

Port Waikato Community Hub Proposal FAQs

1. Why has a stand-alone, council owned hall not been considered?

A stand-alone hall was considered when Council engaged with the community a couple of years ago. The community's preference then was a stand-alone hall to be built at the ruby grounds on Albie Phillips Reserve. But, due to the nature of the site and the extent of the earthworks required for the building, the cost to the community was deemed to be prohibitive. The building of the hall would have to be funded by targeted rate of ratepayers in the Port Waikato Catchment Area – when including factors like depreciation of assets and interest on a potential loan, the targeted rate would have been at least double the targeted rate put forward for the proposed community hub. This was judged to be not feasible for the local community.

2. How did the proposal of the Community Hub come about?

Council held discussions with the Port Waikato Hall Committee and the Port Waikato Residents and Ratepayers Association last year. When the costs of a stand-alone hall were explained, and the fact that there is a lack of suitable land at the Port for any other site apart from Albie Phillips Reserve, it was decided by the hall committee and the ratepayers association that working with the Sunset Beach Lifesaving Charitable Trust to use its upgraded surf clubrooms as a Community Hub was the best option forward. This approach has been tested and supported within meetings held, with rate payers present at the meetings.

3. Who will have to pay the targeted rate?

The targeted rate will have to be paid by ratepayers in the Port Waikato Hall Catchment area only, (see map) which will be around 370 ratepayers.

4. Has there been a public meeting about this proposal?

There was a well advertised public meeting (via the Port Report and social media) held by the Port Waikato Hall Committee and Port Waikato Residents and Ratepayers Association back in June. This was well attended with about 80 people turning up. Because this was not a council meeting, Council did not take minutes at this meeting, although it was attended by Councillor Bronwyn Main.

5. How will the Community Hub work – should the proposal be successful?

Council are working with the Sunset Beach Lifesaving Charitable Trust to form a Memorandum of Understanding that will cover the terms of use of the Community Hub. This will cover things like community representation on the trust board and the community's use of the hub and how that will work. This will be finalised in the coming months should the proposal be successful. In the public meeting in June Malcolm Beattie of the Sunset Beach Lifesaving Charitable Trust said that a new constitution to safeguard the outside funding and non-club Trust members would need to be written. He also said there would also be a Users' Committee formed, to be used as a platform for regular and ad-hoc users to have input into the day-to-day running of the hub. However he said it was important that the Surf Club had the deciding vote, otherwise they could be out-voted from their own property.

6. What happens if the proposal is not successful?

Back to the drawing board in terms of finding a replacement for the current Community Hall, noting all previous options proposed have proven too expensive based on feedback with the Port Waikato community, as it is clear that the current hall will become unusable at some point in the future.

Council has said that once the sand cliff comes to within 7.5m of the front edge of the hall it will become unsafe for regular community use. It is currently at about 12m.

Council is monitoring this on a regular basis.