

MINUTES

Policy and Services Committee

F19/03/05 – D22/3321

Date: Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 3.00pm
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, P S Dalziel, J M S Erwood. R W Coplestone, A K Harris, V R Jones, W J Sandford 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 Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson (*part meeting*), the Community Development Manager – Mr C Julie (*part meeting*), the Roading Asset Manager – Mr S Bowden, the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig, the Services Asset Manager – Mr J Cooper (*part meeting*), the Property Officer – Mrs S Flight (*part meeting*), the Customer & Leisure Services Manager – Mrs A Mathews (*part meeting*), the Administration & Communications Support Officer – Ms R Vanstone (*part meeting*), the Revenue Manager – Mrs J Erwood (*part meeting*), the Asset Management Coordinator/Waste Minimisation Officer – Mrs L Campbell (*via audio visual link*), the Project Manager/Engineer – Mr S Taylor (*via audio visual link*), the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain (*via audio visual link*) and two members of the media (Stratford Press and Taranaki Daily News)

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened with a karakia.

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

A leave of absence had been approved for Councillor M McKay

Recommendation

THAT the apology be received.

BOYDE/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/22/1

3. Announcements

The Deputy Mayor tabled the Connecting our Communities Strategy and Summary, he noted both of these had been received electronically by Councillors and were to be included as part of the report for Item 8.

4. Declarations of Members Interest

The Deputy Mayor requested Councillors to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda. There were no conflicts of interest.

5. Attendance Schedule

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

6. Confirmation of minutes

6.1 Policy & Services Committee – 23 November 2021 D21/42340 Page 11

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 23 November 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

WEBBY/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/22/2

7. Matters Outstanding

D16/47 Page 18

Recommendation

THAT the Matters Outstanding be received.

ERWOOD/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/22/3

Points noted in discussion:

- It was noted that the aircraft landing fee payments were still outstanding as these fees were being disputed.

8. Decision Report – Connecting our Communities Strategy

D21/46044 Page 19

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/JONES
Carried
P&S/22/4

2. THAT the Committee give approval for Council officers to consult with the community for a proposal to implement the Connecting our Communities Strategy.

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 on the adoption of the Strategy.

DALZIEL/COPLESTONE
Carried
P&S/22/5

Recommended Reasons

1. Having a Strategy that encourages all forms of transport options will provide funding opportunities from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.
2. The community has expressed concern regarding the safety of the transport network in the Stratford district.
3. By consulting with the community, Council will gain further knowledge of specific problems with the transport network.

The Project Manager/Engineer noted the following points:

- This strategy discusses perceived safety and the implications this has on people's attitudes towards movements on the transport systems.
- A number of measures have been introduced that will help guide future projects in the Long Term Plan.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was requested that a number of key stakeholders be added to the targeted consultation process:
 - Stratford Grey Power
 - Stratford Positive Ageing Group
 - Stratford Robus
 - Trucking Companies
 - Local Taxi Firms
 - Stratford District Youth Council
- Mr Taylor noted that as this is a strategy for the whole community any interested party can be added to the targeted consultation list.
- It was clarified that the cost for consultation will be met through the current roading budgets as per normal operating procedures.
- It was noted that the key issue "*the lack of recreational walking opportunities in Stratford District is a barrier to locals walking in a safe and attractive surroundings*" was in relation to the accessibility of this infrastructure rather than lack of walkways. This would be reworded to reflect the inadequate nature of the walkways.
- It was noted that the reference to the TSB Community Trust needed to be updated to be the Toi Foundation.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.
2. THAT a new differential for the Roothing Targeted Rate is proposed from 1 July 2022, and released for public consultation.
3. THAT the new differential rate be applied to all properties classified as Exotic Forestry with Council's property valuation services provider (currently Quotable Value NZ), with a differential rate that allows for a fixed amount to be collected from these properties, as set out in the Annual Plan or Long Term Plan, to cover, or partly cover, the expected costs of road damage caused by forestry harvesting operations. It is proposed that the Roothing Targeted Rate continue to be applied on the capital value of each property.
4. THAT the amount collected from the differential rate be \$100,000.

BOYDE/VOLZKE
Carried
P&S/22/6

BOYDE/DALZIEL
1 against
Carried
P&S/22/7

Recommended Reason

To attribute part of the funding of the rooding activity to the exacerbator of the costs.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This report proposes to introduce a new differential to the current Roothing targeted rate and to release this for consultation with the Annual Plan.
- This rate will be applied to properties classified as exotic forestry with our valuation services provider (Quotable Value) and are defined as forestry land that is either in production or available for planting but does not include indigenous forests or protected farmers.
- The amount can be set by this committee and did not have to be one of the suggested amounts.
- Quotable Value classify a property as exotic forestry during the revaluation period where they send out a questionnaire to a number of properties and by using satellite imagery. It is also considered what the land would be sold for – forestry or pasture.
- A single property could be split into different classifications and valued separately although there are not many properties like that in the district.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted he was not against the logging activity but had been concerned for quite some time regarding the expense. He noted that in the past 5 years council had spent \$1.46 million on repairing unsealed roads due to logging damage. With 600km of roads and 65% sealed most of the damage is going on our gravel roads. There is only \$15,000 difference between planned and unplanned rooding expenditure which makes this an unsustainable model. Forestry block owners pay about 0.05% of the rooding expenditure where agricultural pay much. He noted there was also a very real capital value misalignment as forestry blocks were not considered as high in value as orchards for example. He noted his support for option 1 as this would shift the responsibility of the rate. He felt a rate of \$150,000 was too high as this would ultimately be an increase of \$5,000 between the 29 properties identified. He also noted his support to revisit the District Plan and make logging a consented activity.
- The Deputy Mayor agreed that the forestry industry needed to pay its share but felt the way it had been attributed to the properties seems horrendous with the largest of the forestry blocks going from \$4,000 a year to \$50,000 in rates and this would see a lot of pushback. He thought bringing this in over a number of years could be better or a staggered rate where an amount is paid for the first 100 hectares and then anything over would pay a different amount. He also highlighted that there would

be some that would not use our roads at all and others that travelled on them significantly less than others. There needed to be some serious work done about the proportion of the rate between the smaller and larger blocks.

- The District Mayor noted the following:
 - The problem is where the intensive use of roads by logging trucks continuously results in damage to these roads, particularly during the winter months. As council goes and repairs these semi urgent situation it is sucking funds away from every other project as there is no funding allocation for this. All the roading jobs are compromised somewhat because council is repairing the damage done by intensive logging. There needs to be some sort of fund established to call on, or additional funding, that is set aside for the purpose of fixing logging damage which would mean not compromising other projects. He noted he was concerned that this differential rate proposal did not raise any extra funding and just shifted the rating for this to the 29 properties listed. He felt this rate should be in addition to the existing roading rate.
 - He questioned the definition of a forestry road and noted examples such as Douglas Road or Upper Mangaehu that would be considered a forestry road but then asked if Brewer or Mangaehu Roads being used as through roads would then fall under that definition as well? He wanted clarification on which types of roads this would be spent on.
 - There were two of the 29 properties listed that actually front State Highway 43 and although they would come under the scope for this rate they would not be driving on our roads. He asked that there be some justification regarding a state highway frontage and not using local roads.
 - He noted that there were substantial differences in the land values and size of the properties which indicates different types of land use, some of which would have a limit on the amount of money the property could generate with a property completely in trees having no cash income and these owners would need to find a way to fund this.
 - He noted that when council last reviewed its rating process in a substantial way it introduced the capital rating system which is robust, fair and set independently. In making this decision to introduce this rate then council is setting a precedent that whenever a group is identified as causing extra cost to the ratepayers then it would be looking at some way of cost recovery from that group. He noted he was not opposed to this but that there would be other situations in the future where a group of people, or an activity, may cost the ratepayers in the future.
- Councillor Dalziel noted he wanted to see carbon farming included in the exotic forestry definition. He noted that it was understood that some of these blocks may be for about 40 years but would still need to be logged at some point. He felt there was going to be more and more of the eastern hill country bought for carbon farming.
- The Deputy Mayor clarified that should forestry become a consented activity the process couldn't be applied to any existing to replanted forestry blocks.
- Councillor Boyde noted that a consenting process would allow council to plan for upcoming works ahead of time.
- Mrs Radich clarified that the list of properties was not an exhaustive list as council had not previously been collecting this information. Taranaki Regional Council has identified a way through their systems to add to the Quotable Value list who will also do as much as they can via aerial photography.
- It was clarified that it was not the intention to add to the roading budgets but to reallocate where the funds were being collected from. The Roding Asset Manager noted there was currently about a 50/50 split on planned and unplanned works and ideally there would be more funds allocated to planned projects. Reactive work also included projects such as the culvert that collapsed on Manaia Road last year. He noted that if the funds collected were to be specifically allocated for forestry damage then the forestry roads would need to be defined as well as interconnecting roads between the state highways.
- Councillor Jones noted he had struggled with the concept of this rate and had looked at the size of the land areas with some getting a \$19,000 rates increase through this proposal. He questioned the returns for these properties and Mr Bowden clarified that dependent on the price of timber it would be around \$200 a tonne and 550 tonne of timber per hectare. Councillor Jones felt there should be more research done on this decision.
- The District Mayor noted that work on maintaining Puniwhakau Road had stopped as there had been so much funding put into patching up the road and was draining every resource council had. He noted maintenance was still required on other roads without draining the budget for the planned projects. He reiterated that funding needed to be collected over and above the existing costs to cover the extra expense.

- Councillor Harris noted that there was heaps of evidence that the forestry damage was affecting all other roading projects and agreed that council needed to collect over and above the current fund. She noted she would like to explore other avenues of funding.
- It was clarified that the \$1.46million spent in the last five years was the total dollar figure and the Waka Kotahi subsidy was not taken out, council's share over this time was approximately \$600,000.
- Councillor Sandford felt if council proceeded with this rate then it needed to be kept separated and used for those roads affected. He felt this was at least a start and was more positive than doing nothing. If the fund was kept separate then there would be a reasonable resource to access funding to fix damage immediately.
- The Deputy Mayor reiterated his concern regarding the figures for the large blocks, especially those without income from the land. He felt a large block could not jump to these extreme figures and suggested a standard rate for the first 50 hectares and then a dropping rate per every 50 hectare above that. The Chief Executive noted that this discussion had not proceeded from this point in the past due to the impact on the receiving party, but that it needed to be drastic to be material.
- Councillor Dalziel noted that some of these blocks could be staggered maturity and have income in just a few years and every two years after than. He accepted this would impact cashflow planning but that every block is different.
- Mrs Radich noted that this would need to go out for consultation and officers would specifically target these properties and then council can relook at the issues that come up and how the proposal can be tweaked.
- Councillor Coplestone did not support the proposal. This would not fly with landowners. He noted there was a certain amount of money collected by council for roading which was topped up by Waka Kotahi and felt this was looking like a bit of a birds nest and was not straight forward. He felt the proposal should be parked and more thought put into it so as to not create a bigger problem than there already was.
- Councillor Boyde felt that most ratepayers would not be happy to have paid \$1.46 million over the past five years with no reinstatement work being completed because of the damage.
- The District Mayor requested that a definition on forestry roads be provided at the Ordinary Meeting of Council prior to the recommendations being adopted.
- It was clarified that this would not affect the Waka Kotahi funding application process.

10. Information Report – Financial Reserves Balance and Movements – 2020/21

D22/132 Page 33

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

WEBBY/SANDFORD
Carried
P&S/22/8

Recommended Reason

To inform the Policy and Services Committee of the current reserves balances and a summary of the movements from the previous year.

The Corporate Accountant noted the following points:

- This is a standard annual report which is presented to the committee following the adoption of the Annual report.
- It highlights all the movements in the financial reserve accounts.
- The reserve accounts increased by \$1.6 million in the last financial year. This was a result of prioritising of capital expenditure and because of external funding received over the past year.
- There was a spreadsheet of each reserve included in the report.

Points noted in discussion:

- Councillor Dalziel noted that there had been a good build up of funding for these reserves as when he had started on council there had been the reserve commitments but no cash to fund them. He commended the Director – Corporate Services and the team for this work.

11. Monthly Reports

11.1 Assets Report

D21/44671 Page 39

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/JONES
Carried
P&S/22/9

The Director – Assets noted the following points:

- Changes to the monthly report were noted:
 - Wastewater Customer Satisfaction – Complaints – *Not Achieved* to date.
 - Civic Amenities – Annual Booking of War Memorial – *186* YTD, Annual Booking of Centennial Restrooms – *104* YTD.
 - Rental and Investment Properties – Milk Production – *83,487.40* kg.
- The report summarises the activities undertaken in both November and December last year.
- Largely all activities have met their targets.
- Capital projects are on-going.

The Administration & Communication Support Officer left the meeting at 4.07pm.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified the Toko water supply mains leak was a result of a mains break on Toko Road outside of Aitken's Transport.
- It was clarified that officers would actively try to recover the costs of removing the dumped vehicles. It was noted the red one had been successfully removed but the blue one was not as accessible and would be more difficult.
- It was noted the two response performance measures for wastewater that were not achieved were due to the lockdown and officers not being able to access IT equipment. This issue has now been resolved.
- It was clarified there was no specific products that were creating a trend in the contamination of recycling bins in Stratford. Some residents were considering these bins as a second general waste bin and unfortunately these had not been caught through the bin audits as yet.
- It was clarified that investigation was on-going with the contamination at the MRF recycling facility and there are improvements. Issues such as the belt moving too fast to manage the waste sorting were raised and other little things that then result in the contamination being higher from the MRF facility.

The Revenue Manager, Services Asset Manager and Property Officer left the meeting at 4.10pm.

11.2 Community Services Report

D21/45870 Page 79

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/WEBBY
Carried
P&S/22/10

The Director – Community Services noted the following points:

- There were a number of a projects rolled out successful throughout the reporting period.
- There has been a new addition to the report of statistics from the service centre with the first graph showing the topics addressed face to face over the counter, the second showing the average of 1,900 calls being taken per month and the third graph highlighting the wait times for those calls. This is a starting point for the reporting for this activity and may change over time.

The Customer and Leisure Services Manager arrived at the meeting at 4.12pm.

- Applications for the Stratford District Youth Council close next month.
- The Summer Nights concert and movies have been postponed as a result of New Zealand moving into the Red Traffic Light Alert Level but it is hoped they will be delivered in the future. There are currently no changes to the status of the facilities due to this change.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the Official Information Request for Councillors Speech was a query relating to whether council's code of conduct threatens or restricts a councillor expressing opinion and not for a specific speech made by a Councillor.

Council Organisations and Council Representatives on Other Organisations

- Councillor Webby noted that the Percy Thomson Trust had appointed Laura Campbell to the position of Gallery Director.
- The District Mayor noted that the TET Stadium Trust had held its AGM in December where the new constitution was adopted and the new lease considered.

The Community Development Manager, the Communications Manager and the Customer and Leisure Services Manager left the meeting at 4.15pm.

11.3 Environmental Services Report
D21/42831 Page 91

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

COPLESTONE/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/22/11

The Director – Environmental Services noted the following points:

- This report expresses the trend that has run for the whole of 2021 and is continuing into this year.
- It includes commentary around the IANZ audit which resulted in seven general non conformance for which the action plan should be completed this week. It is expected to next see IANZ at the end of next year.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that swimming pool inspections were expected to begin shortly.

11.4 Corporate Services Report
D22/1864 Page 99

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/DALZIEL
Carried
P&S/22/12

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- All subdivision sale money has now been received.
- Council is now compliant with the Treasury covenants.
- Capital Expenditure to date is \$9.9 million of a total of \$8 million budget.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the infringements noted on page 114 for over a month old were largely parking fines and dog infringements. This section jumps up once a year when the overdue dog registrations are processed and slowly comes down through the year.
- It was clarified that Azure was a new software structure and would still be housed in a data centre in Melbourne. The service would be similar but will provide additional benefits. Officers are currently working through the legal contracts at the moment to ensure council retains ownership. This will be in place this year.

12. Questions

- It was clarified that there was no extra costs to council for work undertaken by contractors outside of business hours. Generally this work is assessment of the situation and ensuring the site is safe and the bulk of the work undertaken during normal working hours, however urgent work will be undertaken if it is required.
- Councillor Coplestone questioned if Council was interested in looking at the current medical situation in Stratford as it was pushing for more people to come to our district but the number of doctors and medical assistance was depleting slow. The Chief Executive noted that Councillors needed to have a conversation and give officers a direction of what it would like them to move towards. The District Mayor noted the shortage of GPs in Stratford is acute at the moment and would get significantly worse in the next two months and this was a real concern. There had been one medical practice closed and the departure of a number of GPs employed by another practice. This is a nationwide problem. He was aware there was a real concern in the community. He had been in contact with the District Health Board ensuring they are aware of the situation. Recruiting doctors is extremely difficult and they are competing against a number of other places. There are many contributing factors to why people may not want to practice in a small town and 99% of these were outside of council control. He noted that an offer to assist in anyway possible would be the first step. He did not know how effective council could be in this situation.
- Councillor Dalziel questioned how council regarded close contacts who are required to self isolate and how would it define a close contact in a small workplace? The Chief Executive noted that the definition was ever evolving and that the definition would be left to the Ministry of Health and District Health Board. If a staff member was a close contact then all normal sick leave provisions would apply. Management are repeatedly looking at the business continuity plans for the activities and where possible they were isolating key staff members such as the water treatment team who, for example, did not come into the administration building during the Delta outbreak. There may be possible options to split the teams further, however there were other roles where this would be extremely difficult. He noted there may be a point where council was unable to comply with statutory deadlines although neighbours and contractors would be used where possible if officers become stretched. He noted he was confident council would continue to deliver essential services with support from neighbours, contractors and consultants if required. The team was actively planning for different scenarios.

13. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 115

The meeting was closed with a karakia.

The meeting closed at 4.33pm

A L Jamieson
Chairman

Confirmed this 22nd day of February 2022.

N C Volzke
District Mayor