

Western Bay of Plenty District Council

Minutes of Meeting No. RUR13 of the Rural Committee held on 23 July 2019 in the Council Chamber, Barkes Corner, Tauranga commencing at 2.30am

Present

Councillor K Marsh (Chairperson), and Councillors M Dean, P Mackay, D Marshall, M Murray-Benge, J Palmer, J Scrimgeour, D Thwaites, M Williams, and His Worship the Mayor G J Webber

In Attendance

M Taris (Chief Executive Officer), G Allis (Deputy Chief Executive), R Davie (Group Manager Policy, Planning and Regulatory Services), P Martelli (Resource Management Manager), J Rickard (Senior Policy Analyst), G Payne (Strategic Advisor), S Stewart (Policy Analyst), P Hennessey (Communications Director), and B Clarke (Senior Governance Advisor)

Others

7 members of the public and others as named in the minutes.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dally and Lally, and an apology for lateness was received from His Worship the Mayor who was on other Council business.

Resolved: Mackay / Thwaites

THAT the apologies for absence from Councillors Dally and Lally, and the apology for lateness from His Worship the Mayor be accepted.

Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded of the need to be vigilant and to stand aside from decision making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected representative and any private or other external interest that they may have.

Members were advised that if they had an interest (actual, potential, perceived, pecuniary or non pecuniary interest) in any item on the agenda, then they must declare this interest and refrain from discussing or voting on the item and are advised to withdraw from the meeting table for the item (as per the Local Authorities (Members' Interest) Act 1968).

There were no declarations of interest declared by any Members in relation to any items on the agenda.

Public Forum

Resolved: Marsh / Dean

THAT the meeting adjourn for the purpose of holding a public forum.

A Mark Mayston, General Manager of Bruntwood Farms; Executive of NZ Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated; and member of the Kiwifruit Industry Advisory Council, addressed the Committee and outlined concerns relating to the following:

- Seasonal worker accommodation was now a massive issue for the kiwifruit and avocado growing industry, and had become urgent.
- The Post Harvest Zone was currently limited to 75 people for pack house accommodation. There were expectations within the industry that Council would increase the number to 200 people, as a permitted activity.

B Mark Hume, Managing Director of Hume Pack-n-Cool Limited, addressed the Committee and outlined concerns relating to the following:

- This was a huge industry and was not limited to post harvest.
- There were issues that needed to be addressed and could not wait for two years, if that was the timeline for decision making.
- His company needed to start ordering buildings for accommodation for seasonal workers within the next six weeks.
- He had applied for a consent for building two months ago, but was still waiting for the outcome.
- He planned to have 125 units for the season next year, and to build up to 200 units, however, these numbers would only accommodate some of a much bigger number of people that were coming.
- Council, rather than central government, was viewed as the appropriate authority to come to in relation to people in the rural area.
- People who were sleeping rough elsewhere, could be accommodated and be in a better situation.
- This issue had been under discussion for at least four years. It needed to be addressed as soon as possible, as currently there was no solution for this post harvest season.

To provide clarification for speakers, staff responded to questions as follows:

- The seasonal worker accommodation topic was not included in the Plan Change report being considered by the Policy Committee at a meeting the following day.
- Council was aware of feedback from the industry. Work was still being progressed in relation to rules for seasonal worker accommodation.
- No decision had yet been made by Council, and due to the pre-election period, there would not be sufficient time to complete the work and report back to Council prior to August 2019.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Resolved: Marsh / Dean

THAT standing orders be temporarily suspended for the purpose of allowing the Committee to hold a discussion on the topic of Post Harvest Zones and rules for seasonal worker accommodation.

2.45pm Mayor Webber entered the meeting.

Following discussion, it was noted that those who wanted to, could still apply for consents for accommodation. A number had done that already, or were in the process of doing so. Council was concerned about the impacts on the District's Infrastructure and must consider that for any review. Staff had been instructed to continue the work on seasonal worker accommodation, and to provide a report to the new Council following the Local Government election.

Resolved: Murray-Benge / Scrimgeour

THAT the meeting be reconvened in formal session at 9.55 am.

RUR13.1 Stakeholder Presentation - Urban Form and Transport Initiative

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced Robert Brodnax, Principal Environmentalist of Beca, and Director of the Urban Form and Transport Initiative. Mr Brodnax spoke to PowerPoint Presentation (A) titled 'Telling Transport Investment Stories'.

Scope of Presentation

- There were two paths to government investment
 - the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF), and
 - the annual Crown budget process;
- What other councils had done;

- How the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) fitted in to SmartGrowth;
- UFTI initiatives;
- UFTI following the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) and H2A approach. Mr Brodnax responded to questions as follows:
- The NLTF was currently oversubscribed, but there was still hope, as some projects slowed, or came in under budget.
- Reiterated the importance of having projects ready to present, and packaged in a way that supported the government agenda.
- There was work to be done on the transport front, particularly around modal shift.
- It was important to ensure that those who advised the government were made aware that 'SmartGrowth UFTI' was following the ATAP and H2A approach, preparing a foundation report, mindful of the language of the strategic business case, and the public story-telling that was needing to be done.
- UFTI was working in a strategic way, its purpose was to get information on the table with the appropriate people in the room.
- A single report did not provide the whole context. SmartGrowth was working on this.
- There was a need to support land use patterns. The District was under pressure.
- NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) were bound by the Crown's borrowing policy.
- In terms of relationship with census figures, the government must have hard data from a proven source.
- Every major capital project that NZTA considered was assessed to see whether toll funding was viable for part of the proposed route. Tolls played a part but were not a major stream of revenue. At times they were a factor that allowed a project to progress, but it was about management of cash flow.
- The impact of a growth in the number of seasonal workers in the District would have an impact on the work they did.
- In terms of the ability to buy priority through co-funding, that was a conversation to be had, depending on the cost of the project and the need. The government was focused on well being.

The Deputy Chief Executive thanked the guest speaker for providing an insightful update.

Resolved: Webber / Mackay

THAT the report from the Deputy Chief Executive dated 9 July 2019, and the presentation from the Director of the Urban Form and Transport Initiative / Beca on 23 July 2019 be received.

Concluding Statement from the Chairperson

The Chairperson noted that this was the final Rural Committee meeting of the triennium, and that there had been many interesting debates over the past three years, which he had enjoying Chairing. He expressed his appreciation to Committee Members, Community Board Members who had attended meetings, and staff.

The meeting concluded at 3.49pm.

RUR13