



MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday 1 April 2020

Time: 10.00am

Venue: Online using Zoom

Present: R Graham - Chairman
R Barker
W Foley
C Foss
N Kirton
C Lambert
H Ormsby
J van Beek
M Williams

In Attendance: M Paku – Māori Committee Co-chair
M McIlroy – Māori Committee Co-chair
A Tapine – Regional Planning Committee Representative
J Palmer – Chief Executive
P Munro – Te Pou Whakarae Māori Partnerships
J Ellerm – Group Manager Corporate Services
I Maxwell – Group Manager Integrated Catchment Management
T Skerman – Group Manager Strategic Planning
E Lambert – Group Manager External Relations
J Lawrence – Group Manager Office of the CE & Chair
L Hooper – Governance Lead

1. Welcome/ Karakia /Apologies/Notices

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Pieri Munro offered a karakia to begin.

The Chair advised HB regional leaders, including MPs, are meeting daily to keep up to date with the situation and issues arising.

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations

There were no conflict of interest declarations.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of the Regional Council meeting held on 25 March 2020

Corrections to be made as agreed to:

Page 16, Item 17: correct resolution 3.3 to read "Prior to exercising this delegation, the Chief Executive must obtain the endorsement to the proposed decision from a Chair in the following order of precedence" and 3.3.3 to "Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-committee Chair"

Page 14, Item 19: Correct resolution 2 to read: "Agrees that staff may make further changes to the submission **and associated hearing** processes, as required by the Covid-19 response" and delete resolution 3.

RC37/20 Resolutions

Minutes of the Regional Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 25 March 2020, a copy having been circulated prior to the meeting, were taken as read and confirmed as a true and correct record as amended.

**Barker/Foss
CARRIED**

4. & 6. 1 April 2020 Update on Significant Organisational Activities

Queries and discussions traversed:

- Working with MfE in relation to consent application processing timeframes, in particular decision to publicly notify the Heretaunga Plains water take renewal applications and investigating options to delay receipt of the Tukituki applications using s37a or other means to allow extra time and relieve pressure while the lockdown (and drought) is in effect. Expecting National advice later today confirming provisions available.
- Resources for the HBRC response including PPE and additional staff working within the Regional Business Partner team to support businesses.
- Tb vector control programme is currently on hold and risks possums further spreading Tb to other herds. Looking at how the scaling back up of the Possum control work might be enabled once the nation moves from lockdown to level 3. Biosecurity is not deemed an essential service of Local Government, however looking at whether, in terms of incursion and eradication, this could be classed as an essential service.
- Intelligence being gathered on the economic impacts of Covid-19 on the region, and HBRC has committed resource to the regional economic recovery unit that has been established.
- WDC consent application is on hold and was at the stage of preparation of draft conditions for provision to the submitters. Water quality sampling is currently not being undertaken and staff are spending the time in lockdown on data analysis and report writing, including the MCI.

RC38/20 Resolution

That the Hawke's Bay Regional Council receives and notes the **1 April 2020 Update on Significant Activities** staff report.

**van Beek/Ormsby
CARRIED**

7. **CE's Verbal Report on the HBRC Operational Response to Covid-19**

James Palmer updated the meeting on Council operations including:

- Staff not operating in essential services at home or in the field are deployed across the Civil Defence response on a seven day roster, as host agency providing the backbone infrastructure of the Civil Defence effort
- Able to operationalise flood protection team at short notice and maintaining surveillance of infrastructure assets and regional parks
- Not able to carry out some field based, non essential activities for the 4 week lock down period so staff are currently occupied carrying out desk based projects
- For the period of the declaration, central government will reimburse the direct costs of community welfare delivery but will not reimburse for staffing, usually paid by general rate, and there will likely be a deficit at year end and a wash-up reconciliation will include some carry forwards for work that has not been able to progress as planned through this period

Charles Lambert joined the meeting at 10.57am

Queries and discussions covered:

- Funding for the delivery of the CDEM response and future engagement with the Crown around options for recovering some of the costs of the extraordinary response required
- Information for councillors to be able to share with their constituents on Facebook pages or other social networks; and consistent messaging in relation to Covid-19 and the Welfare response in particular.
- Staff preparing information around the balance sheet and options for the zero rates rise for a workshop on 8 April
- Channels for advising gaps and relaying messages from the community, and preference that 0800 and Covid-19 email provided are used so that queries can be triaged and dealt with by most relevant source. If wanting urgent response councillors should contact James Palmer or Joanne Lawrence in the first instance.
- Civil defence action plan provided to councillors will continue to be updated regularly and redistributed to keep councillors up to date
- Economic recovery unit established and Tom Skerman is working within the unit in a leadership role.

5. **Chief Executive Delegations and Covid-19 Response (Urgent Management Measures) Legislation Bill**

The item was taken as read.

RC39/20 **Resolutions**

That Hawke's Bay Regional Council:

1. Agrees that the decisions to be made are not significant under the criteria contained in Council's adopted Significance and Engagement Policy, and that Council can exercise its discretion and make decisions on these issues without conferring directly with the community and persons likely to have an interest in the decision.
2. Agrees that the provisions of the COVID-19 Response (Urgent Management Measures) Legislation Bill supersede the Council's previous resolutions to set the quorum of all Committees to two members physically present and to suspend Standing Order 10.1 requiring that a majority of councillors must be physically present to be counted toward the quorum.
3. Agrees that sufficient clarity has been provided in relation to the delegations made to the Chief Executive, to apply for the period while the epidemic notice for Covid-19 is in force.

**Williams/Barker
CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 11.20am and reconvened at 11.30am

8. Verbal Update on the HB Drought Response from Iain Maxwell and Councillor Will Foley

Iain Maxwell advised that the response is planned to extend through the next Spring. Recent rain was helpful but not sufficient to break the drought. Previous week intelligence gathering and now tasking groups are starting to get activities running in areas of stock water, feed, supply chain logistics, financial management, animal health, personal welfare, Māori agribusiness and Wairoa. Rural Support Trust has been proactively contacting people in the rural community to ask what type of support they need.

Cr Will Foley advised that localised rainfall in some areas up to 25mm while others only a few mm. Concern about the meat processing plants possibly shutting down, and capacity issues (down 50%) with having had to change staffing to minimise the risk of spreading Covid-19.

9. Verbal Update on HB Tourism from Councillors Craig Foss and Hinewai Ormsby

Craig Foss provided an update covering:

- Regional GDP is \$8.5 billion per year; tourism contributes \$800 million to the regional economy (6,200 employees in tourism sector), with \$124 million coming from international tourism having stopped
- Need to retain the ability to produce food as an essential service
- Important that we don't duplicate central government or CDEM efforts/activities and offer assistance or local initiatives instead

Hinewai Ormsby provided an update covering:

- Hotels are closed; motels are mostly open (430 units available); most campgrounds are open but shared facilities are closed; backpackers and some B&B's open; restaurants & wineries, including cellar doors, are closed - staff are either receiving the Government's 12 week wage subsidy or have been made redundant.
- Forward planning for a changed Tourism industry is under way at the national level with Tourism Aotearoa although not enough certainty to provide specifics at this stage.

10. Verbal Update on HB District Health Board from Councillor Charles Lambert

Local conditions include an interim CE for at least the next 1-2 months while recruitment of permanent CE finalised.

Hospital has reconfigured the ground floor of the hospital for Covid-19 patients only and no visitors are allowed.

Testing still an issue with requirement for referral from GP and further screening at the testing facilities sometimes ruling people out despite referral from GP, and some people are waiting 10 days to be tested. Looking at potential for mobile testing facilities to go out to more remote communities.

Biggest concern in relation to the virus spreading is contact tracing of those who were in contact with visitors from the Ruby Princess. It was advised that Napier City Council has been monitoring the situation and are not expecting any new cases associated with direct exposure as the 14 day period has passed.

11. Verbal Update on the Local Civil Defence Covid-19 Response from Councillor Rick Barker

Councillor Barker advises that this is a health issue first and foremost, and the response needs to be focussed through that lens.

- Compliance with the lockdown restrictions is critical. NZ lockdown is reasonably gentle compared to restrictions on the populations of countries like China where people were not allowed to leave their homes at all, and received a weekly delivery of food from the military
- Regional leaders including MPs, Mayors, Police, CDEM, etc are meeting daily, virtually
- Calls to the 0800 number will be received at national level and referred to relevant region for needs assessment and delivery of whatever is required, e.g. prescriptions, food parcels
- Concerns about 'lockdown fatigue' as time goes on, and people not adhering to the restrictions which will jeopardise stopping the spread of Covid-19

Liz Lambert added:

- Welfare messaging is to source what you need through your own networks first where possible, or through existing networks
- Working on fit for future response to potentially handle thousands of requests

Queries and discussions covered:

- CDEM is not responsible for compliance with level 4 restrictions – that is within the powers of NZ Police, and where there are medical issues the Medical Officer of Health has powers to enforce quarantine; and incoming passengers are kept track of by Public Health.
- New Zealanders will be repatriated to their hometowns after their 14 day quarantine
- A great deal of thought was given to preparations for RSE workers to enable the pick to be carried out
- List of public toilets available has been provided to the Road Transport Management Group for distribution to truck drivers. This list is not being made available to the public.
- The CDEM 'network of networks' connects every possible contact to every potential issue or need
- 54 HBRC staff seconded to the CDEM Group response
- Concerns raised about freedom campers arriving in Mahia to spend the lockdown period 'holidaying' there

12. Verbal Update on the Horticulture Sector from Councillor Jerf Van Beek

Councillor Jerf van Beek advised:

- Very important that the horticulture (primary) sector and its workforce are doing the right things. Crews operate in their own bubbles including when travelling to and from sites, and there are no visitors allowed on orchards or in pack houses.
- 60% of the apple harvest is done, summerfruit finished, wine grapes will be finished in another 2 weeks, another 4-5 weeks of packing onions and another 1-2 weeks of squash harvest
- Work visas are being rolled over, renewed automatically
- Crews need to stay in their bubbles and the CD network of networks has been involved in coordinating with employers, hostels and rental properties housing workers to ensure the level 4 restrictions are complied with
- HB growers are keen to help, and to provide food to food banks or others who provide food to those in need but want to know who to contact and where to take it
- Unfortunate that greengrocers in Auckland and Wellington are shut down as they are a major source of fruit and vegetables to city dwellers, rather than grocery stores
- Approximately 6,000 RSE workers in the region and forward planning includes considering how to redeploy those who want to stay in HB, enable those who want to, to get home, and whether it's possible for those who want to move on to other regions to do so

James Palmer advised that an item will be brought to the next Council meeting to agree a process for decision items that would normally be recommended by a committee to Council, thereby being subject to double-debate.

Pieri Munro led the group in offering a karakia to close the meeting.

Closure:

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 1.00pm on Wednesday, 1 April 2020.

Signed as a true and correct record.

DATE:

CHAIRMAN: