

# Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum

## Open Minutes

- Commencing:** Friday 18 June 2021, 9.30 am
- Venue:** Taupō District Council Chambers, Level 1, 107 Heuheu Street, Taupō. (Upstairs above Jetts Fitness)
- Chairperson:** Deputy Mayor Christine Rankin - Taupō District Council (for this meeting)
- Members:** Mayor Steve Chadwick - Rotorua Lakes Council  
Mayor Judy Turner - Whakatāne District Council  
Chairman Doug Leeder - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana  
Mayor Garry Webber - Western Bay of Plenty District Council  
Mayor Lyn Riesterer - Ōpōtiki District Council  
Mayor Malcolm Campbell - Kawerau District Council
- In Attendance:** Geoff Williams - Chief Executive Rotorua Lakes Council; Miriam Taris - Chief Executive Western Bay of Plenty District Council; Stephanie O’Sullivan - Chief Executive Whakatāne District Council (via Zoom); Fiona McTavish - Chief Executive Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana; Russell George - Chief Executive Kawerau District Council, Julie Gardyne - Deputy Chief Executive Taupō District Council
- Chief Executive Nigel Bickle - Hastings District Council (presenting); Ernst Zollner - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (attending via Zoom); Darren Toy - Kainga Ora (attending); Two Ministerial Advisors on behalf of Hon Dr Megan Woods (attending via Zoom); Dominic Lepa (attending via Zoom) for Ezra Schuster - Public Service Lead, Ministry of Education, Tone Nerdrum Smith - Committee Advisor Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana
- Apologies:** Commission Chair Anne Tolley and Marty Grenfell - Chief Executive - Tauranga City Council; Aileen Lawrie - Chief Executive - Ōpōtiki District Council, Mayor David Trewavas - Taupō District Council, Gareth Green - Chief Executive - Taupō District Council

The recording of this meeting can be accessed via this link [https://youtu.be/10WTh\\_OEdfg](https://youtu.be/10WTh_OEdfg)

## 1. Opening Statement

An opening statement and welcome was provided by Deputy Mayor Christine Rankin - Taupō District Council, acknowledging those present, both at the venue and via Zoom.

Advised that the meeting was being recorded and that the recording would be uploaded to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana's website after the meeting.

Noted the strength and challenges currently facing Taupō, including the changes in international tourism due to Covid-19; increasing property costs and the lack of housing overall. However, Taupō had positioned itself well for domestic tourism, which was proving successful.

Some of the key projects currently underway in Taupō were:

- Transformation of the town centre (Shovel Ready Project)
- Destination playground development
- Restructure of the organisational arm of Taupō District Council.

## 2. Apologies

### Resolved

**That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:**

- 1 **Accepts the apologies from Commission Chair Anne Tolley and Marty Grenfell - Chief Executive - Tauranga City Council; Aileen Lawrie - Chief Executive - Ōpōtiki District Council, Mayor David Trewavas - Taupō District Council, Gareth Green - Chief Executive - Taupō District Council tendered at the meeting.**

**Webber/Turner  
CARRIED**

## 3. Items not on the Agenda

Mayor Chadwick requested that the following items be added to the Agenda for discussion at the end of the meeting:

- Wider Regional Facilities / Rail & Racecourse.

## 4. Minutes

### Minutes to be Confirmed

#### 4.1 Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum Minutes - 12 March 2021

### Resolved

**That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:**

- 1 **Confirms the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum Minutes - 12 March 2021 as a true and correct record, subject to the following amendments:**
  - **In Attendance: Russell George incorrectly listed as Chief Executive Rotorua Lakes Council, change to Kawerau District Council.**

- **Apologies: Mayor Chadwick was present the entire meeting (no partial absence).**

**Chadwick/Riesterer  
CARRIED**

## **5. Presentations**

### **5.1 Hastings District Council - Housing Action Plan Presentation**

*Presentation Hastings District Council - Housing Action Plan PDF - Mayoral Forum  
18 June 2021: Objective ID A3830947 [⇒](#)*

Presented by: Chief Executive Nigel Bickle – Hastings District Council.

#### **Key Points:**

- The current market driven economy, based on the highest return possible, did not support affordable housing
- Emphasized the importance of housing developments being suitable for future living and that they did not exacerbate existing issues
- Utilising rates as the only available funding lever did not work well in housing provision scenarios; alternative levers needed to be pursued
- A place-based entity for development of housing at a community level was being explored
- Long-term services and planning direction was currently not well defined in the Housing First model
- Papakāinga housing in Hastings was well established as its District Plan supported this style of housing, with the challenge being long term, sustainable funding streams
- There were significant social and economic disparities in the district
- Supply and demand was not aligned and the 500+ new builds in the district this year; would need to continue annually over the next ten years to cover the existing housing gap
- There was a significant shortage of builders nationwide which made development challenging
- Social procurement was actively applied, e.g. using local resources; encouraging inclusion of local apprentices etc.
- Different thinking in building practices was needed to make a genuine difference to the current supply issues, in particular in the timber industry
- Invited all to attend the housing open day in Hastings on Friday 6 August 2021.

#### **Key Points - Members:**

- Recognised the success achieved through the strong partnership between Council, Central Government and Iwi
- Important to recognise housing initiatives as return on investment, rather than a cost to Council
- Contestable funding was being allocated to Māori Housing by Central Government
- Housing initiatives such as this were in their nature the 'bottom of the cliff' interventions and the underlying causes needed to be addressed at a nationwide scale.

10.35am – The meeting **adjourned**.

10.55am – The meeting **reconvened**.

## 6. Verbal Updates

### 6.1 Housing: A Verbal Update by Each Mayor/Chair

#### Kawerau District Council – Mayor Campbell

##### **Key Points:**

- High occurrence of homelessness; 3-4 families per house; many living in garages
- The rapidly increasing property values made it challenging for first home buyers to enter the housing market
- Council had purchased the abandoned Talley site and created 100 sections for new builds
- New 29 unit retirement village was currently under construction. These units were sought after by local residents seeking to downsize from their residential properties
- Redundant soccer field of 5ha was being rezoned for housing purposes
- Noted that land was becoming scarce for new builds
- Kawerau Mill closure had meant a loss of 160 jobs
- Of the two motels in Kawerau, one was being used for social housing purposes.

#### Ōpōtiki District Council – Mayor Riesterer

##### **Key Points:**

- A significant number of people were living in unconsented facilities, i.e. cars/garages/sheds
- Had been promised some Kainga Ora housing over the next 18 months, and work undertaken by Council indicated an opportunity for infill development that could create approximately 220 new dwellings
- Had submitted a Housing Acceleration Fund application to enable development of surrounding, high-lying areas currently on septic tanks, in a partnership arrangement between Council and Whakatōhea Iwi
- By developing housing on higher ground/hills, requirements for climate change mitigation was significantly less than in lower-lying areas.

#### Rotorua Lakes Council – Mayor Chadwick

##### **Key Points:**

- Was the second Council to have a housing strategy approved by Central Government and noted the close partnership with Iwi
- Well supported by Government agencies in the emergency housing sector to ensure residents' safety and wellbeing when housed in motels
- Noted the general housing shortage, not limited to affordable/social housing

- Rotorua was a growth area and Council was now focusing on making greenfields available for residential development
- A co-operative approach between Central Government agencies, Local Government and iwi was generating positive outcomes
- Social wellbeing as an outcome should drive developments, rather than 'just' creating additional housing
- Recognised the increasing levels of complexity and costs in infrastructure investment, climate change mitigation etc.

#### Taupō District Council – Deputy Mayor Rankin

##### **Key Points:**

- Significant economic differences within the district
- Rezoning was not the main barrier to progressing developments, rather it was due to the increasing costs of the development itself
- Severe shortage of affordable housing both for rent and to own
- 1200 building consents had been issued in 2020, with the number of applications steadily increasing
- Noted the increase in property values and that the population growth in the area exceeded predictions
- A District Plan review was underway to ensure appropriate zoning was in place to accommodate growth through a number of housing options, e.g. papakāinga housing; pensioner housing etc.
- Concerned regarding the emerging issue of substandard housing being erected on Māori owned land where there was a lack of approved wastewater connections
- Recognised that there was no 'easy fix' to an increasing housing problem.

#### Western Bay of Plenty District – Mayor Webber

##### **Key Points:**

- Western Bay of Plenty was the fifth fastest growing area in New Zealand
- Land/property prices were increasing rapidly, and considered that Central Government intervention was required to achieve affordability
- District Plan changes meant temporary accommodation could be built on site at orchards for up to 200 seasonal workers
- Recognised generational unemployment as a significant issue in areas where industries were closing/down-sizing, e.g. the Norske Skog Mill in Kawerau, tourism ventures in Rotorua etc.
- Local and Central Government should apply all financial levers available to achieve positive outcomes
- Concerned regarding the protracted timeframes when councils were seeking to establish agreements with Kainga Ora in the establishment of affordable housing.

#### Whakatāne District Council – Mayor Turner

##### **Key Points:**

- Whakatāne had become a growth area over the last 18 months, which meant new and different interventions and initiatives were required
- Research indicated that one in ten college students did not know where they would sleep tonight; safe and reliable housing was a significant social issue

- There was a growing homeless population living in cars etc. who, for a number of reasons, were reluctant to interact with support services
- Growth indications estimated that up to 150 new dwellings per year would be required to meet demand
- Majority of current housing development were in the medium/high price range, rather than affordable
- Climate change mitigation was a significant consideration due to the coastal nature of the District
- Elder/social housing was challenging as councils were not recognised as accredited providers and accordingly not entitled to subsidies for repairs and maintenance. Council had as a result sold housing stock to accredited providers to ensure continued care for residents.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana - Chairman Leeder

**Key Points:**

- Noted that rather than providing housing, Regional Council's role was to address the consequences of housing issues/growth
- Main challenges in Western Bay of Plenty/Tauranga included integrating housing with public transport/carbon reduction requirements
- The lack of available land in Tauranga, and its topography, impacted on the opportunity for housing developments
- Prioritisation within the Regional Land Transport Plan was influenced by the National Land Transport Plan, and recent changes in Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency funding were causing concern.

## **6.2 Three Waters: Verbal Update by Miriam Taris - Chief Executive Western Bay of Plenty District Council**

**Key Points:**

- Noted that the announcement regarding the Water Services Entities was yet to be released
- Recognised the ability for local authorities to actively participate in the reform process, and the strong working relationship with Department of Internal Affairs (DIA)
- Noted that the Three Waters reforms, RMA reforms and Local Government reforms were all currently in progress
- DIA was in charge of communication and consultation with Iwi
- Independent reviews indicated that the data gathered through the Request for Information process should be further explored to create a better understanding of the range of issues that needed to be addressed
- Transfer of water services to the new entities was currently not compulsory
- Both debt and funding reserves held by local authorities in their water service activity areas would be transferred to the new entity, as would existing funding mechanisms, e.g. user pay systems.

## **6.3 Future of Local Government Workshop - Rotorua - 14 June 2021**

An opportunity to discuss the DIA organised Future of Local Government Workshop held in Rotorua on Monday 14 June 2021

**Key Points - Members:**

- The workshop had provided a forum for open, opportunity focussed discussion and the ideas generated would be distributed as part of the Local Government review
- Encouraged critical thinking around how Local Government had ended up in a position that required this review as well as the three waters reforms
- Access to sufficient funding was a recognised issue. Accordingly, the Local Government funding review that commenced in 2014 and had concluded that existing funding sources were adequate, had caused significant concern
- Recognised that not all local government entities had mismanaged their assets and that some authorities had invested significant funding to future proof their infrastructure. Conversely, other councils had kept rates/funding low, which meant assets were approaching end of life and associated debt was increasing
- There was a high level of complexity in transferring multiple-structured assets to a centralised entity
- The emerging partnership approach between central and local government should be fostered and form the basis for the way forward.

## **7. Reports**

### **Information Only**

#### **7.1 Correspondence: Hon Dr Woods and Chairman Leeder - Housing Solutions - 9 April 2021**

Noted the corresponded as included in the agenda.

#### **7.2 Climate Change Monitoring Report**

Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana provided an outline of the report as included in the agenda.

## **8. Consideration of Items not on the Agenda**

Mayor Chadwick – Rotorua Lakes Council provided a verbal update on the following new items:

### Wider Regional Facilities/ Rail & Racecourse

- UNISA’s focus tended to be on Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga
- Local Government Caucus had visited Rotorua Lakes Council and thoughts around a wider regional approach to include Waikato, in particular in the context of light rail connectivity to Auckland, had generated interest

- Had discussed the possible establishment of a racecourse in the wider region, which as a regional facility could benefit the region
- Important that both regional and sub-regional opportunities for economic development be pursued.

## **9. Upcoming Meetings**

Next Mayoral Forum to be held on Friday 15 October at Whakatāne District Council, commencing at 9.30am

## **10. Closing**

Deputy Mayor Rankin acknowledged the meeting attendees and their engagement and contribution.

**12.03 pm - the meeting closed.**

**CONFIRMED**

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**DEPUTY MAYOR CHRISTINE RANKIN  
TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL**