

Date: Tuesday 23 August 2022 at 3PM

Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

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

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Director Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the HR & Governance Administrator – Mrs C Reynolds, the Communications Advisor – Mrs S Clarkson (*part meeting*), the Communications Manager – Mr C Julie (*part meeting*), the Community Development Officer – Mrs A Kingston (*part meeting*), the Community Development Officer – Mrs V Fischer (*part meeting*), the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain (*part meeting*), the Asset Management Coordinator – Mrs L Campbell (*part meeting*), the Roding Asset Manager – Mr S Bowden, the Property Officer – Mrs S Flight (*part meeting*), the Projects Engineer/Manager – Mr S Taylor, Mr K Wright, Mrs J Patterson and Mr L Millard (Venture Taranaki), two members of the public and one member of the media (Taranaki Daily News).

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

An apology was noted from the Director Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland

Recommendation

THAT the apology be noted.

JONES/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/22/118

3. Announcements

The District Mayor acknowledged the three Urban Councillors who had been re-elected unopposed being Councillor Sandford, Erwood and McKay. Ellen Hall and Mathew Watt had also been elected unopposed for the urban ward and were in attendance in the public gallery.

The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that the District Mayor had also been re-elected unopposed. He introduced Carissa Reynolds as the new HR & Governance Administrator.

4. Declarations of members interest

Elected members were asked to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda. There were no declarations of interest.

5. Attendance Schedule

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

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Policy & Services Committee – 26 July 2022 D22/28691 (Open) & D22/28320 (PE) Page 11

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 26 July 2022 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

BOYDE/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/22/119

The Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant undertook to make the following amendments:

- Page 15 – Around to amount second bullet under questions.
- Page 19 - outlook to outlet – fifth bullet under Questions.

7. Matters Outstanding

D16/47 Page 23

Recommendation

THAT the Matters Outstanding be received.

ERWOOD/SANDFORD
Carried
P&S/22/120

8. Information Report – Economic Development Quarterly Report – Quarter Four

D22/24141 Page 24

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/McKAY
Carried
P&S/22/121

Kelvin Wright, Jennifer Patterson and Luke Millard of Venture Taranaki were in attendance to answer any questions arising from the quarterly report.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the bold numbers in the table on page 40 referred to the numbers accounted to Stratford. It was noted that the support engagements were undertaken face to face, by phone, email correspondence or virtual meetings.

- Councillor McKay questioned if there was any intention to break the referral and engagement targets within the Districts to provide accountabilities for each District? Mr Wright noted that Venture Taranaki was currently working with New Plymouth District Council on establishing a new daily measurement framework which will enable reporting directly for each District, particularly in respect to the funding allocated from council for services to be delivered by Venture Taranaki. There will be some demographics and geographic and equity analysis that will provide a good clear and concise view of where the funding is going.
- Mr Wright noted that while working with the shareholders there has been a recognition of the challenges for smaller councils in funding economic development and it has been requested that Venture Taranaki ensure Stratford District Council and South Taranaki District Council get more than their fair share of work undertaken for the funding they provide. It is expected that a workshop will be scheduled with council before March 2023 to present a proposal for where the best spend for council's money is in and around the district and ensure that this is within the next Venture Taranaki budget.
- It was clarified that the Regional Business Partners Funding always trends downwards towards the end of the financial year. This is a result of funding limitations and not a result of a downturn in requirements.
- Mr Wright noted that there was a strategy in place funded through Covid-19 Recovery for a tranche of affordable rentals. Quite a bit of funding could be allocated to Stratford due to affordability within the district. An application will be submitted in September to the Toi Foundation to support the running of the entity to get around 500 properties to operate. A second application will also go to the Toi Foundation to fund an independent planning team to look at where there isn't really residential land available where private work to create sections out of rural land could be achieved. Those subdivisions would be shared between the regional housing initiatives, Kāinga Ora and to the open market to subsidise the housing initiatives. There is not a lot of support from the government at the moment for the regional housing space and this model is really reliant on attracting private entities to build those houses and hold them as 'super landlords' rather than council having to be the developers. The Toi Foundation is really supportive of the model and wants to explore external housing developments. House builds around the region will be led by demand and will be a mix of high density, flats, two bedroom and three bedroom whānau homes. A feasibility study is being done in New Plymouth, South Taranaki and Stratford districts with the one being undertaken in Stratford being completed by Location Homes who have some sections and are currently doing some developments. Subject to the Toi Foundation funding it is hoped that the formal team will be established after Christmas.
- Mr Wright noted that he did not see much directional change being introduced at Venture Taranaki under his leadership, he acknowledged Venture Taranaki was respected nationally and with four new trustees on the board he noted they were currently going through the process of looking at opportunities to do things slightly differently, more fine tuning than change. The Section 17A review which was completed with the shareholders resulted in a set of recommendations so these were currently being put together. It was important to recognise changes in direction due to post covid talent shortages, immigration issues, productivity losses with increased absences and looking where staff could best look after that.
- It was clarified that the Regional Intelligence Survey was sent out to approximately 1,700 businesses across the region with a response rate of about 200. The report contained a brief breakdown of key findings from this survey but also included the link to the full report which had a strict breakdown of Taranaki wide industry sectors and a more in-depth question analysis. The next survey in December will provide comparative data which can be sliced by business type, size etc., and will allow viewers to see how things are changing. Of the 200 returned surveys about 8% were Stratford Businesses. There was a really good mix of respondents across rural farming businesses, professional services, retail and hospitality etc.

Mr Wright, Mrs Patterson and Mr Millard and the Community Development Officers left the meeting at 3.24pm.

9. Monthly Reports

9.1 Assets Report D22/28774 Page 52

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/22/122

The Director – Assets noted that the tables throughout the report incorrectly stated 2021/22 in the table headings for year to date results. This would be fixed before the next monthly report.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- The Roding Asset Manager clarified that the Speed Management Plan to be submitted to the Regional Transport Committee was a result of the national Setting the Speed Limit Rule. He noted New Plymouth, South Taranaki and Stratford would individually complete the speed management plan and then take this to the Regional Transport Committee to ratify the regional speed management plan and ensure there are consistencies across the regional boundaries, he noted the example of Opunake Road that Stratford had recently reduced the speed for to 80km but has remained at 100km in South Taranaki. This had been included in the monthly report to signal that this is the next step following the speed reviews around schools. Roads have been assessed on the geometry of the road, width, existing speed profile and collective and personal risks. These risk scores have been factored into the megamaps tool. He confirmed that this would be brought to council for further discussion and then to be endorsed before being submitted to the Regional Transport Committee.
- The District Mayor questioned the credibility of the process as he noted the three plans would be submitted to the Regional Transport Committee who will make another decision on consistencies and speeds within the plan and then forward to Waka Kotahi who will have the final decision and could force further changes on the districts.
- It was noted that the risk scores for roads also took into account the formal function of the roads, traffic volumes, and crash data. Councillor Boyde noted the risk score for state highways at the moment would be through the roof.
- Councillor Jones acknowledged the pricing supplied for spraying of Yellow Bristle Grass and as this would require a change in level of service he requested it be discussed for the next Long Term Plan review due to the amount of work rural ratepayers get compared to what they see being done in town.
- Councillor Jones questioned whether council stockpiled metal for roading in the eastern hill country. Mr Bowden clarified that how the contractors operate in terms of efficiencies was their decision, council pays for supply, transportation and compacting.
- Councillor Coplestone noted the level of Dockstar quoted by the contractor in the monthly report would be 10 litres to the hectare which would be illegal under the Hazardous Substances Act. He noted Glyphosate could not be compared to Dockstar as they were for completely different outcomes, Round-up (glyphosate) would be useless in getting rid of bristle grass. Dockstar is a selective herbicide that takes out dock and bristlegrass without touching anything else. He noted he had estimated round-up would cost \$80 per hectare and dockstar at \$78 per hectare at the correct dosage rates. He acknowledged that both sprays would have to be applied at different times of the year.
- It was clarified that the additional staff noted to be employed for Electronic Water Metering was to fill an existing vacancy and was not as a result of the electronic water meters project.
- It was clarified that the KPIs under wastewater were the standard ones set by the Department of Internal Affairs. The District Mayor noted his concern that system adequacy – dry weather sewerage overflows was not providing relevant data and that a wet weather sewerage overflow would be more appropriate especially given the past week of wet weather and sewerage overflows. The Chief Executive noted that from an engineering perspective dry weather overflows highlight deficiencies in the system, where a wet weather overflow is a result of an overwhelmed system. The KPIs could be updated to include a wet weather sewerage overflow target during the Annual Plan process if that was the desire of elected members.

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/JONES
Carried
P&S/22/123

The Director – Community Services noted the following points:

- Stratford District Council's Customer Service ranked ninth out of 80 organisations in the recent mystery shopping undertaken by ALGIM.
- The team is working on completing the plans and strategies.
- Operationalising of the new pool is underway.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted the outstanding achievement by the Customer Service team, especially during a difficult time.
- The Community Development Manager noted they were working alongside the Wheelhouse in helping to put a package together to help the Taranaki Pioneer Village build capability and capacity, looking at how Covid-19 has impacted the village, helping them build a strategy and encouraging some new faces on the committee to bring new ideas and help overcome challenges. It was confirmed the Taranaki Pioneer Village is a member of the Stratford Business Association.
- It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding was expected to be approved by the Stratford Business Association at their meeting on 12 September, this would then be brought back to council for approval.

Council Organisations and Council Representatives on Other Organisations

- Councillor Sandford noted that the Taranaki Synthetic Turf Trust had been involved with the developments at the New Plymouth Racecourse and are being used as a vehicle for further synthetic surfaces at that facility. He noted he had stood down from this trust.

The Community Development Manager left the meeting at 3.48pm.

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

COPLESTONE/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/22/124

The Chief Executive noted the following points:

- Building consents are coming down and subdivision consents are going up – but both changes are not by significant numbers.
- There has been a downturn in building activity but this is occurring nationally and it is expected that this will plateau soon.

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/22/125

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This report includes the interim draft results as at the end of 30 June 2022 and a summary of where council is looking. During the interim audit the auditors do not look at the financial statements but look at processes and internal controls. The final audit will be undertaken in October with an expected final audit report in December. These interim draft financial statements are still pending audit finalisation.
- With regards to the end of year financials:
 - Revenue is close to budget
 - Total expenditure is close to budget
 - The Rates Revenue is over budget and is a result of estimating when setting the annual plan and subsequent subdivision applications and the number of targeted rates being set at a higher level.
 - The final reserve balances will be brought to council in a report towards the end of the calendar year for council to consider what these reserves could be used for in terms of new projects within the next Annual Plan.
 - Last month council approved carrying forward \$3.9 million of capital expenditure into this financial year. An update will be provided each month with the full capital programme.
- Mrs Radich noted that the Information Management Assistant who had been employed through the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs programme for a fixed term of three months had been a success. Due to a number of other projects requiring to be undertaken in the Information Management space, the assistant had been employed by council for a further fixed term of 12 months.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Mrs Radich noted that there had been no changes in the demand from changing auditors as they are asking similar questions with the exception of a few extra questions that are needed at the start of being council's auditors.
- It was noted that the outstanding debtors was high at the moment due to the beginning of the financial year which brings all the previously unpaid rates into the overdue section. Overall the debtors is low and can be often impacted by roading expenditure and collecting the Waka Kotahi subsidy.
- Councillor Boyde reiterated how outstanding the achievement of staff had been to be able to complete 86% of capital expenditure which was the biggest capital expenditure ever spent by Stratford District Council.
- The District Mayor noted the increase with the revaluation of assets with the resulting depreciation increasing by \$521,000. Mrs Radich noted the asset revaluation had been factored into this years Annual Plan, auditors have requested another asset revaluation be completed for next years Annual Plan but was unable to comment on how this could affect rates at this point. For clarification it was noted that a 1% rates increase is about \$130,000. The District Mayor commented how this single adjustment to the accounts, which is done externally, could result in a 4% rates increase just to accommodate depreciation and noted how the community struggles with this, he appreciated that this was the process and standard accounting practices but noted the implications this can have on residents. Mrs Radich noted that depreciation funding was intergenerational to ensure there are sufficient funds to replace assets for the future generations in the community.
- It was clarified that only the 3 Waters Assets depreciation was only funded by 90% during the last Annual Plan.

The Communications Advisor left the meeting at 4.04pm.

- Councillor Jones questioned what terms the A&P Association loan was on and if they were expected to repay in full when it renews in 2025. It was clarified that the requirements were currently quarterly interest payments which have been met. The expiry date is December 2025 and council could ask for repayments at this time, there had been no expectations for repayments at this stage unless council was required to change its debt rating to fund projects. The District Mayor noted there had never been any implications that the association will be gifted the funds, purely that no principle repayments were required at this point. It was noted that there would be a presentation on the Stratford Park Project at the public forum on Tuesday 13 September 2022.
- It was clarified that the debt statement showing a difference of \$20,000 was due to the requirement to borrow rounded up.

10. Questions

- Councillor Boyde noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau had closed as the building was not fit for purpose. He asked all councillors to let them know if they knew of any building that was available as they offer a very valuable service.
- Councillor Boyde noted that from next Monday there will be 217 secondary school students participating in a hockey tournament at the Stratford Turf. These students and their support staff will be staying the full week.

11. Resolution to Exclude the Public

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

Agenda Item No: 12

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 to each matter	Grounds under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
Purchase of property	The withholding of the information is necessary for commercial sensitivity	The withholding of the information is necessary to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. Section 7(2)b(ii) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

BOYDE/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/22/126

The HR & Governance Administrator, members of the public and media left the meeting at 4.11pm

12. Public Excluded Item

Recommendation

THAT the open meeting resume.

ERWOOD/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/22/129

13. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 142

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.26pm.

A L Jamieson
Chairman

Confirmed this 27th day of September 2022.

N C Volzke
District Mayor