

MINUTES

Policy and Services Committee



F22/55/05 – D24/32049

Date: Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 3.00 PM
Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

The Deputy Mayor – M McKay (the Chairperson), the District Mayor N C Volzke, Councillors: S J Beck, G W Boyde, A M C Dudley, J M S Erwood, A K Harris, E E Hall, V R Jones, C M Tongaawhikau, W J Sandford and M J Watt.

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Sven Hanne, the Director – Assets Mrs V Araba, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Acting Director – Community Services – Mrs E Bishop, the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig, the Committee Secretary – Ms E Coulton, the Acting Executive Assistant and Committee Secretary – Mrs C Reynolds (*part meeting*), the Community and Economic Development Manager – Ms S Afzal (*part meeting*), the Community Development Officer – Ms A Kingston (*part meeting*), The Property Manager – Mrs S Flight (*part meeting*), The Projects Manager – Mr S Taylor (*part meeting*), the Graduate Asset Engineer – Ms K Van Hout, the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain, the Services Asset Manager – Mr J Cooper, The Roading Manager – Mr S Bowden, one member of the Media (Stratford Press), Jennifer Patterson (Venture Taranaki), and one member of the public.

1. Welcome

The opening karakia was read.

The Deputy Mayor welcomed the Chief Executive, Councillors, staff, and the media.

The Deputy Mayor reiterated the health and safety message and emergency procedures.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Announcements

There were no announcements.

4. Declarations of members interest

Elected members were asked to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda.

Councillor J M S Erwood declared interest in item 10 Decision Report – TET Funding Application 2024.

5. Attendance Schedule

The Attendance schedule for Policy and Services Committee meetings, including Hearings, was attached.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Policy and Services Committee –28 May 2024 D24/26845 Page 10

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 28 May 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
P&S/24/176

The Committee Secretary undertook to make the following amendments:

- Councillor Harris expressed that on page 15 of the agenda under item 11.1 Monthly Reports – Assets Report a conversation was missing where she expressed her frustration towards the damage to the bridge. She noted that this comment was put in a media release and believes it is important for it to also be included in the minutes. The Chief Executive Officer noted that the purpose of the minutes is to record decisions and is not verbatim, he noted that it is unlikely we will be able to backfill that conversation.
- The Deputy Mayor requested the title of chairman to be amended to chairperson for the meetings she chaired.

6.2 Policy and Services Committee – 11 June 2024 (Hearing) D24/30048 Page 18

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting, to hear and consider submissions to the Rates Postponement and Rates Remission Policies, held on Tuesday 11 June 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

TONGAAWHIKAU/JONES
Carried
P&S/24/177

The Committee Secretary undertook to make the following amendments:

- The second bullet point of submission one, the term is E-RUCs (Electronic Road User Charges) not E-trucks and needs to be changed accordingly.
- Page 26 item 10, Decision Report – Rates Postponement Policy – Deliberation and Adoption, spelling mistake. Change from deceleration to declaration.
- Councillor Jones was not present at the meeting, attendance needs to be updated accordingly.
- Spelling error page 22 was changed from sate to state.

Recommendation

THAT the Matters Outstanding be received.

DUDLEY/BECK
Carried
P&S/24/178

The Chief Executive Officer noted the following:

- There was a workshop scheduled to discuss the new Parking Bylaw today but due to the Pedestrian Crossing matters and the two extraordinary meetings held in the last week this has been cancelled. He noted that this workshop will be rescheduled as soon as possible, and information will be circulated in due course.

8. Information Report – Economic Development Quarterly Report – Quarter Three
2023/2024
D24/29109 Page 29

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/WATT
Carried
P&S/24/179

Jennifer Patterson from Venture Taranaki noted the following:

- The report the elected members received was not customised to the Stratford District so Ms Patterson wanted to take the opportunity to highlight aspects specific to the Stratford District.
- A demonstration on how the interactive Quarterly Report Dashboard works was done.
- Highlights on the dashboard noted that three different businesses in the Stratford District received capability funding and one manufacturing business has received a \$10,000 grant due to their innovation.

The Graduate Asset Engineer joined the meeting at 3.07pm.

- Influencers, Rody NZ, have partnered with Venture Taranaki to produce content of the region. They have journeyed all throughout the region and have highlighted the arts map and the Taranaki taste trail through their videos.

The Parks and Reserves Officer joined the meeting at 3.10pm.

- Venture Taranaki are in phase 2 of the branching out process and ashwagandha and liquorice have been planted in toko as trial crops in the Stratford District.
- The team went on a funded trip to Auckland to promote regional collaborations on primary sector diversification. She noted there are plans for more funded trips in the future.
- In the innovation and entrepreneurship space, Venture Taranaki facilitated an AI for business presentation which was well attended and have had another sell out workshop for raising capital 101.
- Taranaki trends for summer 2024 are now available.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde questioned if Venture Taranaki provided support to Councils with regards to new industries/opportunities being attracted to the region. Ms Patterson noted that it is a bit of both and that consenting is primarily a council issue, she expressed that Venture Taranaki drive the case but require council to implement them with the consents in a timely manner.
- Councillor Beck asked if anyone in the Stratford District took part in the trial crop for garlic. Ms Patterson noted that no one in the Stratford District took on a garlic trial crop, she noted that this may be due to soil conditions, weather, or lack of interest from farmers. Councillor Beck asked if garlic has the capability to be grown in the Stratford climate. Ms Patterson directed Councillor Beck to their website as it has indications as to what crops are suitable to each area. Councillor Beck noted that if garlic is able to grow here, he is interested in doing a trial crop.
- The District Mayor sought clarification as to what is being grown in Toko. Ms Patterson clarified that Ashwagandha is being grown and is a medicinal herb.
- The District Mayor noted that an area that is focused on for economic development seems to be cruises, he noted that he saw something that mentioned that P&O will no longer be heading to Taranaki on their route. Ms Patterson noted that she is unsure on the validity of that and will need to follow up.

The Services Asset Manager joined the meeting at 3.30pm.

The Graduate Asset Engineer left the meeting at 3.30pm.

- The Deputy Mayor noted that page 18 of the report notes the direct spend and economic impact of the regional film office, she sought clarification on what the economic impact is and what it is comprised of. Ms Patterson noted that the direct spend is what is directly spent during the duration of the activity such as meals paid for, whereas the economic impact is indirect and is more so about the benefits seen through that direct spend.

Information Report – Percy Thomson Trust – Statement of Intent 2024/2027

D24/30656 Page 57

Recommendation

1. THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/HALL

Carried

P&S/24/180

2. THAT Council receive the final Statement of Intent for Percy Thomson Trust for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2027.

BOYDE/BECK

Carried

P&S/24/181

Recommended Reason

In terms of Schedule 8 of the Local Government Act 2002 Percy Thomson Trust, being a Council Controlled Organisation, must deliver a final statement of intent on or before 1 July 2024.

The Chief Executive Officer noted the following:

- The draft statement of intent was presented to council at the February Policy and Services committee meeting. Elected members at this meeting noted that they want the Percy Thomson Trust to keep council updated with any structural changes, however it is not required to be included in the statement of intent. The statement of intent that is presented today is therefore the same as the draft intent submitted in February.

The District Mayor noted the following:

- At the past Policy and Services meeting in February when the draft statement of intent was presented, Councillor Hall and himself were tasked to create a summary for elected members about the Trust's future and potential changes, he apologised as that is not being presented to elected members today. It was noted that the intention is to hold a workshop to discuss the future of the trust in mind.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde acknowledged what the Chief Executive Officer and the District Mayor had to say but noted that there were some concerns for him. He noted that Council has the ability to extend the deadline and delivery of the statement of intent by resolution and expressed that this may be wise as the discussion surrounding the future governance of the trust is set to begin shortly and it would make sense to have these two discussions synonymous of each other. It was noted by the Chief Executive Officer that elected members did not direct the Percy Thomson Trust on changes to be made to the statement of intent draft and clarified that we are able to recall and reevaluate a statement of intent at any time that we see fit. The Chief Executive Officer noted that since the publication of the agenda Mrs Craig has been removed from the statement of intent as she has resigned as a Trustee.
- Councillor Hall noted that if there were not legislative requirements to receive the report today, we would not be doing that right now due to the discussions had throughout the council surrounding the future of the trust. She expressed that she is happy with where we are in regard to receiving today and noted that timeframes could be put in place surrounding the summary being comprised by herself and the District Mayor on the Trust's future.
- Councillor Beck sought clarification if the plan was to receive the statement of intent at this meeting and then hold a subsequent workshop to discuss amendments that are required such as the budgets. The Chief Executive Officer advised the Budgets are those of the Percy Thomson Trust, and not Council's to workshop. The time for amendments was when the Draft Statement of Intent was presented to Council.
- The District Mayor clarified that the numbers that have been presented in the statement of intent are the Trust's numbers and the budget they have created, he noted that he believes a discussion surrounding budget should be undertaken when the discussion about the future governance of the Trust is being held.

The Roading Asset Manager joined the meeting at 3.45pm.

Councillor Dudley and The Acting Executive Assistant and Committee Secretary left the meeting at 3.45pm.

- Councillor Beck noted that he has been relying on the District Mayor and Councillor Hall for all information regarding the Percy Thomson Trust and would be interested in seeing a workshop be planned to discuss the current issues and the future.
- Councillor Hall expressed that if she was not in the conversation with the Percy Thomson Trust and the District Mayor she would also be as concerned as the other elected members, however she is aware what discussions are being had.
- The Deputy mayor noted that the concerns are clear and we will be sorting this as soon as possible but currently the only thing we are able to do is receive the report.
- The District Mayor noted that he received an email from the Chairman, Mr Ellis, stating that due to Mrs Criag resigning there is now a gap within the committee and has expressed they would like someone to fill that role, but this is up to the Mayors discretion. The District Mayor sought advice from elected members if this role should be filled. Councillor Boyde noted that he was interested in seeing someone fill that role.

The Roading Asset Manager left the meeting at 3:50pm.

- Councillor Sandford also noted that he was interested in seeing that position filled. The Deputy Mayor expressed her opposition to filling the position, citing concerns about the current situation within the committee. She questioned the potential value that a newcomer, lacking experience, could contribute under the current circumstances. She noted this may be unfair to both the committee and the potential new member. Councillor Erwood agreed with the Deputy Mayor. Councillor Harris noted that two members within the committee are set to expire at the next AGM, it may depend on them reinstating their position. She is on the fence.

Councillor Dudley rejoined the meeting at 3.51pm.

- Councillor Beck noted that he would like to see someone appointed and expressed that The District Mayor would be in the best position to make this decision and indicate who is suitable for that role. It was ultimately decided that it is up to the District Mayor to decide the outcome of this.

Councillor Erwood left the meeting at 3:53pm.

9. **Decision Report – TET Funding Application 2024**
D24/30070 Page 81

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/WATT
Carried
P&S/24/182

2. THAT Council's funding application to the Taranaki Electricity Trust (TET) for \$432,212 is approved to be submitted.

DUDLEY/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/24/183

Recommended Reason

The opportunity to have projects externally funded will reduce the rating impact for ratepayers.

The Acting Director – Community Services noted the following:

- The amount in the recommendation needs to be updated from \$452,212 to \$432,212 due to a last minute change to the total.
- All of the projects included in the funding application have been included in the Long Term Plan projects discussion.
- The mirrors and Pilates reformers for the aquatic centre are scheduled in year one of the Long Term plan projects, while the coffee station is budgeted for year four but may be brought forward pending funding approval. She emphasized that securing funding for these enhancements aims to enhance availability and revenue for the aquatic centre.
- The business case has not yet been presented to the elected members yet. As it includes discussions on projected revenue, program extensions, and strategies to increase pool usage, it is expected that the projects listed in the funding application will influence these aspects.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Harris questioned if the items listed on page 82 were in order of priority, she noted that if we are not successful in gaining the full amount of funding, how will it be decided as to what items gets the funding. The Acting Director – Community Services clarified that they are not in priority order but typically if we are unsuccessful in getting the full funding, TET will stipulate as to where that money is to go.
- Councillor Sandford question the logistics of the coffee station at the aquatic centre, he asked if it would be a barista operated machine or a self-serve machine. The Acting Director – Community Services clarified that it will be a basic coffee machine that will be run by reception.
- Councillor Boyde noted that we are asking for \$185,000 to be put towards economic development and business support services within the application, he questioned what would happen with this funding if it was successful due to this being budgeted for in the long term plan

already. The Chief Executive Officer noted that from an accounting perspective it will become surplus. .

- Councillor Boyde questioned what would happen if the partially funded projects such as event delivery did not receive the funding from TET but received the partial funding from the LTP. The Acting Director of Community Services explained that the amount of funding allocated to items like event delivery directly determines the scale of events we can host. If we do not receive full funding, we will need to reduce the scale of the events or potentially cancel them.
- Councillor Harris questioned if the operational impact on the aquatic centre is known if these projects get funded, specifically the coffee station. The Acting Director – Community Services noted that it will cost the aquatic centre \$2.28 per coffee to make a coffee. Councillor Harris clarified that it is minimal operational impact. The Acting Director – Community Services agreed.
- The Deputy mayor asked if the funding gets accepted and we decide what we have asked for no longer fits our directional outlook are we able to return funds. The Acting Director – Community Services noted that this is possible, and the TET have stipulated that any unused funds are to be returned.

10. Monthly Reports

Councillor Erwood rejoined the meeting at 4:04pm.

11.1 Assets Report D24/28261 Page 86

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

TONGAAWHIKAU/BECK
Carried
P&S/24/184

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Jones raised the question of whether we should postpone purchasing the composite sampler mentioned on page 96 of the agenda until a decision is made regarding the potential amalgamation of water services, he wondered if we could continue using the NPDC spare sampler. It was explained that NPDC requires the return of their composite sampler, and we currently have a need for this equipment.
- Councillor Boyde noted that page 104 section 4.3.1, highlights how well the farm is doing and noted that the early figures for this year are projecting a good profit.

Councillor Hall left the meeting at 4:07pm.

11.2 Community Services Report D24/27801 Page 109

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/24/185

The Parks and Reserves Officer, The Property manager, The Projects Manager and The Services Asset Manager left the meeting at 4.08pm.

The Acting Director – Community Services noted the following:

- The Positive Aging forum is being held tomorrow, Wednesday the 26th May.
- The Puanga Starry Night Event is being held on Thursday the 27th of May starting at 4:00pm at the War Memorial Centre.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde observed the significant number of Antenna uninstalls and inquired whether there was a specific reason for this trend, such as a shift of users to Your Say instead of Antenna. The Acting Director of Community Services explained that the Communications Manager was not present to provide an immediate response but noted that she will follow up with her after the meeting.

Councillor Hall rejoined the meeting at 4:09pm.

- The Deputy Mayor commented on the recent pool admissions noting that there is a great consistent uplift that is being shown. She noted that this is a big positive.

11.3 Environmental Services Report
D24/23931 Page 117

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/24/186

The Director – Environmental Services noted the following:

- The earthquake prone buildings number is incorrect, it states there are 89 buildings, but it should be 94.

The Community and Economic Development Manager and the Community Development Officer left the meeting at 4:11pm.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- The District Mayor noted that the joint New Plymouth District Council and Stratford District Council Local Alcohol Policy had its review date 18 months ago but this review has not been started due to NPDC being busy with their district plan. He noted that there have been some recent updates to the Supply of Alcohol Act that have just come into effect on June 1st and believes now would be a good time to review the policy to allow for the change of direction stipulated in the legislation. He is questioning how much longer we are prepared to wait for NPDC to be ready or would it be beneficial to create our own policy separate from NPDC. The Director of Environmental Services noted that the question we should be considering is what actions we can take independently to advance the matter. Historically, we have often played a subordinate role in policy discussions with limited input. Therefore, it might be appropriate for the council to assert itself more actively and advocate more vigorously on this issue.
- Councillor Dudley noted that the last day to apply for an extension on earthquake prone building reports was May 31st and has noticed only some owners have applied for extensions, for those who have not applied for extensions, when are they due? The Director – Environmental Services noted that they will need to be in by August 2nd.

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/McKAY
Carried
P&S/24/187

Questions/Points of clarification:

- Councillor Hall queried whether the Long Term Plan budget for the upcoming financial year, incorporates the insights gained from overspending and overall expenditure increases observed in the current financial year. The Chief Executive Officer clarified that the budget does consider cost increases, however the margins for unexpected expenses are difficult to plan for. The goal is to average year financially. The Chief Executive Officer acknowledged the frustration of explaining budget overruns regularly in meetings but emphasised the importance of gaining accurate financial forecasting over consistently reporting under-budget scenarios.
- Councillor Hall questioned if when we go over budget, the money comes out of the reserves for the activity. The Chief Executive Officer clarified that for targeted activities yes it does however, for other activities it comes out of a joint fund.
- Councillor Hall noted that the council are looking at a 50% – 52% completion ratio for the capital budget and there is a list of all capital projects, she noted that it would be helpful to have a summary as to why some of those projects are not being completed and to indicate if there is any trend. The Chief Executive Officer noted that the key contributor for project incompleteness are external factors which can be seen in the purchasing of Prospero Place, transport choices programme being stopped by Central Government and the council subdivision being held up by new legislative requirements. Councillor Hall questioned if the incomplete projects would be carried over to the next financial year for potential completion and if that impacts rating when it comes to borrowing in that financial year. The Corporate Accountant clarified that everything stops at a long term plan year and gets reevaluated, if they choose to get carried over it will be seen as a new project from a budget perspective.
- Councillor Boyde expressed concern about the \$175,000 outstanding debtors mentioned on page 142, questioning whether this reflects a concerning negative trend in the current financial climate. The Corporate Accountant clarified that the council does not write off debts and makes every effort to recover them. Although rates are slightly higher compared to previous years, the team is actively promoting direct debits. This approach eliminates interest fees if payments are made before the due date, encouraging ratepayers to enrol in direct debit arrangements.
- Councillor Boyde asked whether the introduction of water meters in the future would lead to an increase in costs. The Corporate Accountant replied that currently, it's uncertain how this will impact water billing, but they have observed abnormally higher water bills in various invoices which have been contested by various rate payers frequently leading to the discovery of leaks. She mentioned that the installation of water meters is expected to have a generally positive impact overall.

11. Questions

There were no questions.

12. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 143

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

M Mckay

Chairperson

Confirmed this 23rd day of July 2024.

N C Volzke
District Mayor