

Date: Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 3.34 PM

Venue: Council Chambers, Stratford District Council, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

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

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Acting Director – Corporate Services – Mr B Coles, the Acting Director – Assets – Mr S Bowden, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the acting Director – Community Services – Mr C Julie, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, two members of the public and one member of the media (Stratford Press)

1. Welcome

The District Mayor welcomed Elected Members, members of the public, staff and the media to the meeting.

1.1 Opening Karakia D21/40748 Page 5

The opening karakia was read.

1.2 Health and Safety Message D21/26210 Page 6

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

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from the Director – Assets Mrs V Araba and the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich.

3. Announcements

There were no announcements.

4. Declarations of Members Interest

Elected members 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 Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings was attached.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Ordinary Meeting of Council – 8 August 2023

D23/34198 Page 8

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 8 August 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

HARRIS/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
CL/23/84

6.2 Policy and Services Committee – 22 August 2023

D23/35474 Page 15

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22 August 2023 be received.

SANDFORD/HALL
Carried
CL/23/85

2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22 August 2023 be adopted.

HALL/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/23/86

7. District Mayor's Report

D23/38410 Page 27

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD
Carried
CL/23/87

The District Mayor noted the following points:

- The letter from the Minister of Local Government has important legislative changes which will enable those attending remotely (via audio visual link) to count towards the quorum of a meeting.
- The changes to the Resource Management Act that were discussed at the hui between the Mayoral Forum and Ngā Iwi o Taranaki have now gone through the legislation process.
- The Taranaki Regional Position Statement for Affordable Waters was signed by Mayor Volzke as chair of the Mayoral Forum, and Jamie Tuuta as chair of Ngā Iwi o Taranaki. The date of 1 April 2025 has now been adopted.
- The meeting with representatives from the office of the Auditor General was held and was an open and frank discussion regarding audit costs. A course of action was mapped out and is being followed, but it is unlikely to result in a reduction of fees.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde questioned if the unacceptable amount of staff time had been conveyed to the office of the Auditor General. Mayor Volzke noted this had been strongly put across and also specific questions raised of the time spent by auditor junior staff and being treated as a learning opportunity.

8. Information Report –2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey

D23/34569 Page 37

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/BOYDE

Carried

CL/23/88

Recommended Reason

This is an information report only. It provides the 2022/23 Customer Satisfaction Survey results.

The Acting Director – Community Services noted the following points:

- These results are from the previous financial year customer satisfaction survey.
- There is an option to have an in-depth conversation with Key Research regarding the results but there is an additional cost to do so.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Hall questioned if there had been conversations with Key Research regarding participants being more likely to provide feedback when they are unhappy rather than when they are happy. Mr Julie noted this had not been specifically discussed with them, however it is known from the collection of general feedback that negative is received more than positive. Councillor Hall acknowledged that there might be a large portion of people who are happy with things but just did not want to give feedback.
- The Chief Executive noted that one of the key differences from the previous internal survey to going to the external provider is that there is a balanced cross section of the community and now truly reflects the Stratford community.
- Councillor Watt noted that Planning and Resource consents have the highest level of downward trend as well as being the lowest level of satisfaction in the survey. The Director – Environmental Services noted that there is a really low number of participants so year on year the figure fluctuates wildly for each question which is shown by the LIM results with one response taking a quarterly total from 100% to 0%. There is also a high degree of sensitivity for each response as well as seeing a time where people are under quite a bit of pressure in the community which impacts attracting positive results for regulatory services.
- The District Mayor noted that the regulatory department is often impacted by customer dissatisfaction when the outcome of the engagement is being told they can't do what they want to do rather than the engagement itself.
- Councillor Boyde noted he had been sceptical of this group doing the survey but has been very impressed. The results are well balanced and show trends in areas that stick out and highlights to him that there is a lot of pressure currently in the community, particularly with the 41-45 age range. There are three to four numbers that stick out as low but he acknowledged that every survey in the country is showing a disconnect with everything.
- It was clarified that council was unable to contact survey participants as it was an anonymous survey. The Deputy Mayor noted that it could be helpful to let people know that we can email rates bills rather than printing. Mr Julie noted that a lot of the comments do not represent the service that is delivered by council and there is a disconnect between those who have filled out the survey and their understanding of what council does. The District Mayor noted this was also evident in roading where a lot of the dissatisfaction relates to state highways. It was noted that the survey does specify the difference between state highways and council maintained roads.
- Councillor Beck noted his concern that overall satisfaction with the Stratford District Council has slipped from 69% (2022) to 57% (2023). He felt this trend and the overall value for money is concerning. Mr Julie noted that Key Research has very much seen this drop for councils nationwide.

A lot of councils are coping dissatisfaction with things that are very much out of their control, along with environmental and financial pressures affecting our communities.

- Councillor Harris noted that surveys outside of the local government sector reflect what this survey is showing as well. She asked if there was an explanation separating the Taranaki Regional Council from Stratford District Council noting there were complaints regarding invoices that could be related to the regional council. Mr Julie would make a note of this for the next survey to check and include if needed.
- The District Mayor noted that the trend is not where he would like to see it overall, however there are some satisfactory results. It will give council some things to work on and focus on with officers using this information in the best way they can to inform and engage with the community.
- The Deputy Mayor noted the theme regarding public toilets and asked what the expectation and feedback was to the contractors? It was noted there had been a heightened period of vandalism that has affected the use of some of these public toilets, the cemetery one was out of action for a month due to vandalism. This has impacted the results but the District Mayor also noted that there was one comment saying disgusting and another one saying they are nice and clean.
- Councillor Boyde noted these results are a reminder that councillors need to be accountable for every cent spent of rate payer money as they are directly responsible for that.

9. Response to Public Forum

Speaker: John Campbell

Topic: Taranaki Pioneer Village

- It was requested that the District Mayor acknowledge the presentation and the work Mr Campbell does as a volunteer at the Taranaki Pioneer Village – specifically with the amount of hours he dedicates to it.

10. Questions

There were no questions.

11. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 120

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.04pm

N C Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 10th day of October 2023.

N C Volzke
District Mayor