

Regional Council

Open Minutes - Annual Plan Deliberations

- Commencing:** Wednesday 18 May 2022, 9.30 am
- Venue:** Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street,
Tauranga and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)
- Chairperson:** Chairman Doug Leeder
- Deputy Chairperson:** Deputy Chairperson Jane Nees
- Members:** Cr Andrew von Dadelszen
Cr Matemoana McDonald
Cr David Love
Cr Norm Bruning
Cr Bill Clark
Cr Stuart Crosby
Cr Kevin Winters
Cr Lyall Thurston
Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti - via Zoom
Cr Stacey Rose - via Zoom
Cr Paula Thompson
Cr Te Taru White
- In Attendance:** Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Fiona McTavish - Chief Executive, Mat Taylor - General Manager Corporate, Namouta Poutasi - General Manager Strategy & Science, Sarah Omundsen - General Manager Regulatory Services, Chris Ingle - General Manager Integrated Catchments; Karen Aspey - Director, People & Leadership, Kataraina O'Brien - Director Strategic Engagement, Kumaren Perumal - Chief Financial Officer, Zhivan Alach - Organisational Performance Manager, James Llewellyn - Transport & Urban Planning Manager, Mark Le Comte - Principal Advisor Finance, Mereana Toroa - Finance Support Team Lead, Tone Nerdrum Smith - Committee Advisor
- External: Chimmyma Kiora Williams - Public Forum, Clifford Paxton - NZ Police, Jay Zmijewski - NZ Bus, Michelle Te Wharau - Waka Kotahi, Paul Mason - Tauranga City Council, Nic Johansson - Tauranga City Council
- Apologies:** None

1. Chairman's Opening Statement

Chairman Leeder advised those present in Chambers and via Zoom 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://youtu.be/JiFoHSDv4I>

2. Opening Karakia

A karakia was provided by Cr Thurston.

3. Karakia for Moana Boyd

Chairman Leeder recognised the recent passing of Regional Council's Senior Advisor Moana Boyd with a karakia.

4. Public Forum

4.1 Chimmyma Kiora Williams - Ex-Security Guard in Tauranga CBD

Key Points:

- Had previously been employed as a security guard at Tauranga City Council for a number of years, deployed at the Willow Street the service centre/bus stop
- Security work in the city was more in line with social work, rather than just security
- Interacted with rangatahi; vulnerable elderly; street people; public and tourists
- Worked closely with police and recognised how their resources were stretched
- There were constant issues and friction due to the different social groups gathering in the same area
- Support and understanding, rather than punishment, was needed for the younger members of the community; i.e. the social work aspect of the security job
- Recognised the impact of Covid on youth and their everyday life
- Genuine care was needed to be part of a community; not punishment and alienation
- Recognised that the contractual limitation on the security guards currently working at the bus stop meant that they were often unable to intervene
- Building rapport and trust could take a year or more.

In Response to Questions:

- Bus stops became a place to 'hang out' and create connections/a sense of community when this was otherwise missing in your life
- Youth mingled with older individuals at the bus stops, who were often a bad influence
- 'Quick fixes' might include training in how to physically and mentally project yourself as a security guard; introduction of body cameras etc
- Considered that the free fares had contributed to social issues as it enabled quick/free travel to trouble hotspots
- The core group was probably approximately 15 people, with others joining in from the periphery
- Trouble appeared to follow the bus routes, in particular with the really young ones
- Rangatahi were opportunistic, but would not push too far, i.e. did not expect them to force their way onto the bus if fees were reintroduced
- Not all adults at the bus stop were homeless, some were unemployed and with 'nothing' else to do they would spend their days at the bus stops
- Important that the agencies and people involved understood and met the need of the community

- Security guards needed to have the right skills, rather than necessarily being present in large numbers
- Youth needed a safe place where they could hang out, alternative to the bus stop
- With regards to Māori Wardens, its success relied on having the right people in the roles.

5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

6. Reports

Decisions Required

6.1 AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Overview of Annual Plan Deliberations Process

Presentation - Council Annual Plan 2022-23 pdf - 18 May 2022: Objective ID A4101572 [⇒](#)

Zhivan Alach – Organisational Performance Manager provided an outline of the Annual Plan 2022/23 process to date.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 **Receives the report, AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Overview of Annual Plan Deliberations Process.**

**Leeder/Love
CARRIED**

6.2 Improving Safety and Security of Bus Services

Namouta Poutasi - General Manager Strategy & Science introduced the item and the speakers in attendance from various agencies, as set out below.

Key Points

- Regional Council was here with partners to outline what was being done to improve the safety of bus users including:
 - increasing security at Willow Street and Farm Street;
 - working with partners to relocate the CBD interchange as quickly as possible;
 - seeking Council direction as to whether to reduce the hours of operation for the fare free trial for children; and
 - adding code of conduct notices to buses.

Key Points - Chairman Leeder:

- Welcomed the representatives from NZ Police, Tauranga City Council, Waka Kotahi and NZBus.
- Summarised the issues Council was required to consider and had the authority to address

- Noted the need to consider both short-term intervention and long term solutions.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted that Council's policy currently stipulated free fares for all children 18 years and younger at all times, i.e. 24/7 in Tauranga.

NZ Police - Clifford Paxton

Key Points:

- Recognised that he was there to speak with regards to free bus fares, however also acknowledged the increasing social/criminal issues at the bus stops
- Introduction of free bus fares had seen an increase in antisocial behaviour, both at the Farm Street, Mt Maunganui and Willow Street, Tauranga CBD bus stops
- Additional police resourcing in Willow Street had dispersed some of the issues there
- Free bus fares made it possible to move freely between various locations across the city and to disperse more easily when having caused trouble
- Considered that the free bus fares both encouraged and enabled antisocial behaviour
- The free bus fares were being used by youth for different purposes than what was intended, which was free transport to and from school.

Key Points - Members:

- Access to reliable public transport was identified by youth as an important component in their ability to work; access to education etc.
- Council had introduced free fares as a way to reduce traffic congestion; encourage alternative modes of transport and ease the financial pressure on families.

In Response to Questions:

- Antisocial behaviour peaked before and after school, however there was an overall increase across the region outside these times, combined with an increase in the seriousness of the offending
- Youth pre-arranged fights across the city and used the free fares to travel between hot spots
- Recognised the multitude of factors in play, all contributing to the current issues e.g. Covid preventing school attendance meant children on the fringes had stopped attending school all together
- 12-14 year old children hanging out at the bus stops without supervision was a serious concern
- Behaviour change took time and required supporting education; however the majority of people did comply once changes were introduced and notified
- Duty of care with regards to safety was a shared responsibility between parents, police, councils etc.
- Blue Light had a role in truancy in NZ, supported by a number of agencies, and addressing truancy was recognised as a nationwide priority.

NZBus - Jay Zmijewski

Key Points:

- Provided an outline of his background within public transport in Australia
- Had not experienced antisocial behaviour to the extent currently experienced in Tauranga
- Recognised, from personal experience as a bus driver, the significant impact when encountering aggression and intimidation, and the flow-on effects afterwards
- The current antisocial behaviour affected NZBus' ability to recruit and retain staff
- Vandalism on the buses was severe, and meant buses were out of circulation while being repaired
- Acknowledged the ongoing support by councils in providing increased security and monitoring
- Recognised the good intention behind the free fares, however considered limiting the free fares to before/after school would provide a short term solution towards addressing some of the issues currently occurring.

Key Points - Members:

- Queried if additional security measures could be introduced similar to that done overseas, e.g. protective cages for drivers, additional security presence on key routes etc.

In Response to Questions:

- Use of cages was not supported by drivers, however additional security wardens etc. could make a difference.

Tauranga City Council (TCC) - Nic Johansson and Paul Mason**Key Points:**

- Recognised that addressing the current safety issues went beyond infrastructure and security services
- Noted that the bus stop was being moved temporarily from Willow Street to Durham Street and the 'circuit breaker' opportunity this might provide
- Increased safety measures, such as lighting; CCTV cameras and breakout rooms for drivers were being provided
- Recognised the close working relationship between the two councils and police
- Plans were in place to provide additional training with the security guards in social engagement; introduction of youth/rangatahi workers etc.
- Noted the ongoing investment and commitment by TCC towards safety and security in the public transport service.

Key Points - Members:

- Concerned that it appeared TCC did not consider ongoing contribution towards security costs to be part of their responsibility
- Recognised that ultimately, the Tauranga rate payer funded this service through the targeted public transport rates

In Response to Questions:

- Provided an outline of the historical division of who funded which security services, i.e. TCC for the campus/BOPRC for the bus service

- TCC considered that providing security was an operational component of the bus service and accordingly fell within BOPRC's area of responsibility. However, until the matter of the free fares/related safety issues had been addressed, a cost-share arrangement between the two councils for additional security costs could be agreed to until a new solution had been implemented.

Waka Kotahi - Michelle Te Wharau

Key Points:

- Noted the positive and committed working relation between the partners
- Recognised Waka Kotahi's role as a funding partner and that additional security measures, when required, formed part of this.

Key Points - Chairman Leeder:

- Recognised the role of NZ Police as the lead agency in addressing antisocial/criminal behaviour related to the bus service
- Encouraged Commander Paxton to approach Council if support was required in approaching central government for additional resourcing.

Key Points - Namouta Poutasi

- Additional security measures, e.g. body cameras, would be discussed as part of Council's contract with the security firm.

Key Points - Members:

- Emphasized the need for the right fit of the security guards
- Noted that funding towards further security costs also needed to focus on education of the guards.

11.21am - The meeting **adjourned**.

11.40 am - The meeting **reconvened**.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 Receives the report, Improving Safety and Security of Bus Services.**
- 2 Approves the inclusion of additional Security Costs in the draft Annual Plan budget for 2022/23, to be funded through the Regional Fund Reserve;**
- 3 Notes the additional cost of bus services in 2022/23 relating to the temporary Tauranga CBD interchange of \$343,000, to be included in the Draft Annual Plan 2022/23 Budget;**
Amended Resolution 4
- 4 Approves the change to the free fare trial to morning: 7.00am to 9.00am; and afternoon: 3.00pm to 5.00pm, noting that this is expected to be implemented on 4 June 2022.**

Nees/Thompson

Amendment was **CARRIED** on a show of hand

Von Dadelszen/Crosby

The substantive motion was **PUT** and **CARRIED**

Minute Note: That the stated 7am-9am / 3pm-5pm times represent travel time to match normal school start / finish times, and that these may consequently alter depending on school specific timetables.

Additional Resolutions

That the Regional Council:

- 5 **Reviews the impact of the reduction of free fares for youth within three months and reports back to Council so that the change to free fares can be reconsidered;**
- 6 **Directs staff to provide funded Bee Cards to schools to enable assistance to be provided to families experiencing financial hardship as a result of the reduction in free fares;**
- 7 **Directs staff to initiate discussions with other agencies to investigate the societal causes that have led to the current issues and long term solutions for the public safety issues being experienced in Tauranga, with terms of reference to be approved jointly by BOPRC and the other agencies;**
- 8 **Develops a communication strategy as a matter of urgency to communicate the rationale behind the reduction in free fares;**
- 9 **Formally requests that Tauranga City Council reconsiders its position not to co-fund the security contract in the CBD on an ongoing basis.**

**Nees/Thompson
CARRIED**

6.3 AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Transport and Urban Planning Reprioritisation

Presented by Namouta Poutasi - General Manager Strategy & Science, James Llewellyn - Transport & Urban Planning Manager

In Response to Questions:

- The Bay of Plenty Transport Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) funding allocation was in response to Central Government's Emission Reduction Plan which created expectation and actions for local authorities
- The TERP would be brought back to Council for consideration and approval
- Noted that the free fare trial extensions in Rotorua and Whakatāne was for the 2022/23 financial year and that they would be monitored/reviewed through the Fare Review by the Public Transport Committee. Any changes would be presented to future Annual Plans/Long Term Plans for consideration.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted that there was significant investment and innovation taking place in the hydro energy/bus space on a national level

- Agreed that any CAPEX/OPEX funding in hydrogen buses as a local initiative was not appropriate for Council.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 **Receives the report, AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Transport and Urban Planning reprioritisation.**
- 2 **Confirms the reprioritisation of funding for the following items, as set out in this paper:**
 - (a) **Bay of Plenty Transport Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) – \$250k OPEX;**
 - (b) **Tauranga South On Demand Public Transport Trial – n/a;**
- 3 **Confirms Passenger Transport Fare Free Trial extensions – SuperGold Card, Fare Free School Children in Rotorua and Whakatāne.**

**Winters/Rose
CARRIED**

Cr Bruning **opposed** the motion and requested that this be recorded in the minutes.

6.4 AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Statements of Proposal

Presented by Mark Le Comte – Principal Advisor Finance.

Key Points:

- Provided a summary of the report and the submissions received, which had been spoken to by submitters at yesterday's Council meeting.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted the submission made by Tauranga Business Chambers regarding social licencing expectations of the Port of Tauranga, and suggested Council pursue further discussion with Quayside Holdings Ltd regarding this.

In Response to Questions:

- There was no conflict in areas of responsibilities between the Regional Shared Services (RSS) Council Controlled Organisation and the services currently being provided by BOPLASS
- Confirmed that Council collecting its own rates would not negatively impact on ratepayers currently having rate remission arrangements with their local councils for the current and the next financial year.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 **Receives the report, AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Statements of Proposal.**
- 2 **Directs staff to prepare the following for adoption:**
 - (a) **Fees and Charges Policy with no changes from consultation;**

- (b) Revenue and Financing Policy with no changes from consultation;
 - (c) Rates Remission Policy with no changes from consultation.
- 3 Approves that the Regional Council becomes a shareholder of the Regional Shared Services (RSS) Council Controlled Organisation and delegates to the Chief Executive to take all appropriate steps required to join the CCO.

**Winters/Love
CARRIED**

6.5 AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Financial Overview and Implications

Presented by Kumaren Perumal – Chief Financial Officer, Mereana Toroa – Finance Support Team Lead, Mark Le Comte – Principal Advisor Finance.

Resolved

That the Regional Council:

- 1 Receives the report, AP 2022/23 Deliberations: Financial Overview and Implications.
- 2 Includes the proposed targeted rates for the minor river schemes in the draft Annual Plan 2022/23 budget for adoption on 23 June 2022.

**Winters/Thurston
CARRIED**

7. Annual Plan Deliberations Summing Up and Next Steps

Presented by Zhivan Alach – Organisational Performance Manager.

Key Points:

- The guidance provided today would be incorporated in the draft Annual Plan, which was scheduled to be adopted at the Council meeting on 23 June 2022.

8. Closing Karakia

A karakia was provided by Cr White.

12.57 pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED 23 JUNE 2022

Chairman Doug Leeder
Chairperson, Regional Council