



Summary of Waikato Mayoral Forum meeting Monday 15 October 2018

WAIKATO PLAN – UPDATE

Vaughan Payne, CE of Waikato Regional Council, gave an update on the Waikato Plan. Mr Payne advised the forum that in late September, the regional council disestablished the Waikato Plan Leadership Group Joint Committee, and then established a new committee for Waikato Plan under the Waikato Regional Council. The first item of business is for the Waikato Plan Committee to elect co-chairs and deputy chairs.

Other items for discussion include the Regional Housing Initiative, Te Waka, Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan and an update on the National Waterscape.

Mr Payne added that the purpose of the Regional Housing Initiative is to gain greater clarity on current and projected housing stock figures and identify gaps or hot spots. This stocktake will be completed by December.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Otorohanga District Mayor, Max Baxter, also Chair of the Mayors Task Force for Jobs (MTFJ), addressed the forum on national youth employment and unemployment issues. He reported that June quarter labour market statistics reveal the Not in Employment, Education or Training rates (NEET) across New Zealand were 10.9 per cent, with Waikato at 12.4 per cent. NEET rates have fallen 1.5 percentage points since the March quarter and MTFJ plans to address these issues by engaging with key partners, such as local government, and educators (schools and industry training organisations).

Other issues Mayor Baxter reported on included:

- Last year MTFJ partnered with the Industry Training Federation and Industry Training Organisations for the “Got a Trade? Got it Made!” campaign. Across four events designed to put students together with employers there were 445 matches. The involvement of mayors and councillors in the SpeedMeet events signals strong support to employers, schools and students. MTFJ is keen to work with any council who wants to run a SpeedMeet event.
- The Graduated Driver Training programme has shifted to a new government portfolio and it’s hoped this will be budgeted for in 2019.
- Oral Fluid Drug Testing – MTFJ supports the introduction of this style of testing in the workplace. It is seen as fairer and more reasonable than older methods and has been recommended by Australian and New Zealand employment courts.
- Another meeting of MTFJ with Department of Internal Affairs officials is planned for Thursday 18 October.

Mayor Baxter concluded by saying that students, in particular Māori and Pasifika, were not always aware of industry opportunities as these were not promoted by schools nor parents. Chair Alan Livingston thanked Mayor Baxter for his report and said forum members appreciated the update and were highly supportive of initiatives identified by MTFJ.



THREE WATERS REVIEW – UPDATE

Waitomo District Mayor, Brian Hanna, along with chief executives Vaughan Payne (Waikato Regional Council) and Don McLeod (Matamata-Piako), gave an update on the Government's Three Waters review.

In summary, in 2014, LGNZ conducted a National Information Framework Survey that collected data on three waters assets and services from 70 councils. The data formed the basis of LGNZ's Three Waters issues paper in 2015. Three core issues for the sector were:

- investing to replace and renew existing assets
- investing to meet rising standards and increasing expectations
- providing end-users with the right incentives to use water infrastructure and services efficiently.

Based on robust research, the paper argued for a refresh of the regulatory framework to ensure delivery of quality potable and wastewater and stormwater services, and for a co-regulatory approach. The paper outlined what stronger performance of the three waters sector would look like:

- Putting in place effective management and investment in the physical assets
- Understanding customer needs and expectations
- Having accessible and accurate data on performance
- Acknowledging the diverse range of customers.

Mayor Brian Hanna provided the forum with an update on the Three Waters review. He said water is critical for our future health, economy and environment. From a local government perspective, he said we know the quality of the drinking water, wastewater and storm services is critical to the ongoing health and success of our communities. He called for local and central government to have an evidence-based discussion on the water system and take a collaborative approach.

Chair Alan Livingston asked forum members to consider whether the Waikato Mayoral Forum should be providing a clear signal to the minister about what we see as the real issue. This was parked for further consideration.

WATERS COLLABORATION – UPDATE

Don McLeod, Chief Executive of Matamata-Piako District Council, gave an update on the waters collaboration. He advised that seven local authorities and the regional council had come together to fund an assessment of on drinking water. This will allow Waikato councils to assess where the areas of most need are. A key area will be to address compliance around drinking water standards.

A report back to Waikato Regional Council is expected in late November and discussion centred on the opportunities for proactive messaging to Ministers Mahuta and Parker.

TE WAKA – UPDATE

Chief Operating Officer of Te Waka, Harvey Brookes, introduced new Chief Executive, Michael Bassett-Foss. Mr Bassett-Foss acknowledged the importance of the relationship between Te Waka and the Waikato Mayoral Forum. He said he was slowly making his way around our region's councils and thanked Mr Brookes for providing continuity since the establishment of the agency. Te Waka staff are building momentum and making good progress with a business plan while being very active in the provincial growth fund space.



Mr Brookes reported that the summit had helped to identify 19 priorities. As a result, a priority model was created to inform Te Waka's movement into an operational phase with a business plan due for completion by mid-November. The big messages included:

- He tangata – skills, education, employment opportunities are needed across all sectors and all areas.
- Wider Auckland economic district and golden triangle – being in close proximity to Auckland is “a gift”.
- Three distinct sub-regions – Auckland including Hamilton to Auckland Corridor, Thames Valley, Southern Waikato.
- Our rivers – Waikato, Waipā, Waihou.
- The Waikato Story – fiscal and social investment in a story that needs telling.
- Hamilton – our city, because every great region needs a great city.
- Being business led and driven – the core of what Te Waka is about.
- Competitive sectors – growing areas where we are strong (manufacturing, food production) and building strength in emergent areas (tourism, freight and logistics).
- The whole system – up to 50 good ideas.

HAMILTON TO AUCKLAND CORRIDOR – UPDATE

Hamilton City Council Special Projects Executive Director, Blair Bowcott, advised that planning for the corridor was progressing at pace. The plan covers Papakura to Cambridge/Te Awamutu and end of the expressway with deliberate focus on the two city nodes connecting two of the country's fastest growing urban areas.

The Minister of Transport had convened a series of meetings with governors including a special briefing to Hamilton City Council on 4 October with the purpose of sharing and seeking feedback on the emerging direction of the plan.

Four strategic objectives have been identified:

- Improving housing affordability and choices.
- Enhancing the quality of the natural and built environments and the vitality communities.
- Improving access to employment, public services and amenities.
- Creating employment opportunities.

Mr Bowcott told the forum he believes there is positive engagement across government agencies, local government and other governors that has the potential to be transformative.