

Regional Council

Open Minutes

Commencing: Thursday 31 March 2022, 8.00am

Venue: via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)

Chairperson: Chairman Doug Leeder

Deputy Chairperson: Deputy Chairperson Jane Nees

Members: Cr Norm Bruning
Cr Bill Clark
Cr Stuart Crosby
Cr David Love
Cr Matemoana McDonald
Cr Stacey Rose
Cr Lyall Thurston
Cr Andrew von Dadelszen
Cr Te Taru White
Cr Kevin Winters

In Attendance: Fiona McTavish - Chief Executive, Mat Taylor - General Manager Corporate, Stephen Lamb - Environmental Strategy Manager, Chris Ingle - General Manager Integrated Catchments, Sarah Omundsen - General Manager Regulatory Services, Julie Bevan - Policy & Planning Manager, James Llewellyn - Transport & Urban Planning Manager, Zhivan Alach - Organisational Performance Manager, Mark Le Comte - Principal Advisor Finance, Kumaren Perumal - Chief Financial Officer, Tone Nerdrum Smith - Committee Advisor

Apologies: Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti and Cr Paula Thompson

Chairman's Opening Statement

Chairman Leeder advised that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded, and that the recording would be made available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council website following the meeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ep1N4hvWyUk>

1. Opening Karakia

A karakia was provided by Cr Te Taru White.

2. Apologies

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti and Cr Paula Thompson tendered at the meeting.**

**Leeder/Winters
CARRIED**

3. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

4. Reports

Decisions Required

4.1 Statements of Proposal for Changes to Policies

Presented by: Mark Le Comte – Principal Advisor Finance

Key Points:

- Provided an outline of the key substantial changes, including creating the ability to set targeted rates in the future for particular infrastructure projects
- Important to get the balance between private vs public benefit right in the user fees and charges policy
- Existing rates remission arrangements would be continued in the next financial year when Regional Council would invoice its own rates
- The enabling provisions for sustainable homes would allow for targeted rates to be a repayment mechanism for loans. The terms of any loan would be agreed in writing with the ratepayer
- Rates remission for multiple owned māori land being developed would be approved upfront, with Council working closely with the owners/developers to ensure there were clear terms and duration.

8.25am – Cr Love **entered** the meeting.

8.29am – Cr McDonald **entered** the meeting.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted that the targeted rating proposal was an enabling tool, rather than an intended targeted rate application
- It should be ‘optional’ to provide personal information to ensure it was not a compulsory requirement that would deter submitters from participating in the consultation process
- Important to apply caution to consent application charging regimes to ensure cumulative costs did not become excessive
- Queried if the Regional Infrastructure Targeted Rate Proposal was sufficiently specific to prevent it from being used in different ways than intended.

Items for Staff Follow Up:

- Consultation document: Clarify that the targeted rating proposal was an enabling tool and that the new targeted rates would not be set in 2022/23.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 **Receives the report, Statements of Proposal for Changes to Policies;**
- 2 **Approves the following Statements of Proposal and Draft Policies for public consultation:**
 - (a) **Revenue and Financing Policy;**
 - (b) **Fees and Charges Policy;**
 - (c) **Rates Remission Policy;**
 - (d) **Joining a Regional Shared Services Organisation; and**
- 3 **Delegates to the Chief Executive to make any minor editorial changes required to these Statements of Proposal.**
- 4 **Confirms the decision has a medium level of significance as determined by the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. Council has identified and assessed different options and considered community views as part of making the decision, in proportion to the level of significance.**

**Winters/White
CARRIED**

4.2 Toi EDA - Council Controlled Organisation Exemption

Presented by: Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive.

Key Points:

- Noted that Toi EDA reported to Council on a regular basis through the Strategy & Policy Committee
- The exemption had been approved by the Eastern Bay councils in the past and this was expected to occur again. The matter was considered to be of a procedural nature.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 **Receives the report, Toi EDA - Council Controlled Organisation Exemption.**
- 2 **Exempts Toi EDA from the provisions related to Council Controlled Organisations, as provided for under section 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 for a period of three years from March 2022 to March 2025.**
- 3 **Notes that Ōpōtiki, Whakatāne and Kawerau District Councils are undertaking an approval process to exempt Toi EDA from the CCO requirements.**

**Leeder/Crosby
CARRIED**

4.3 Recommendations from Public Transport Committee

Presentation - Free Bus Fares pdf - Council 31 March 2022: Objective ID A4068966

Presented by James Llewellyn – Transport & Urban Planning Manager, supported by Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive.

Key Points - Presentation:

- Free Bus Fares
- PTC Resolution
- Most Effective Patronage Impacts
- Mode Shift Initiatives
- Financial and Patronage Impact
- Key Challenges
- Recommendation.

Key Points:

- It was important to note that introducing free fares could mean the Waka Kotahi 50% fare subsidy may not be forthcoming as this relied on Council collecting revenue
- Applying a combination of the tools/levers available would traditionally provide the best results in increasing patronage and changing travel behaviour
- The introduction of free fares for school children had resulted in increased patronage. However, anecdotal evidence indicated that children who otherwise walked would take the bus if it was free, which did not reduce private vehicle use
- Immediate introduction of free fares, i.e. by 1 April, would only be possible if Bee Cards were not swiped which meant valuable travel data would not be collected
- Data would be collected for the three month period of 50% reduction in fares through use of the Bee Card/Regional Integrated Ticketing System
- Recognised the link between increased cost of private vehicle use and increased public transport patronage, however travel mode shift would only occur if the alternative options were both attractive and viable.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted the significant effort of staff to accommodate the 50% public transport subsidy announced by central government on 14 March
- Collecting data through the Bee Card was crucial as part of wider modeshift investments.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 Receives the report, Recommendations from Public Transport Committee;**
- 2 Rejects the recommendation from the Public Transport Committee meeting held on 17 March 2022 specific to the report, Chairperson's Report to: Recommend to Regional Council that staff investigate options for a full bus service incorporating free fares to improve patronage, and align with the government announcement of half price fares, as a trial for a period of three months; and instead adopts the following:**

That the Regional Council:

- 3 Implements Central Government half price scheme;**
- 4 Monitors patronage impact over the next three months;**
- 5 Does not extend the scheme to provide free fares;**
- 6 Awaits Regional Public Transport Plan and technical review of fare setting before any further changes.**

**von Dadelszen/Crosby
CARRIED**

5. Closing Karakia

A karakia was provided by Cr Te Taru White.

9.25 am - the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Chairman Doug Leeder
Chairperson, Regional Council