

Date: Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 3.30 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 (*part meeting*), 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 – Assets Mrs V Araba, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Team Leader – Library & Visitor Information – Mrs B Roper (*part meeting*), the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson (*part meeting*), the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig (*part meeting*), the Acting Community Development Manager – Mrs A Kingston (*part meeting*), the Aquatic Services Team Leader – Mr R Naicker (*part meeting*), the Roading Asset Manager – Mr S Bowden (*part meeting*), two members of the public (*part meeting*) and one member of the media (Stratford Press)

Via audio/visual link – the Communications Advisor – Mrs S Clarkson (*part meeting*)

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 8

The opening karakia was read.

1.2 Health and Safety Message D21/26210 Page 9

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

2. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

3. Announcements

The District Mayor noted the Te Keke Ngahuru Ki Te Awa Tupua – Te Awa Tupua Strategy had been handed out to all councillors. He asked that everyone takes the time to read this and if there were any questions to let him know.

4. Declarations of Members Interest

Elected members to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda.

Councillor Boyde – Item 9 – Approve Draft Financial Budgets for Long Term Plan (Hockey Turf Reserve)

Councillor Erwood – Item 9 – Approve Draft Financial Budgets for Long Term Plan (Central Taranaki Safe Community Trust)

5. Attendance Schedule

The attendance schedule for Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings was attached.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 **Ordinary Meeting of Council – 12 December 2023** D23/50109 Page 11

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 12 December 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

HALL/JONES
Carried
CL/24/1

6.1.1 Public Forum Notes D23/49712 Page 22

The notes from the Public Forum held on Tuesday 12 December 2023 were attached for Council's information.

The Roading Asset Manager joined the meeting at 3.34pm.

6.2 **Policy and Services Committee – 23 January 2024** D24/4505 Page 24

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 January and Tuesday 30 January 2024 be received.

ERWOOD/McKAY
Carried
CL/24/2

2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 January 2024 and Tuesday 30 January 2024, *excluding P&S/24/22 (item 15 Fees and Charges), P&S/24/30 (item 17 LTP Capital Projects)*, be adopted.

McKAY/BOYDE
Carried
CL/24/3

Item 15 (Fees and Charges) and item 17 (LTP Capital Projects) recommendations were excluded to allow for further discussion and amendments.

6.2.1 Updated – Housing for Older Persons D23/25127 Page 52

Updated policy for council's information.

6.2.2 Updated – Revenue and Financing Policy
D24/50 Page 55

It was noted on page 59, Civic Amenities, as the asset is not depreciated the wording will be amended to '*therefore the asset depreciation is not funded*'.

6.2.3 Updated – Fees and Charges
D23/1515 Page 65

- The Director – Community Services noted that officers have sought comparison fees from other facilities as requested. They were \$120 per hour or \$75 per hour plus gst for private use compared to Stratford's current charge of \$600. The charges for the swim club were currently noted as to be confirmed in the schedule and the proposal was that a 50% discount be applied for private hire per lane and the full facility hire for swim events with no pool entry charge.
- Councillor Boyde noted he was happy to support this but noted his frustration in the timing of receiving this information. He noted the importance of encouraging as many people and groups as possible to use the facility and this would remove the perception of double dipping.
- Councillor Erwood support the proposal as a good incentive for use.
- Councillor Dudley supported the proposal as it was important to have the pool used as much as possible.
- Councillor Hall suggested an amendment to use the school group – swimming sports to be available twice per year to accommodate for other events within the school year. Councillor Sandford did not support this change as he felt this would result with fees that no one could understand again. Councillor Boyde did not support this amendment as he felt the facility was still really good value and was expensive to run.
- Councillor Dudley noted she had received feedback from a parent at Stratford Primary School as they were looking to do a slip n slide for their triathlon rather than a swim due to the expense. She noted the children were only in the pool for this event for a short time so she supported allowing two events per year. Councillor Harris noted this would be nice to do but felt the fees and charge stipulate swimming sports so a triathlon would fall outside of this. The Deputy Mayor suggested that the pool entry per student of \$2.50 would be a more appropriate mechanism for a short time frame Councillor Dudley noted that the way the charges are applied the school would have to hire the lanes and then pool entry on top. Ms Whareaitu clarified that the school had been charged \$176.50 for lane hire, which was \$3.36 per child, for the previous triathlon event.

Recommendation

THAT a 50% discount apply to:

Private Hire – Per Lane *and*
Full Pool Complex Exclusive Use

With no pool entry charged for these types of bookings for the Taranaki Swimming Club and Stratford Swimming Club.

ERWOOD/BOYDE
Carried
CL/24/4

Recommendation

THAT the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 be approved to be released for public consultation with the Long Term Plan 2024-34 (LTP) Consultation document.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
CL/24/5

Updated list of LTP Capital Projects

- The Deputy Mayor noted she had reviewed the capital projects again and would like to revisit some of these that did not feel 100% to her. The first was the lighting at the bike park. She would like to see this completely removed, she noted it was ideally to be a deterrent but it might not work and there would be on-going operation, maintenance and replacement costs.
- Councillor Jones noted he was happy to leave this in as the lights were security lights to boost the function of the cameras and would not be on all the time. He would question this project if they were to be operating 24 hours a day.
- It was clarified that the design for these had not been done yet. The purpose was that they would be security and would most likely be low level LED lights that would be on from sunset to sunrise but this was not set in stone. The Chief Executive noted that motion activated lights were not often used now.
- Councillor Dudley supported retaining this project. As the lighting was for security reasons and to deter vandalism she should the cost would be off set by the money saved on repairing vandalism.
- Councillor Harris supported removing the project. The assumption was that the lights would reveal the identities of offenders but she noted her assumption was they would just conceal their identity.
- Councillor Boyde noted there was already lighting installed at the park which he felt was sufficient.

Recommendation

THAT the Lighting at Bike Park (\$15,000) be removed.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
7 for
CL/24/6

- The Deputy Mayor suggested that the continued walkway development be amended to every second year, removing Years 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 and increasing Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 to \$30,000 which would see a saving of \$50,000 across the full LTP.
- The Director – Assets noted it would be important to align this with the continued parks development to run the projects together. Combining the projects into one line was not an option as they are similar in nature but different areas of the park sand walkways and keeping them separate gave more flexibility on how the budget was allocated.

Recommendations

1. THAT the Continued Walkway Development be amended as follows:

Years 1, 3,5, 7 and 9 be removed.
Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 be increased to \$30,000

2. THAT the Continued Parks Development be amended as follows:

Years 1, 3,5, 7 and 9 be removed.
Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 be increased to \$20,000

McKAY/ERWOOD
Carried
CL/24/7

- Councillor Beck proposed the project replacing the old bricks at the Pioneer Cemetery be reduced to \$20,000 in year 2 as per previous discussions to only do the plaques. Councillor Dudley noted this was grant funded and if funding could not be obtained then only the plaques were going to be done. The Deputy Mayor noted her concern that grant funding was still using someone else's money and the project did not need to be done which was why councillors had felt the bricks were sufficient at this stage.

Recommendation

THAT the replace red brick monument wall with old bricks – Pioneer Cemetery be amended to *'Replace plaques on monument wall – Pioneer Cemetery' \$20,000 Year 2.*

BECK/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
CL/24/8

- Councillor Hall suggested that the seating to the pump track area be changed from grant funding to loan funding. The pump track is a real asset to the community and is well used. Seating has been identified as a need by parents watching their children at the pump track and she was worried it would not happen if grant funding was not sourced.
- The Deputy Mayor agreed noting she had initially supported it being grant funded. She had visited the pump track and agreed seating was required to be able to watch the children.
- Councillor Sandford did not support the amendment as he stated this was a nice to have luxury item and did not believe the ratepayers should pay for it. Councillor Boyde agreed as there was already seating at the park, it was important to get back to basics and if it did not cost the ratepayers then it was ok.

Recommendation

THAT the seating to pump track project be amended to loan funding

HALL/McKAY
Lost
7 against
CL/24/9

- Councillor Sandford suggested removing the completion of the metal path at Kopuatama Cemetery. He felt this was an unnecessary expense as people walk through to look for graves and visit loved ones not to look at the river. Councillor Watt agreed it was not necessary.
- It was clarified this path would be used by hearses and service vehicles as well.

Recommendation

THAT completion of metal path at Kopuatama Cemetery be removed (\$50,000 Year 2)

SANDFORD/WATT
Carried
CL/24/10

- Councillor Sandford also noted he could not understand the garden planting and seat installation at Kopuatama Cemetery. Seating is a nice to have but not necessary as visitors won't sit 20 meters away from their loved ones they are visiting.
- Councillor Harris noted the OPEX impact was low for this project but noted that gardens are high impact operationally. Mrs Araba clarified that this depended on the type of gardens as hedging could be relatively low maintenance. She clarified this was not a renewal and was creating new gardens and Mrs Radich clarified the majority of this budget was for seating.
- The District Mayor noted that the rural women had donated a garden which had to be removed due to it becoming unidentifiable due to the state of neglect it was in.

Recommendation

THAT the garden planting and seat installation – Kopuatama Cemetery project be removed.

SANDFORD/BECK

Carried

CL/24/11

- It was clarified the lime chip completion at King Edward Park was a different project to the completion of replacing lime chip with concrete behind the netball courts and they were both scheduled for the same year to provide the opportunity to reuse the removed lime chip in the extension project if possible.
- Councillors gave approval for officers to place the \$200,000 Kopuatama Cemetery (new land concept plan) in the year that had the lowest rates increase (either 2029/30 or 2030/31).
- Councillor Jones suggested the on-site café – tea and coffee facilities (pool) be moved to 2028/29 to smooth the debt limits.
- Councillor Hall did not support this suggestions as following lengthy discussions on the on-site café the view remained that council should be looking at this. It was a compromise to push this to year 4 and if it was pushed out too far the opportunity to generate revenue would be missed. Councillor Dudley supported this view.
- Councillor Jones noted this project would be debated again at the next LTP but by moving it now it would smooth the debt limits. Councillor Beck supported this.

Recommendation

THAT the On-site café – Tea and Coffee facilities (Pool) be moved to 2028/29.

JONES/BOYDE

Carried

7 for (including casting vote)

6 against

CL/24/12

- Councillor Beck noted his desire to remove the walking and cycling budget completely or see it reduced substantially. The Roading Asset Manager noted this was for the physical work of shared use footpaths as well as education. The Connecting our Communities Strategy is about getting people on bikes and supporting them through educational programmes such as the bikes in schools, the second element is providing the facilities to allow bike use such as widening footpaths. The budget scheduled for this covers both elements and the council's contribution would be 37% of total costs.
- It was clarified that if this was removed it would not go in the NZTA application. Mr Bowden noted he could not predict how much would be approved by NZTA when developing the land transport programme but if it was submitted at a reduced level then that would be reflected in the budgets.
- Councillor Sandford felt council had rushed into doing a walking and cycling strategy. The community had spoken quite clearly that they felt it was a waste of money but the feedback did identify areas of town that did need work. He felt the budget should be reduced to a realistic amount.
- It was clarified that extra widening of footpaths being replaced could come out of the footpath renewal programme but it would reduce the meters of footpath renewal.
- Councillor Boyde noted the community had let him know they were not happy about this and he felt uncomfortable with the figure in the budget. There were areas around the school that will help but that times were tough and he would be proposing the budget be reduced to \$200,000 to do those safety improvements.
- Councillor Watt agreed that the majority of the public view had not wanted walking and cycling proposals. He did not want to approve any amount of money that could be used as cycleways under the guise that they were safety improvements.
- Mrs Araba noted there was a lot of confusion amongst councillors on the walking and cycling strategy versus Transport Choices. Council has a walking and cycling strategy which is different and has a

work programme to follow. Mr Hanne noted the importance of keeping the budget under this heading for funding applications.

- Councillor Hall noted this was a significant difference to the \$7.8 million budget that had been initially spoken about, this was about the safety of our roads, and the people who are using the roads and the footpaths to move about. She noted it was categorically untrue that everyone was against this as people had submitted in favour of it and she had been approached by people in support of it. In previous years there have been young people hit by vehicles and this project had talked about crossings that were going to solve some of those issues. She felt removing it would remove the opportunity to do this. She noted council had adopted the connecting our communities strategy and this budget was a way to achieve its goals. This budget isn't the last time council will see this project, this means it is on the table, that it is in front of Waka Kotahi to progress with the bits council wants to progress with. She urged councillors to consider these points before removing the budget.
- It was clarified that footpath renewals were subsidised at 63% but that this could not be increased as renewals only allowed for replacement of what is there. Renewals is funded by depreciation and walking and cycling is a level of service increase and would be loan funded.

The Aquatic Services Team Leader left the meeting at 4.39pm.

- Mr Bowden clarified that the initial project identified through the transport choices process for the primary school work was \$650,000 to \$700,000 so reducing this budget would see this work take three years to build.
- Councillor Tongaawhikau noted the health and safety aspects is a priority around our schools and in the community. He acknowledged it was a lot of money but not at the expense of the safety of our tamariki walking around. He noted reducing the budget was probably a good choice but then it was unknown how much would be funded in the end which would impact projects. He noted he had initially spoken against this budget but now would be voting against the motion to reduce it.
- Councillor Harris noted she did not support the motion, she would like to see it reduced slightly but felt there was merit in keeping it in as felt council would be fools if it was not able to widen a footpath during renewals.
- It was clarified that the budget line needed to be walking and cycling for funding purposes.

Recommendation

THAT the Walking and Cycling budget be reduced to \$200,000 each year.

BOYDE/SANDFORD

Lost

6 for

7 against (including casting vote)

CL/24/13

- The District Mayor used his casting vote to vote against the motion to leave the budget at \$400,000 per year. He noted this was done in the knowledge that the community can come back and express a view that it is too much, or if further savings are required it is still an option to reduce it.
- Councillor Boyde suggested the removal of the Brecon Road bridge project. It is a \$20 million project with a high OPEX and no funders looking to support it. He stated the district cannot afford this.
- Councillor Erwood supported leaving it in. It is time to move on this and indicate to the community it is what council intends to do to open up connectivity and potential footpaths to get our tamariki across that side of town.
- The District Mayor noted this project was already in the draft regional transport plan which will be sent to Waka Kotahi for moderation when it is adopted. Then it will become competitive with all other projects submitted by councils. This is giving Waka Kotahi the opportunity to consider it, if it is removed it will not happen.
- Councillor Beck noted this was a nice to have.
- It was clarified that if this gets approved for funding by Waka Kotahi then it would be subsidised at 63% with the potential of a third party funder if a block of land is opened for housing.

- The District Mayor noted that even where it is at in the budget now is not where council has indicated it will be in previous plans. When it was first entered it was only a \$5 million project and that it is something that will fail to be delivered if it continues to be deferred.
- Councillor Jones noted there would be further discussions preliminary to this as it will not go ahead if funding is not received. He noted it hardly impacts the loan limits in years 4, 5 and 6 so to say council cannot afford it is rubbish.
- Councillor Hall supported retaining this project. She urged councillors to consider what Stratford will be like in 10 years or 15 years, what the community will be like and how we will want to connect our communities. This project is a key to the success of our community.

The Acting Community Development Manager left the meeting at 4.54pm.

- Councillor Jones suggested reducing the budget for the solar panel batteries. This has a high OPEX and high capital cost and he felt council was borrowing for something that has not had a business case presented.
- The District Mayor noted the budget was allocated in 2027/28 and therefore would allow the council at the time to discuss and review it then.
- Councillor Hall asked if would be a better understanding of the OPEX by then? Mr Hanne noted the sustainability strategy will have a list of projects and this is a placeholder to indicate that council are planning on doing work in the sustainability space. Councillor Boyde noted the sustainability strategy was a key component of this and he was happy to leave the figures in there but also to push them out further.

The Corporate Accountant left the meeting at 4.56pm.

Recommendation

THAT the updated LTP Capital Projects list be adopted.

BOYDE/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
CL/24/14

6.3 **Taranaki Solid Waste Joint Committee – Thursday 9 November 2023**
 Page 87

Recommendation

THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Taranaki Solid Waste Joint Committee held on Thursday 9 November 2023 be received.

VOLZKE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/24/15

The Deputy Mayor noted that the discussions are continuing around the regional composting facility and that she was proud to see the regional waste minimisation officer report highlighting how well Stratford is doing compared to its neighbours.

6.4 **Regional Transport Committee – Thursday 7 December 2023**
Page 90

Recommendation

THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Regional Transport Committee held on Thursday 9 December 2023 be received.

VOLZKE/McKAY
Carried
CL/24/16

7. **District Mayor's Report**
D24/4742 Page 95

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/24/17

2. THAT Jack Whitika be appointed to the Sport New Zealand Rural Travel Fund Committee until the end of this triennium (October 2025).

VOLZKE/McKAY
Carried
CL/24/18

The District Mayor noted the significance of the King's Theatre being given Heritage 1 status. This is a true acknowledgement of its significance to the community.

8. Decision Report – Proposed Road Closures for Mangaotuku Road and Junction Road for a car club event 23/24 March 2024

D24/1084 Page 113

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD
Carried
CL/24/19

2. THAT pursuant to Section 342 (1) (b) in accordance with Schedule 10 clause 11(e) of the Local Government Act 1974, approval is hereby given that the Stratford District Council closes:

- Mangaotuku Road from Dog Trial Corner (RP 3.2) to the intersection of SH43 (RP0.08) on Saturday 23 March between the hours of 7.30am – 5.30pm, and;
- Junction Road from 551 Junction Road (RP5.4) to the intersection with Tawhiwhi Road (RP0.8) on Sunday 24 March between the hours of 7.30am-5.30pm.

The closure is to enable the South Taranaki Car Club to host a 2 day national hill climb motorsport event.

BECK/BOYDE
Carried
CL/24/20

Recommended Reason

In order for the South Taranaki Car Club to host a hill climb motorsport event, as part of the National Goldstar Hillclimb Championship, it is necessary to close both Mangaotuku Road and Junction Road for safety reasons for the participants and for any spectators. The proposed road closure requires formal endorsement by a Council resolution. The organisers expect up to 40 entrants from across New Zealand to attend.

9. Decision Report – Approve Draft Financial Budgets for Long Term Plan 2024-34

D24/4405 Page 132

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/JONES
Carried
CL/24/21

Recommended Reason

To progress the development of the Long Term Plan 2024-34.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified the 13% had been a self imposed target.

Section 4.3 of the Decision Report

Points noted in discussion:

- Councillor Hall noted the figures provided around the pool depreciation made her quite concerned about only funding 10% of the depreciation for the swimming pool given that the current 55% was less than what the facility was costing in CAPEX and loan repayments already. She felt this was creating a hole for further years.

- It was clarified that section 4.3 was summarising the feedback and suggestions made by councillors and noted what had actually been done. Section 4.4 had additional savings and section 7 contained the additional options that had not yet been considered.
- It was clarified that within these proposals the roading reserve balance would be back to a zero balance at the end of Year 2.
- Councillor Watt noted his discomfort in using the Financial Contributions Reserve to fund the subdivision as developers have put the money into this to be used for parks and reserves. Mr Hanne clarified that this was effectively internal borrowing and that the section sales would repay the reserve which is largely dormant. Councillor Boyde supported his concerns but did not want to see the subdivision rate funded.
- Councillor Hall appreciated the desire to cut costs but the proposal to only grant fund community events concerned her as they are key to the outcomes council are trying to achieve. This department runs on an oily rag and they do the best they can with grant funding. Councillor Harris would like to see this fund remain as it is as there was a high chance it could all be grant funded and because there was still the opportunity for the community to provide feedback on where they could see a reduction in levels of service. Councillor Dudley agreed but also noted the suggestion to hold these events biennially.
- The Deputy Mayor noted that retaining this budget indicates to the community that council wants to see these events go ahead, but if grant funding is not achieved then it will deliver a lesser event if need be. In tough financial times it is important to provide access to leisure activities for the community.

Section 4.4 of the Decision Report

Points noted in discussion:

- The Deputy Mayor noted her concern that reducing the contribution to the water ready response budget as the reserve is already depleted. She felt the budget should remain as it was so that it was not depleting any further if it is required. Councillor Hall agreed.
- Councillor Harris requested that the unsubsidised roading expenditure remain as it was as these activities were associated with street cleaning and rural road frontages which are a health and safety and fire risk. It doesn't need to be spent but it is available if required. The District Mayor agreed due to the number of complaints he receives regarding street cleaning and urban frontages.
- It was agreed not to amend either of these budgets.

The meeting adjourned at 5.26pm and reconvened at 5.36pm. The two members of the public left the meeting at the adjournment.

Section 7 of the Decision Report (Option 1)

Points noted in discussion:

- Pool depreciation to remain at 55%.
- Sponsorship revenue – make note for officers to actively pursue funding.
- Cyber Prevention (\$15,000 in budget). Remove but provide further information on what is being proactively done for this to the Audit and Risk Committee if requested.
- District Plan – Mr Hanne noted that there was a risk of the neighbouring councils requiring Stratford to be part of a project which would create an overspend but he felt this was justifiable given the past rating for this activity.
- Civic Functions
 - Councillor Sandford noted he was comfortable holding the Mayoral Reception biennially, however he believed the new homeowners acknowledgement was important and suggested a lower level event with councillors serving drinks and food.
 - The Deputy Mayor supported moving this to a biennial event for both homeowners and community representatives as she acknowledged the value in connecting the homeowners to community group leaders. She felt a letter could be sent to new homeowners annually noting the year the event would be held as well.
 - Councillor Hall noted that renters were also active members of the community and engaging with them would also be valuable.
 - The Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant noted that less than 20% of the new homeowners, who were invited to the 2023 mayoral reception, had attended the event.
 - Agreed to change to biennial. The operational elements of the event will be undertaken by officers.

- Communications
 - It was clarified that moving from to a half page weekly advert would not attract the same savings. The maximum savings would be moving to fortnightly editions however if a reduction in communications is approved then officers will work with the provider to maximise the savings.
 - Council has an obligation to publicly notify certain things which means it could not move to just one of media such as social media.
- Grants/Contributions

Pioneer Village (\$5,000)

- Councillor Sandford noted council had historically had a community grants pool which allocated funding to community organisations, however council had decide it was not fair to give away ratepayer money in this form. He noted Pioneer Village had never come to council with their hand out and put in significant volunteer hours. He felt the contribution from council was important to show other funders that council supports this important part of the community.
- To remain.

Central Taranaki Safe Community Trust (\$15,000)

- The District Mayor noted that one of the functions of this trust was that they provided things for the community that no one else does which would possibly fall back on council if they didn't exist.
- To remain.

Stratford Business Association (SBA) (0.5 FTE/\$40,000 per annum)

- Councillor Boyde noted this contribution was a concern for him as the review of this had not been completed. Mr Hanne clarified that the proposed memorandum of understanding between the association and council had been paused due to the section 17a review and the request to do a full review of the economic development activity. There is budget in Year 1 to complete this review and will be the task of the Community and Economic Development Manager when appointed to the role. Councillor Boyde felt it needed to remain in the budget until the review was complete.
- The District Mayor noted this contribution was there to provide administrative support. Without this support the association will need to rely on its own funds (which they don't have) or volunteers. Events such as AmeriCARna and the Christmas Parade take a considerable amount of organising on behalf of the SBA and he suggested these may not occur without the support from council, or council would be looked at to provide them. He did not see them as being responsible for economic development as the association was more about marketing, promotional activities and events.
- The Deputy Mayor noted this contribution had been brought up time and time again. She noted this could be the opportunity to propose removing council's support to see the community feedback given there are events that would be at jeopardy of not being delivered. It would also give the association the chance to come back and say they did not have the capacity to hire their own secretary or create a volunteer position. She also did not think it fit with economic development and this was being used as a mechanism to cease funding. Mr Hanne noted if it was not economic development then he would struggle to see where it would fit in the four well-beings.
- Councillor Hall noted council did not have a community grants pool but has key relationships with groups. These are relationships where they are providing a community need that council is otherwise unable to do. These are relationships that have been fostered for a very long time and while she acknowledged these decisions needed to be made she felt better thinking about how it is done was needed.
- The District Mayor noted restrictions on the support provided could be made, such as for events but not day to day administration work. Mr Hanne acknowledged there have been comments that the community cannot visually determine if an event is a SBA or council event.
- Councillor Sandford felt the association has lost its way. In the past there was a lot of main street promotions to shop in town and the romeo awards all of which would not have happened without the support of council staff. He noted they did not report back to council directly. He felt that they needed to be woken up with a shock and suggested removing the funding.
- Councillor Erwood noted his concern on a recommendation to remove the funding. He felt this would send the wrong message. Council wants to encourage businesses and he felt this was

going out with a negative connotation. He did not think an informed decision could be made without the review. He also noted that external funders had already committed funding to events that may not happen if this support was pulled.

- It was agreed to include this in Year 1 only.

Sport Taranaki (\$10,000)

- To remain.

Venture Taranaki (\$145,000)

- The District Mayor strongly recommended not removing this altogether. There is a lot of government funding available dependent on a regional approach. This would have significant impacts on our neighbouring councils if it was not a truly regional organisation.
- It was noted the agreements are three yearly.
- The District Mayor noted that as the discussions around economic development have only just begun, this budget could be included for the first three years of the LTP to be reviewed at a later time.
- Councillor Boyde noted that two years ago he would have supported dropping the contribution considerably, however he has seen some real value in the last couple of years. They have realigned themselves and are working with councils better. He struggled with the amount but supported leaving money in the budget for it.
- It was clarified that requests for funding to help access external funding would be separate from this budget.
- The Deputy Mayor supported continuing to review this following comments around how many people are actually accessing their clinics from Stratford. She suggested more accountability to be able to signal that council may look to reduce some of those services.
- Councillor Erwood noted he could not see the value in this and would like to see the amount reduced.
- To remain.

Percy Thomson Trust (\$50,000)

- It was noted that the Statement of Intent would be presented at the next Policy and Services Committee which will enlighten council on the trust's financial status. The trust is also currently reviewing its position as a council controlled organisation and there are further discussions to held.
- Councillor Hall felt this should remain until the conversations of what the trust looks like from their perspective are held. Removing this contribution risks fracturing a relationship. Councillor Boyde agreed but noted he would like to see this only in Year 1. With a million dollars in investments he questioned the annual contribution of \$50,000.
- To remain.

Te Matatini (\$20,000)

- It was clarified this was an allocation of \$20,000 for a one off payment to support his event. Participants will be staying and practicing throughout the region with event based at the Bowl of Brooklands.
- Councillor Tongaawhikau noted that Te Matatini was the Olympics of kapa haka. One group of 40 plus come with multiple supporters and there will be 60 groups. Overseas visitors come to the event as well. Marae, motels, hotels will be booked up. He felt \$20,000 was an investment into something the entire nation gets behind. There will be 80,000 – 100,000 people needing to be housed and fed. The businesses and the community will reap the benefits.

Councillor Dudley left the meeting at 6.16pm.

- Councillor Hall noted that the economic impact for our area, Taranaki and Stratford, is going to significant. This is five times the economic impact that WOMAD brings to the region. The impact this will have for our iwi, hapu and the cultural impact for the community will be significant and providing a grant like this shows our commitment to our community. The Deputy Mayor agreed and noted that she supported both cash and in-kind support as she saw nothing but positivity from this.

- Councillor Sandford noted his concern that council cannot afford to give out ratepayers money like this as it will be a very narrow group who will benefit from this such as restaurants, motel owners and supermarkets. He would support in-kind support but not a cash contribution.
- Councillor Harris agreed with the concept of supporting this event but agreed she would prefer it to be in-kind such as hall hire and using our communications. Mr Hanne noted a report can be brought back with in-kind support options when officers know what will be required.
- Councillor Watt asked for clarification if any of these events will be held in Stratford? Ms Whareaitu noted that competition takes place at the Bowl of Brooklands, however the local marae is already booked for a team to stay at. She noted the teams were made up of 40 people plus support and the majority of marae are in South Taranaki so there will also be through traffic impacting Stratford. It would be about getting the town activated and participating in the event. Councillor Tongaawhikau noted that there will be involvement with schools and that any money and resource that comes back to the community will be good for everyone. Councillor Watt noted his concern that cash contribution would not bring any more benefit than in-kind support.
- The Deputy Mayor noted the message that would be sent without a cash contribution, this would be that Stratford was happy to take the financial benefits from this event but was not happy to invest a very small portion of what is likely to be the benefits. What message would this send to the community? The cultural impact and economic development impact will be significant and if council was not going to invest in something that will benefit its businesses, then it should not be investing in economic development at all.
- The District Mayor noted that culture was one of the four well-beings. This was last held in Taranaki over 30 years ago and will not present itself again in our lifetimes. There is a cultural and social benefit from this and he would be supporting the inclusion in the budget.

Recommendation

THAT the \$20,000 cash contribution to Te Matatini be included in the budget for Year 1.

McKAY/HALL

Carried

7 for

CL/24/22

Hockey Turf Reserve (\$10,000)

- Councillor Boyde removed himself from the table during this discussion.
- It was clarified that the land was owned by the council but the turf was owned and maintained by the Turf Trust. Council makes no contribution to the turf that is currently there.
- It was clarified that council does not maintain other sports grounds other than the grass. It does not maintain the cricket wicket or supply the rugby goals.
- The Deputy Mayor this was different to other sport grounds and brings cool events to the district. If it was lost there would be a detrimental impact on the community.
- Councillor Sandford noted that there had just been 21 teams from around New Zealand here for a tournament last weekend. There have been 37 international hockey matches played here and two Oceania Cups. The last international event was held three years ago.
- Councillor Beck supported this contribution as he saw more positives than negatives.
- Councillor Harris supported this contribution remaining and noted that when Victoria Park had been out of action rugby had used the turf for soft training.
- To remain.

Positive Ageing Group (\$7,500)

- This was budget to run two forums per year plus the International Day of the Older Person.
- To remain.

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
 - Ms Whareaitu noted there was an opportunity to save \$10,000 per annum if the survey was delivered via email. However this will impact the split in the community. Moving to every second year would impact council's KPIs.
 - Councillor Hall noted her support to continue to outsource this service but with a view to provide via email.
 - It was clarified there would be no savings by changing the frequency of the survey.
 - Reduce budget to \$18,000 and move to providing the survey via email.
- Library/Information Centre
 - The Team Leader – Library and Visitor Information noted keeping the AA closed on Saturdays had had no impact on users and the Stratford was a real outlier for offering the service on Saturday as long as it has.
 - It was noted the average people in on a normal day was 270, and was around 100 on a Saturday so was a similar number to weekdays.
 - The Deputy Mayor supported closing the AA desk on Saturdays but was not supportive of closing the whole facility as the library is a really important centre piece of the community and creates a level playing field for everyone – especially in financially difficult times. Councillor Boyde agreed noting the planned developments for Prospero Place and the library being a centre point.
 - Councillor Hall noted she was interested to see the feedback received on this as there will be people who work Monday to Friday who simply cannot access the services.
 - Councillor Sandford noted it was important to look at saving money and nothing had been saved yet. He felt people would survive without the library being open on Saturdays.

Recommendation

THAT the AA Desk be closed on Saturdays.

McKAY/BOYDE
Carried
1 against
CL/24/23

Recommendation

THAT the full Library Facility close on Saturdays.

SANDFORD/ERWOOD
Lost
3 for
CL/24/24

- Book Purchases
 - Mrs Roper noted that the benchmark for this is about \$6.06 per capita. Stratford currently spends \$4.96 per capita. Book issue are still rising every year and the target for book loans per capita is 6 per person with Stratford sitting at 6.2.
 - To remain.

The Communications Advisor left the meeting at 6.47pm.

- Aerodrome – reduce level of reporting via Aim system.
 - It was clarified that the voice recordings are still taken and can be accessed if required but it will cost extra.
 - It was agreed to remove.

- Draft Budgets
 - The District Mayor noted a third scenario for the sample rates had been presented, it was important to think about how this is communicated to the community to show how this impacts properties. Mrs Radich clarified that how this is presented to the community will be brought to the February Policy and Services Committee.
 - Mrs Radich clarified that this was the last time to make any changes to the financials, however there may be further amendments after it has been presented to the auditors. Following the audit it will be presented to council one more time before being released for consultation.
 - Councillor Hall noted her concern that council was setting itself up to fail from the start with the 110% debt ratio. It was clarified that the 110% debt ratio goal and 13% rates cap were made as guidance/target figures, these will be discussed with the financial strategy at the Policy and Services Committee meeting.
 - Councillor Beck noted that council was about to approve the budgets that were not at the 13% cap. It was clarified that the 13% had been provided as a guide and once the budgets are approved the financial strategy can be finalised and brought to the Policy and Services Committee for approval. Mr Hanne further clarified that if the 13% cap was confirmed at this point then council was still able to breach the limit as long as the breach is formally acknowledged.

Recommendations

2. THAT the draft financial budgets for the Long Term Plan 2024-34 be approved, after consideration of further options to reduce rates in 7.4 of this report.
3. THAT the approved draft financial budgets, with the above amendments, be included in the Long Term Plan 2024-34 and associated documents, including the Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy and Consultation Document.

McKAY/VOLZKE
Carried
CL/24/25

Recommended Reason

To progress the development of the Long Term Plan 2024-34.

The Deputy Mayor noted this had been a very long process. Nobody wanted to see a double digit figure but she felt more comfortable this time as council can go to the community and say they have gone through the budgets line by line. She noted her appreciation to the council officers for the efforts they have gone to for this process.

10. Decision Report – Amend Treasury Management Policy

D24/4714 Page 151

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/24/26

Recommendation

THAT the Net Debt to Revenue ratio be increased to 120%

HALL/BOYDE
Withdrawn
CL/24/27

Points noted in discussion:

- Councillor Hall noted council had tried really hard to get to the 110% ratio but suggested the amendment meant council would not be in breach of the policy for a number of years.
- Councillor Beck noted that if the ratio was 115% then council would only be breaching the policy in one year. He suggested it be set at 115%.
- Councillor Hall and Councillor Boyde withdrew the resolution to more to 120%.

Recommendation

THAT the Net Debt to Revenue ratio be increased to 115%

BECK/BOYDE
Carried
CL/24/28

Recommendations

2. THAT the Treasury Management Policy be amended as highlighted in the track changes in **Appendix 1** of this report.

HARRIS/McKAY
Carried
CL/24/29

Recommended Reason

To ensure the policy is fit for purpose for the next ten years of the Long Term Plan 2024-34.

Points noted in discussion:

- It was requested and approved to amend the policy to note the requirement of elected member approval, on a case by case basis, for borrowing for renewals and replacements if the reserves are insufficient.
- The Deputy Mayor noted the debt repayment schedule amendment allowed for a longer repayment period and questioned how councillors would have visibility of this. Mrs Radich clarified that budgets would be kept at 25 years but this would allow councillors to stretch out a repayment term if they requested it, it would only be done with specific council approval.
- It was clarified that council contributes to being part of LGFA and also earns interest from this membership.

11. Public Forum Response

It was noted the s public forum speaker had rescheduled to 12 March 2024.

12. Questions

There were no questions.

13. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 164

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 7.14pm

N C Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 12th day of March 2024.

N C Volzke
District Mayor