
**MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF
THE STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBERS, STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL, MIRANDA STREET,
STRATFORD ON TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 3.00PM**

PRESENT

The District Mayor N C Volzke (the Chairman), the Deputy Mayor A L Jamieson, Councillors M McKay, V R Jones, R W Coplestone, G W Boyde, W J Sandford, A K Harris, J M S Erwood, P S Dalziel and G M Webby.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Executive Administration Officer – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the Community Development Manager – Mr C Julie, the Roading Asset Manager – Mr S Bowden, the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig (*part meeting*), the Percy Thomson Trust Chairman – Mr B Ellis (*part meeting*), Ms J Gilliland, Mrs J Patterson and Mr S Davis (Venture Taranaki – *part meeting*) and two members of the media (Daily News & Stratford Press).

1. **WELCOME**

The District Mayor welcomed the Deputy Mayor, Councillors, staff, and the media. He reminded Councillors to ensure they are familiar with the health and safety message including evacuation procedures which he read.

2. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chief Executive requested permission from the committee that the District Mayor would assume the position of Chairman at this Policy & Services Committee meeting and that the Deputy Mayor would participate in this meeting as a member of the committee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the District Mayor will assume the position of Chairman for the duration of this Policy & Services Committee Meeting and the Deputy Mayor will sit as a member of the committee.

BOYDE/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/21/17

4. **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

The District Mayor requested Councillors to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda.

Councillor Erwood – Item 12 – Decision Report – Request to consult on a proposed 80km/h speed limit for Opunake Road.

5. **ATTENDANCE SCHEDULE**

The Attendance Schedule for Policy and Services Committee meetings was attached.

6. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

6.1 **Policy and Services Committee Meeting – 26 January 2021**
D20/3410 Pages 8-16

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

WEBBY/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/21/18

The Executive Administration Officer undertook to amend the date in the minutes to 26 January 2021.

7. **MATTERS OUTSTANDING**
D16/47 Page 17

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the matters outstanding be received.

JAMIESON/SANDEFORD
Carried
P&S/21/19

8. **INFORMATION REPORT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
QUARTERLY REPORT – QUARTER TWO

D21/3727

Pages 18-56

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/COPLESTONE
Carried
P&S/21/20

Ms Gilliland presented to the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Updated statistics following the printing of the report show Taranaki is bucking the national trend post lockdown with retail spend up 0.4% in the Stratford District. Job listings have varied from quarter to quarter with this quarter down 32% on the previous year, but the previous quarter up 91% on the previous year.
- Branching Out – the land and climate report was released. An avocado workshop is happening on 17 March and will follow a similar format to the kiwifruit one held earlier. More workshops will be rolled out as potential opportunities are worked through.
- Enterprise engagement is still at record highs where staff work one on one with an enterprise/business. It had slowed during December/January but is picking up again with triple the client numbers than usual. Government funding for this ended in December and the team is now back to its normal size and reviewing the customer journey and installing website tools to help deal with the high demand.
- There was the highest amount of student internships in Taranaki over this summer with 35 students supported by Callaghan Innovations. Firms had to have made a strong commitment for research and development and this resulted in a great spread of students around the maunga.
- The focuses for the next quarter and remaining calendar year will be:
 - Strategic Tourism Asset Protection Programme (STAPP) which received funding for marketing and strategic development and will begin with an event in March to look at developing the future visitor experiences. The funding and programme will conclude in August/September this year.
 - The ‘PowerUp’ ecosystem work is really powering up. This was launched last year and looks at supporting the ecosystem in Taranaki by shining a spotlight on work already being undertaken and then looking at ways to expand and grow further initiatives where there are gaps. There are 50 participants in the start-up programme with an opportunity for five of those to progress to phase 2 which will be a more intensive programme and provide \$10,000 into their business.
 - Branching Out – kiwifruit was covered last year with avocados coming soon along with a number of others. Looking at the other options will involve ensuring their resistance, value add and the position on the value chain.
 - There are a number of energy sector firms looking to progress Taranaki 2050 projects and really exciting stuff happening in the hydrogen space.
 - All the actions in Tapuae Roa and Taranaki 2050 actions have been integrated and are currently working on the strategic narrative to bring it all together. This includes prioritisation of the Top 30 projects to put in a bid to the Government. These will continue to be a significant focus with the challenge being the resource funding runs out 30 June 2021.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted his concern that in noting the suitability for horticulture in Stratford and Taranaki agriculture was being overlooked and as one of the best regions in the world for dairy along with the best carbon footprint and felt the value of this impact on the local economy was being overlooked with the promotion for alternative land use. Ms Gilliland emphasised branching out was not a move away from agriculture but a way to look towards diversifying the food sector and creating complimentary opportunities. She noted the importance to retain the dairy, sheep and beef and poultry industries which also create significant jobs in the area. She noted Venture Taranaki also receives funding to support the agriculture sector in training in best practice, environmental, mental health and animal welfare. She noted the Councillors concerns and acknowledged it was important to continue to connect with national and local groups.
- Councillor Sandford noted apples were recommended for the Stratford District. He noted the orchards nationwide being removed and felt it was not a good recommendation at the current time. Ms Gilliland noted apples were highlighted as a common crop that could work in Taranaki soils but had not moved to the top of the list to promote. It was also about myth busting to show what can be grown here.
- Councillor Dalziel noted the huge risk with horticulture as he felt if Taranaki was such a good area for growth it would already have it in pockets here and did not want to see anything that could make the region poorer. Ms Gilliland emphasised it was not about moving away from agriculture but adding something extra to it to sit alongside and increase value.
- It was noted that Job Hop was for employees who wanted casual work and that this business had been working with Venture Taranaki from day one. There has been a good response and provided an opportunity for some who have started on casual to move into permanent positions. The employer posts a job and the connection is made with potential staff by Job Hop. They have also worked closely with IRD to cover off tax concerns for employers.

The Director – Community Services noted the following points:

- The iSITE relocated to the library in quarter two and this is working well.
- The Discovery Trail has made some really good progress.
- The most up to date data for the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs project is 21 young people have been placed into work and 10 who were registered through the programme have found employment themselves.

Ms Gilliland, Mrs Patterson and Mr Davis departed the meeting at 3.27pm.

9. **INFORMATION REPORT – PERCY THOMSON TRUST – HALF YEARLY REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2020**

D21/4583

Pages 57-78

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received.

McKAY/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/21/21

2. THAT Council receive the half yearly report for Percy Thomson Trust as at 31 December 2020.

WEBBY/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/21/22

Recommended Reason

In terms of Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2002 the Percy Thomson Trust, being a council controlled organisation, must deliver to Council a half yearly report (as at 31 December 2020) on or before 28 February 2021.

The Percy Thomson Trust Chairman noted the following points:

- This six monthly report highlights the return to full activity following the lockdown.
- Visitor numbers were 14,000 which was a record 6-monthly figure.
- The Gallery Director is continuing to present thought provoking exhibitions and providing a venue for young, not so young, local and national artists to display their work.
- Work is continuing on developing ideas for the arboretum in conjunction with the Council's Parks and Reserves team and as part of the Discovery Trail.
- The Trust is below budget financially with external funding being a challenge. Grants have moved from the overall Gallery activity to supporting designated projects. Work will continue on moving to projects that fall within these requirements. Funding was obtained through the Te Karaka Foundation to secure a biannual exhibition for emerging artists.
- Financially, the re-letting of the former iSITE space is a concern. Negotiations are occurring with a potential tenant.
- The investments were discussed at the presentation of the 2020 Annual Report, it was noted that they are all performing to expectations.
- He noted it felt like the Trust was tagged on at the end of the Council's Long Term Plan and noted it was important to reflect that it contributes positively to Council's vision and community outcomes.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Dalziel noted it was a fantastic venue and a real asset to the District and Town. He questioned the investments and how liquid they were if the Trust wanted to redeem them. The Trust Chairman noted it would depend on a number of factors such as if someone else was trying to sell at the same time, and that selling would take some time. He noted it was a matter of balancing a good fundamental investment with a good tenancy base and knowing that if the Trust wanted to get out tomorrow there could be some difficulty. He clarified the \$450,000 of investment was spread over five separate investments that all had significant tenants. Councillor Dalziel commented on the valuation of commercial properties being at risk with new attractive options giving the potential for tenants to move. The Chairman acknowledged this risk but noted it was important to balance against what alternatives are. He noted the valuation had gone down on one property as the tenants lease was up for renewal but that they had now renewed for a further seven years which would be reflected in the next valuation.

- Councillor Boyde noted his congratulations to the Gallery Director and Gallery Assistant on their work and the outstanding visitor numbers.
- Councillor Sandford acknowledged the work at the arboretum and the addition of the QR codes but felt it was lacking a board to tell its story and why it is there. The Chairman noted the QR codes mean visitors can discover what the plants are but that a couple had been vandalised. He noted the Trust did plan on looking into an information board.

10. **INFORMATION REPORT – PERCY THOMSON TRUST –
STATEMENT OF INTENT – 2021 -2024**

D21/4580

Pages 79-101

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/JAMIESON
Carried
P&S/21/23

2. THAT Council receive the Statement of Intent for Percy Thomson trust for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024.

BOYDE/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/21/24

Recommended Reason

In terms of Schedule 8 of the Local Government Act 2002 Percy Thomson Trust, being a Council Controlled Organisation, must deliver a statement of intent on or before 1 March 2021.

The Percy Thomson Trust Chairman noted one issue was the herbarium which was part of the bequest and had previously been delivered through a website. Trustees are looking into options and will bring a recommendation back to Council to consider in the future.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Dalziel questioned the ability to increase revenue. The Trust did not want to introduce an entry fee but could look at increasing endowment for the gallery. There is a capital sum in rental from the café and Percy's Place is going well.
- It was clarified that the \$20,600 per annum for administration services to the Trust from Council was separate to the annual \$50,000 grant and can change with CPI increases or increased maintenance costs.

The Corporate Accountant and the Percy Thomson Trust Chair departed the meeting at 3.50pm.

11. **DECISION REPORT – BRAND REFRESH – FINAL LOGO LOCK-UP**
D21/5229 Pages 102-110

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received.

JONES/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/21/25

2. THAT Council adopt the final corporate logo lock-up including bilingual name as per **Appendix B**.

McKAY/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/21/26

Recommended Reason

As a key initiative within the Communications and Engagement Strategy adopted by Council in May 2020, Council’s endorsement is sought to agree to the final logo lock-up so that the wider brand improvement project can be rolled out.

The Communications Manager noted that this was part of the overall brand refresh project and the final lock up of the logo and bilingual name had been brought back following consultation with Iwi and local Marae.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that this was just regarding the corporate brand. The District Brand had been included to show the full process for the complete rebrand. The District Brand will be brought back at a different time due to the different meaning and process.
- The Chief Executive noted he had discussed Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Whakaahurangi’ with Ngāruahine, Ngāti Maru and Ngāti Ruanui and the view was it was a straight forward and common sense translation. It translates as Te Kaunihera – the council, ā rohe – district, o Whakaahurangi – of Stratford.

Councillor Erwood left the table at 3.51pm.

12. **DECISION REPORT – REQUEST TO CONSULT ON A PROPOSED
80KM/H SPEED LIMIT FOR OPUNAKE ROAD**
D21/5417 Pages 111-118

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received.

SANDFORD/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/21/27

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. THAT the Committee give approval for council officers to consult with the community for a proposal to reduce the speed limit of Opunake Road from 100km/h to 80km/h from RP0.0 (Elizabeth Grove) to RP16.75 (District Boundary).
3. THAT once the consultation period has been undertaken a further decision report will be presented to this committee summarising the comments received and making a recommendation for a safe suitable speed limit for Opunake Road.

VOLZKE/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/21/28

Recommended Reason

The Government Policy Statement for Land Transport 2021/22-2030/31 has a strategic priority relating to road safety including a desire to reduce the death and serious injury crashes by 40 percent by the year 2030. This “Road to Zero” vision is one of the primary focuses of the current Government and thus encouraging all local authorities and agencies to play their part in achieving this goal. Opunake Road has been identified as one of our highest risk roads within the Stratford District.

The Roading Assets Manager noted the following points:

- This topic has been raised with Elected Members before through the Assets monthly report.
- Everyone is aware of the serious crash history along this road.
- Opunake Road crosses into the South Taranaki District and discussions have been held with South Taranaki District Council who are on board to consult on a change at their end.
- This report requests approval to consult with the community as part of a collaborative plan with South Taranaki. This change can continue for just the Stratford section but it would be nice to have the same speed the full way along.
- A speed traffic count was undertaken on Opunake Road, west of Palmer Road, in August and the average speed was 104km/hr.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- The Deputy Mayor noted reducing the speed between New Plymouth and Waitara had not reduced accidents and questioned if improvements should be looked at rather than just a speed limit drop. Mr Bowden clarified that Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency had undertaken a region wide speed limit review using their consultants assessment tool. As a result they have suggested the appropriate safe speed limit would be 60km/hr which Mr Bowden noted would not be acceptable to the community. To improve the safety elements and retain the current speed limit it would require approximately \$5 million over the next three years. There would still be some improvements required at 80km/hr and illuminated signs were a possibility.
- Councillor Boyde noted a major percentage of accidents happen in winter and was pleased to hear signage would be going up, particularly around the Cardiff monument where there are heavy frosts. Mr Bowden noted that a reduced speed reduces the severity of the crashes but acknowledged that not driving to the conditions was a large element of crashes.
- Councillor Coplestone supported the 80km/hr speed limit. He felt a lot of the dangerous driving came from those using it as a thoroughfare and that there was a lot of work needing to be done on that bit of road.
- The District Mayor noted the total number of crashes over the past five years worked out to one a month and felt that if this number was reduced, even by a small amount, then it would be a positive move. Speed is the most prominent cause of accidents and the most effective

and cheapest way to lower the impact of those crashes was to lower the speed limit which would have an immediate impact.

- It was clarified that once reduced the speed limit could not go back up without major improvements being made to the road.

Councillor Erwood re-joined the meeting at 4.03pm.

13. **MONTHLY REPORTS**

13.1 **ASSETS REPORT** D21/3497 Pages 119-145

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the reports be received.

VOLZKE/JAMIESON
Carried
P&S/21/29

The Director – Assets noted the following points:

- January has been a very busy month particularly with audit. The team is still busy providing information to Audit.
- On-going discussions are occurring with iwi regarding key projects and shovel ready projects.
- Roading activities are continuing as programmed.
- Overnight water usage at Midhirst and Toko remain high.
- The new aquatic centre, children's bike park and the second trunk main are all on-going as programmed.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted the children's bike park was looking outstanding.
- It was clarified that Council was not required to notify the Taranaki Regional Council regarding forestry slash and the contributing factor on slips. Forestry owners are required to provide the regional council with a forestry management plan and how timber will be extracted and water ways and erosion prevention. Councillor Boyde requested a log of all jobs created as a result of forestry slash over a 12 month period.
- It was noted the manufacturers of the dust suppressant being trialled suggest that it should be effective for a full summer season. The properties affected have been asked to provide feedback.

13.2 **COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT** D20/3535 Pages 146-153

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the reports be received.

VOLZKE/McKAY
Carried
P&S/21/30

The Director – Community Services noted the following points:

- The Community Development Team supported Whangamomona Republic Day in January.
- It was a really good school holiday programme – particularly in the library.
- The pool is currently working through its Pool Safe accreditation.
- Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund opened yesterday.
- Summer Nights movies is on this Sunday from 1.00pm.

Council Organisations and Council Representatives on Other Organisations

- Councillor Sandford noted the Taranaki Lightning 5s was well supported with 16 teams having travelled from as far as Auckland and Palmerston North. It was disappointing that prior to the tournament the umpire dug out had been set on fire causing significant damage.

13.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES REPORT

D21/3689

Pages 154-160

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the reports be received.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD
Carried
P&S/21/31

The Director – Environmental Services noted the following points:

- January had seen a dip in development activity and consents, however February is already looking as though it will continue to be another strong period of development. There is also still interest in subdivision enquiries.
- The road numbering project was put on hold during the Christmas period to not disturb the extra mail received at that time. This will now be picked back up again.

13.4 CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT

D21/5269

Pages 161-178

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the reports be received.

VOLZKE/JONES
Carried
P&S/21/32

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- It was noted the capital expenditure budget had been reforecast by 26% but was probable it would need to be reforecast down again.
- There are two loans coming off in April and May totalling \$3.5 million. Officers are looking to refinance \$3 million with good rates coming through.
- Auditors are currently reviewing everything for the Long Term Plan and have sent a few changes through so far. It is now in its final stages with the senior level.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that \$500,000 to repay some of the loans would come from term investments. There is quite a bit on term deposit at the moment, more than usual, this is largely due to the government funding that will need to be used soon.

- It was noted the was currently \$7 million invested with Westpac which was a breach of the Treasury Policy but the process saw approval given by District Mayor and the Audit and Risk Chair prior to investing. This would be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- It was clarified that the cash position was also taken into account when calculating the net debt.

14. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

The meeting closed at 4.21pm.

N C Volzke
CHAIRMAN

Confirmed this 23rd day of March 2021.

N C Volzke
DISTRICT MAYOR