

MINUTES

Policy and Services Committee



F22/55/05 – D23/32658

Date: Tuesday 25 July 2023 at 3.10PM

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, W J Sandford, C M Tongaawhikau and M J Watt

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, 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 (*part meeting*), the Roading Asset Manager – Mr S Bowden, the Project Manager – Mr S Taylor (*part meeting*), the Projects Engineer – Mr O Mabumbo (*part meeting*), the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain (*part meeting*), the Property Officer – Mrs S Flight (*part meeting*), the Education Officer – Water and Waste – Mr P McNamara (*part meeting*), the Graduate Asset Engineer – Ms K van Hout (*part meeting*), the Communications Advisor – Mrs S Clarkson (*part meeting*), the Sustainability Advisor – Ms V Dombroski (*part meeting*), the Services Asset Manager – Mr J Cooper (*part meeting*) and one member of the media (Stratford Press)

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

The District Mayor requested that councillors remain behind following the conclusion of the meeting to discuss the remits for the Local Government New Zealand conference.

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.

It was requested that Councillor Boyde's apology be amended to sick for the meeting on 27 June 2023. It was noted that when an apology is recorded it will only be noted on the attendance schedule as sick leave if requested to maintain the privacy of the elected member.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Policy & Services Committee – 27 June 2023
D23/28249 Page 10

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

TONGAAWHIKAU/ERWOOD
Carried
P&S/23/97

7. Matters Outstanding

D16/47 Page 21

Recommendation

THAT the Matters Outstanding be received.

ERWOOD/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
P&S/23/98

8. Decision Report – Policy Reviews – July 2023

D23/30653 Page 22

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

HALL/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/99

2. THAT the attached, updated and new policies, being the:

- Occupation of unused Road Reserve Policy
- Fences on Road Reserve Policy
- Stock Crossing and Races Policy
- Stock Underpasses Policy
- Temporary Road Closures Policy
- Charges for New Wastewater Network Connections Policy
- Discretionary Information in LIMs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

be adopted.

Recommended Reason

This is part of council's rolling review of policies. Policies require review from time to time to ensure they still reflect current legislation and best practice, as well as elected members' views and meet the business needs of the organisation. Any policies recommended for withdrawal have either been found to be not required, amalgamated into an existing policy or replaced by a new policy as outlined in the body of this report.

The Chief Executive noted the following points:

- This is a general policy update with the majority being a refresh of the existing policy.
- Consideration had been given to combining some of the roading policies into one, however this will be reviewed at a later date due to current workloads.
- The most significant update was to the Discretionary Information in LIMs Policy which clarifies what council does or doesn't volunteer to disclose in a LIM request.

Occupation of Unused Road Reserve Policy

- The District Mayor noted the inclusion of a nominal charge per year as opposed to a percentage of the land value, he asked if there was typical size for these blocks of land. The Roading Asset Manager noted that the land varies in size and noted an application that had been received was for 2.5 kms therefore with the percentage charge it would be \$2,500 per year which would be unlikely to be paid. He noted that agreements include keeping the area maintained, fenced and free of weeds and reduced maintenance required by council. He noted an alternative option could be a flat rate fee per size or length.
- It was clarified that this policy would cover new applications and would not be retrospectively charged.
- Mr Bowden noted that there was such a disparity between the costs for these areas of land and the area to be occupied that this review created an opportunity to review the charging basis.

Fences on Road Reserve Policy

- It was clarified that the reason electric or barbwire fencing could not be used was due to public health and safety. This was not related to boundary fences that bordered on road reserves and further clarified that this was fencing between the natural fence line/boundary and the road.
- It was clarified that the previous policy (Occupation of Road Reserve Policy) would be used should a resident be using road reserve without an application to occupy (utilising the road reserve without authorisation).
- This policy was not designed to litigate historic situations regarding boundary fences.

Stock Crossings and Races Policy

- It was clarified that effluent was noted in the policy as if it is not removed from the road service on a regular basis the chemical within will eat into the bitumen.

Stock Underpasses Policy

- Mr Hanne noted that this policy was created to incentivise the introduction of underpasses. Landowners pay for the structure and the work, however it does bring costs to council to restore the road on top but this was as an incentive to remove the conflict of stock and motor vehicles. He noted that due to the tight budgets this incentive may be reconsidered.
- It was noted that in the past eight years there had been two underpasses installed.
- Councillor Beck Noted he felt the cost of the top surface should go back on the applicant. Councillor Erwood supported this.
- Councillor Jones felt that with the small number of underpasses being installed the benefit of getting the cows under the road was greater than the cost of metal. Farmers pay the majority of the rates and he felt they should get some benefit as they get left behind as it is. He fully supported this expense on council.
- Councillor Boyde agreed. He asked when underpasses were inspected and who's cost it is if an issue is identified? Mr Bowden noted that basic bridge inspections are done every two years. If any issues are identified the owner is notified to do some maintenance on it. The owners are required to do the maintenance, but council needs to ensure the structural integrity of the structure is maintained.
- It was noted there were over 100 underpasses throughout the district. Replacement costs would be the owners responsibility, however if they were replaced the cost of the road surface would be councils under this policy.
- It was clarified that if the responsibility for road reinstatement went to the farmer the reinstatement of the road surface could be completed by the contractor completing the underpass if they are able, however council can undertake the work and recover the costs and retains sign off on the work for both scenarios.
- It was clarified that if a property is sold the underpass responsibility falls on the new owner.
- Inspections are completed by council officers during the installation, so there are some supervision costs incurred by council as well.
- It was noted that Waka Kotahi undertake the work themselves to reinstate the road for installations on state highway.

Temporary Road Closures Policy

- This policy had no changes except the move to the new template and updating NZTA to Waka Kotahi.

Charges for New Wastewater Network Connections

- Mr Hanne noted the overall intent of this policy was for those connecting to the network, however there was also a clause covering extension charges.
- The District Mayor noted he had no problem with the connection fee or the policy, however he felt that very few had connected to the extension on Pembroke Road as the charges council is imposing are greater than replacing a septic tank and there had been no gain from this work. The greater the number of people connected to the system meant the greater the distribution of the cost and felt the last sentence of clause 2.2 (from Property owners connecting) should be deleted.
- Councillor Boyde felt the policy required more work and further discussion. Mr Hanne noted it could be discussed now or during the review of the fees and charges.
- The Deputy Mayor noted she would like to see a recovery fee but it should be less than a resident has to pay to install their own septic tank to incentivise to connect.

The Services Asset Manager left the meeting at 3.56pm.

Health and Safety Policy

- It was noted that the policy had been broadened to align with reality and that the full pre-approval process was not appropriate for low risk work. A JSA (job safety analysis) was perfectly appropriate for a one-off task.
- This would be added into the updated Health and Safety manual once adopted.
- It was noted that contractors were required to reapply to be on the approved contractor list every two years. This was to ensure key processes are followed and requirements such as insurances, certificates, policies etc. are current. The approved contractor list was purely for Stratford District Council and the costs for performing the pre-approval process were not recouped from the contractors.

Recommendations

2. THAT the attached, updated and new policies, being the:

- Occupation of unused Road Reserve Policy
- Fences on Road Reserve Policy
- Stock Crossing and Races Policy
- Temporary Road Closures Policy
- Discretionary Information in LIMs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

be adopted.

ERWOOD/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/100

- Councillor Sandford noted there were a lot of underpasses in the district, therefore there could be the potential for these to be dug up for maintenance and questioned if council was responsible for reinstating the road surface in this instance? Mr Bowden noted that underpasses should have a 100 year lifespan, however under this policy council would be required to cover the cost of the reinstatement of the road surface for maintenance purposes.

Recommendations

THAT the Stock Underpasses Policy be amended that Council only covers the initial reinstatement of the road surface.

JONES/DUDLEY

1 against

The motion was amended

P&S/23/101

- The District Mayor put a notice to amend the motion. He noted that in most instances an underpass was required when a land owner acquired property across the road therefore this was property development and he did not feel that council should incur the cost associated with this.

Recommendations

THAT the Stock Underpasses Policy be adopted with the amendment to remove clause 1.2 and 1.3

VOLZKE/BECK

3 against

Carried

P&S/23/102

- Councillor Boyde noted he did not support the motion to remove clauses 1.2 and 1.3 as this was an incentive to promote safety and minimising road damage. By removing council support it would not encourage farmers to install an underpass.

Recommendations

THAT the Charges for New Wastewater Network Connections Policy be adopted with the amendment to remove the second paragraph of clause 2.3.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD

Carried

P&S/23/103

- The District Mayor noted that residents who benefit from the service should pay for it. He felt in this instance council was charging residents more than to do the alternative creating a disincentive to join the service. He felt the fees and charges should be looked at in a way to encourage people to connect to the network with the 10% discount removed and just a straight fee to join.
- Fees and charges would be discussed during the Annual Plan or Long Term Plan process.
- It was clarified that this would remove the second paragraph of clause 2.3 being:

Property owners connecting or committing to connect at the time of construction and where payment is made in full, or a payment agreement for the full amount over a period of 2 years is set up at the time, receive a 10% discount on their wastewater network extension charge.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report and attached schedule be received.

BOYDE/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/23/104

2. THAT the schedule of uncompleted projects, budgeted for in 2022/23 and previous years, and the amounts proposed, be approved for addition to the capital expenditure budget for 2023/24 in the reforecasted capital budget, with any amendments made as decided by elected members.

BOYDE/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
P&S/23/105

Recommended Reason

To seek approval for capital projects that were budgeted for in the previous financial year, to be carried forward to 2023/24.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This report is brought once a year in years between the Long Term Plan.
- It highlights what was budgeted for, what was completed and what requires approval to carry forward or drop off the budget.
- Approval will mean the projects can carry on into the new financial year, noting that some have started and some have yet to begin. Anything left uncompleted will be reset in the Long Term Plan.
- All capital projects start fresh on 1 July 2024.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that inflation had not been added to the budgets. Mrs Radich noted that some projects have started and some are in the early stages. A number of projects are scalable so can adjust the volume of work if costs have increased. However if officers cannot deliver on the scope of the project it will be brought back to council. The audit and risk committee receives a capital works project update at each meeting.
- It was clarified that on-going discussions were occurring for the property purchase for the Stratford 2035 project s and if this budget was removed from the capital projects it would stop all work going forward. This project could be brought in again in the Long Term Plan, however if the land became available in the meantime council could not proceed with the purchase without seeking the approval from the executive committee for an unbudgeted spend. It was noted that the current workload for officers was the biggest hurdle for the Stratford 2035 project, however different stages had been designed.
- It was confirmed the generator for the Water Treatment Plan was underway.
- It was clarified the replacements for roading financially assisted by Waka Kotahi was in relation to special purpose roads (two roads up the mountain) and 100% funded.
- It was clarified that the Midhirst cemetery pathways had been approved for Year 3 of the 2021-31 Long Term Plan which was this financial year so is included in the Annual Plan work plan.
- It was clarified that the roading budgets presented were the reduced budgets as a result of the spend in the last financial year.
- It was clarified that the Victoria Park drainage project was not yet complete so the budget in this report was related to completing stage 2.
- It was clarified that the budget regarding the proposed subdivision related to contractual agreements with the vendor to doing a minimum amount of infrastructure within the land.
- The Broadway roundabout garden upgrade was questioned as to at what point of the Stratford 2035 project this would be completed? Mr Hanne noted that the advisory group would recommend to council for decision making and that there were certain elements that could be broken out of the overall scope – however this could lead to misaligned outcomes.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/HALL
Carried
P&S/23/106

2. THAT pursuant to the Waste Minimisation Act (WMA) 2008, the committee adopts and releases for special consultative procedure as per the Local Government Act 2002, the draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2023-2029.
3. THAT the committee approve for consultation the proposal to change service level with regards to kerbside collection of waste in the district.

McKAY/HALL
Carried
P&S/23/107

Recommended Reasons

The adoption of draft WMMP under the WMA 2008 requires a special consultative procedure as per the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002. The proposed change to the current kerbside waste collection service levels also requires consultation.

The Director – Assets noted the following points:

- The report seeks the approval and adoption of the draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) to release for consultation.
- It also releases for consultation the proposal to change the service level agreement for the current waste collection service.
- The key parts of the report were brought to council previously to adopt the vision and targets etc.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- The Deputy Mayor requested that it be very clear to the community that these are changes that will be required for us but be driven by central government.
- It was noted that the change to the service level will be clearly separated from the WMMP.
- It was clarified that food waste technically should be separate from green waste as the composting process is separate. Food waste requires a higher level of treatment. This is why a potential green waste collection could be an opt in system.
- The District Mayor noted this was typical government policy being forced on council with no funding stream. He noted his concern of the introduction of policies and mandates without funding streams to support the implementation.
- It was clarified that the proposal would be that the majority of the community would not require a green waste bin (240 litres). The food bin would be a small bin. To combine the two would force all the contents to the higher level of treatment. Legislation does require council's to provide the community a way to dispose of food waste separate from general waste in three years time.

The Communications Manager and Communications Advisor left the meeting at 4.46pm.

11. Monthly Reports

11.1 Assets Report

D23/28663 Page 271

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/ERWOOD
Carried
P&S/23/108

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was noted there was no further update on the Midhirst water leak.
- It was clarified that officers are still experiencing teething issues with the electronic water meters and are going back to the manufacturers with the problems.
- It was noted that it cost \$86,000 to replace the bridge on Puniwhakau Road, which included the culvert and realigning the road at the same time.
- The lower customer satisfaction for roading results was noted. There is often confusion between the state highway network and local roads in these surveys, however it may also be that customers are not happy with the level of service being provided – particularly with the condition of some of the forestry roads. These results could go lower as council is unable to respond to service requests. The key performance indicators will be reviewed as part of the Long Term Plan process.

The Projects Manager, the Projects Engineer, the Parks and Reserves Officer, the Property Officer, the Education Officer – Water and Waste, the Graduate Asset Engineer and the Sustainability Advisor left the meeting at 4.52pm.

11.2 Community Services Report

D23/29449 Page 294

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/23/109

Points noted in discussion:

- Councillor Boyde noted there were two big hockey tournaments coming up in Stratford, one at the end of August and one at the end of September. The under 15 tournament will host teams from all over New Zealand.
- Councillor Harris noted the Central Taranaki Safe Community Trust had applied for funding to purchase a ANPR camera which recognise number plates and will be very helpful for the community if successful.
- Councillor Dudley read a positive post made in the Stratford Community Board regarding a resident visiting Wai o Rua.
- The District Mayor noted that admission to the pool is the highest it has been in 6 years and still continuing to rise. He noted the swim school had started and is very well organised.

11.3 Environmental Services Report
D23/26528 Page 302

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/110

11.4 Corporate Services Report
D23/30567 Page 310

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

DUDLEY/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/111

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This report has the preliminary results for the end of the year as work is still being undertaken to close off accounts.
- Auditors arrive to commence the audit on Monday 31 July.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the additional reactive work for Parks and Reserves expenditure was related to fallen trees.
- The Deputy Mayor questioned the process regarding using debt to cover the cashflow shortages? Mrs Radich clarified that this was monitored monthly and borrowing completed as required which is often dependent on when payments come out. Borrowing is only used for capital expenditure.
- Mrs Radich clarified that the contracts rising from \$1 million to \$2 million was purely an invoice timing issue rather than going over budget.
- It was noted that the IT team have been working really hard to resolve the issues created by the Azure change over.
- It was clarified that management will review the audio system options for the council chambers. It will be brought to council as an Long Term Plan item if required. It was noted that there were much different requirements for an emergency management centre to a meeting set up.

12. Questions

There were no questions.

13. Closing Karakia
D21/40748 Page 325

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 5.04pm.

M McKay
Chairperson

Confirmed this 22nd of August 2023.

N C Volzke
District Mayor