office, 15 Galileo Street, Ngaruawahia on **TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2023** commencing at **9.30am**.

**Present:**

Cr J Gibb (Chairperson)  
Cr C Beavis  
Cr M Keir  
Cr K Ngataki  
Cr T Turner

**Attending:**

Ms D Tracey (Strategic Planning Manager)  
Mr J Fuller (Senior Policy Planner)  
Ms S Chibnall (Resource Policy Team)  
Mr F Bell (Strategic Planner)  
Ms T Heera (Strategic Planner)  
Mr B Wolf (Ecologist)  
Mr G Mason (Open Spaces Team Leader)  
Mr M Horsfield (Reserves Team) – *from 9.42am*

Ms E Saunders (Democracy Advisor)

The Committee opened the hearing with a Karakia.

**APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Resolved: (Cr Ngataki/Cr Beavis)**

**THAT:**

- a. an apology for non-attendance from Cr Eyre be accepted.

**CARRIED**

**S&WH2304/01**

## **CONFIRMATION OF STATUS OF AGENDA ITEMS**

**Resolved: (Cr Keir/Cr Turner)**

**THAT the agenda for a meeting of the Sustainability & Wellbeing Committee for the hearings and deliberations of the Taiao Strategy held on Tuesday, 18 April 2023 be confirmed:**

- a. all reports be received and;
- b. all items therein be considered in open meeting.

**CARRIED**

**S&WH2304/02**

## **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of Interest.

## **REPORTS**

Taiao in the Waikato Strategy Hearing & Deliberations Report  
Agenda Item 4.1

The report was received [*S&WH2304/02 refers*], and a full overview of the Taiao Strategy was given to the Panel by the Senior Policy Planner:

It was confirmed by the Panel that the late submission from Waikato Tainui would be accepted and a resolution was passed to confirm this.

**Resolved: (Cr Ngataki/Cr Turner)**

**THAT the Sustainability & Wellbeing Hearings Panel:**

- a. accepts the late submission by Waikato Tainui;

**CARRIED**

**S&WH2304/03**

Funding: Resourcing and Collaborative Partners Discussion:

- A question was raised around funding for this strategy and where the funding would come from? It was confirmed that whilst this strategy was not focused on funding itself there was a still a brief discussion had about the Conservation Fund and who could apply for this funding (Council vs Private).
- The Conservation Fund was initially set up for private landowners who had covenants on their land to assist with maintenance of fencing and pest control. The full amount was not covered but it was a contribution.

- It was noted that when Council introduced Significant Natural Areas it was thought to open up the funding that the Conservation Funding Pot could be opened up to Private Landowners as these areas were marked as being on their land through no fault of their own.
- The Panel confirmed that there needed to be some wording changes in the draft strategy particularly around “funding” and making it clear that funding is not part of this strategy.
- Cr Turner queried what all the other organisations (i.e Waikato Regional Council; QEII etc.) are doing in this space and how funding from Council is contributing to this? A brief discussion was held about our collaboration partners and how funding could best be utilised.
- *The Panel queried if the Taiao Strategy is a specific target that sits outside what other organisations or ministries are doing? Or is it the same? Do we need to have a strategy for Council and what is the goal with this?* The Senior Policy Planner advised that this strategy showed best practice as Council would hopefully encourage landowners to do the same in collaboration with Council.
- The Panel queried how this fit in the funding argument if individual landowners could not access those funds unless they are part of a group? It was confirmed that it encourages landowners to work with community groups and to get involved in restoration projects in their area.
- It was noted that resourcing in this space is required but it is a discussion for the Long Term Plan process.
- It was noted that Council had a history of not utilising volunteers very well – particularly volunteer groups and this is something that could be looked at moving forward.

**ACTION:** Council Staff to update the wording around funding and resourcing as currently described in the strategy to ensure clarity and transparency.

## **DELIBERATIONS ON SUBMISSIONS:**

### Submission Themes:

#### Access:

- The Council Parks & Facilities Team are currently working on the Network & Connectivity Strategy which will go out for full consultation for submissions to be received.
- The Network & Connectivity Strategy will be worked on in collaboration with different community groups to understand the networking needs in each space.
- Submission number 6 – the points noted have already been included in the strategy but the wording needs to be improved to show the recommendation has indeed been included to make it clear.

**ACTION:** Council Staff to update the wording for Submission 6 to make it clear the recommendation has been included.

#### Best Practice & Key Documents:

- Access Strips – what is included in this? It was confirmed by the Policy Team what an access strip actually was, but the Senior Policy Planner confirmed this would be explicitly explained in the wording of the strategy.

**ACTION:** Council Staff to update the wording in the draft Strategy to make it clear what an access strip is.

#### Collaboration:

- Submission 14 (4737) – it was confirmed what Threat Species is and why it has been referenced.
- It was noted that Nature and the City will be referenced and Hamilton City Council will be worked with in this space.
- The Panel queried whether Council needed to be more specific about who we were collaborating with for this strategy?
- The Panel queried best practice and if this will be captured in the wording in the strategy.

**ACTION:** Council staff to update wording in the strategy around collaboration partners to not only include who Council are currently working alongside but to also show that the strategy is an evolving document that could include relationships with other partners moving forward.

#### Conclusion:

- Climate Change point was noted.

#### Elements of Waikato District:

- Point 1.1.1 will be slightly re-worded as per recommendation from the submitter.
- Point 21.2.2 – The 85% of Significant Natural Areas as referenced by the submitter needs to be clarified.
- The Waikato Tainui Submission was discussed and it was noted that work would be undertaken in collaboration with Council staff.

#### Emerging Threats:

- No further discussion on this theme.

### Esplanade Reserves:

- It was noted in Point 12.2.1 that submission was acknowledged but that wording changes for the strategy is not required.

The Hearing adjourned for Morning Tea at 11am and resumed again at 11.18am.

### Focus Areas (Including Actions):

- Council have accepted the recommendations from some of the submitters as noted in the submission theme document.
- It was noted by the Ecologist that Council already had a seat on the Biodiversity Forum that holds site visits once or twice a year.
- It was noted by Cr Beavis that Council needed to look at how they are wording these points to ensure they are clear. The wording in particular around point 5.2 needs to be strengthened.
- Point 7.4.4 – clarity was provided and it was confirmed that all submitters would be getting an acknowledgement that is specific to their submission.
- Point 7.4.15 – The last sentence in this point was highlighted as an error and it was confirmed that the submitter is wanting these weed species to be removed.
- Focus Area 5.1 of the Draft Strategy – a brief discussion was had around information provided to the public and whether more could be done to have this readily available.
- The Panel queried whether Council have a specific strategy around Plant Pests? It was confirmed that resourcing doesn't allow for this to be done on each reserve so it is more a case by case basis.

**ACTION:** Council staff to strengthen the wording in section 5.2 of the draft strategy to ensure it is clear and more fluid.

**ACTION:** Section 5.1 of the draft strategy - Council staff to investigate the possibility of having more information available to the public, particularly around different the plant species in NZ. The possibility of using the council website is to be explored and providing links to existing websites that have this information.

### Funding:

- Points for this theme were raised in the initial conversation and there was no further discussion.

### General:

- No further discussion on this theme.

#### Goals:

- Point 1.3.1 - The F&B link will be added as per the notes.
- Point 1.8.1 – Clearer wording is required to explain exactly what the benefits are of including this information in the strategy moving forward.
- The Panel advised that clarity in the wording is required around the Snapshot of the Goals (Page 26 of the Draft Strategy).

#### Introduction:

- The Senior Policy Planner gave a brief overview of this theme with no further discussion.

#### Layout & Comprehension:

- The Senior Policy Planner gave a brief overview of this theme with no further discussion.

#### Monitoring & Review:

- The Senior Policy Planner gave a brief overview on the Report Card but no further discussion was had.

#### Opportunities & Implementation:

- Whilst there was no further discussion on this theme it was noted by the panel that this was a good piece of work.

#### Other:

- Point 18.9.3 – clarity is required around macrons vs double vowels for te reo wording and guidance is required. It was confirmed that Waikato Tainui will be given the opportunity to go over the document to ensure consistency.
- Point 15.4.1 – further clarity with the wording is required.

#### Policy & Scope:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Private Landowners:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Recreation & Reserves:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Reporting:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Restoration & Riparian Plantings:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Rewilding (Passive):

- Point 7.2.1 – The submission noted and the Senior Policy Planner advised that the submitters point was taken and will be expanded on in the strategy.
- It was noted that Council have responded to Waikato Regional Council and that an alternative wording rather than rewilding will be used.

Significant Natural Areas:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Strategic Context:

- Points 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 (Vision of the Draft Strategy) – it was confirmed that further clarity with the wording is required.

**ACTION:** Draft Strategy Vision statement: Council staff to update the wording to have emphasis on the peoples values and to ensure the vision is clear and transparent.

Vision & Goals:

- No further discussion on this theme.

Waikato Tainui – Environmental Plan:

- No further discussion on this theme.

