



WAIKATO

MAYORAL FORUM

Chair's summary of meeting held 17 July 2017

2017-2019 strategic collaborative priorities

Consultant Peter Winder presented on a paper expanding on priorities for regional collaboration through the forum.

Suggested key initiatives include:

- One Voice for the Waikato
- Advocacy priorities
- Waikato Plan priorities
- Water
- Economic development
- Sub-Regional collaboration
- Technical professional collaboration.

The Canterbury approach to collaboration was discussed, including a virtual policy team coordinated by the regional council to support chief executives to ensure issues going before their mayoral forum are supported by appropriate analysis and advice. It's felt this sort of framework within the Waikato could significantly enhance the region's ability to speak with one voice and advocate strongly on behalf of its people and communities. Chief executives are to undertake further work on how to give effect to priorities for collaboration and present the forum with a project plan.

There was some concern expressed that the boundaries between the Waikato forum's work and that carried out under the Waikato Plan could be blurred. The forum's chair's view is that councils do need to keep an eye out for this sort of thing but believes the work of the forum and implementation of the Plan can be managed in such a way as to avoid any unnecessary "double-ups".

It's worth noting that the forum and the Plan's joint committee will have distinct roles with the future of the Plan. The committee will oversee implementation of the Plan, with the forum discussing direction and helping co-ordinate local government actions under the Plan.

Waikato Plan update

The signed off Waikato Plan is currently in the process of being considered for adoption by individual councils.

At the forum meeting, the Plan's joint committee chair and project manager reported to the forum on implementation priorities.

The Plan project team has agreed that the main priorities for the first 18 months of implementation are:

1. Preparation of a three year implementation funding plan.
2. Collaboration over a regional development strategy.
3. Developing regional priorities for service and technical infrastructure and matching central Government services with community need.
4. Engagement with central Government.

The forum endorsed those priorities.

A question was raised about whether the Waikato Plan would create statutory obligations and require changes to planning regulations. Staff advice was that the Plan was not a statutory document and that its actions did not require planning regulation changes.

Waikato Means Business

The forum received a presentation of a review examining the current state of economic development governance, funding and service delivery in the Waikato.

Findings included:

- A range of economic development strategies and frameworks across the region with little alignment.
- A business community seeking a strong voice and ambition for the region
- Overall, fragmented and uneven services with limited reach
- A demand for improved investment attraction and facilitation, innovation and industry/major project support
- Limited local government resourcing into economic development in the Waikato region relative to other areas.

The review's recommendations included:

- A new regional economic development entity focused on business development, innovation, industry development and investment attraction services, but not tourism activity
- Enhanced regional leadership of economic development, overseen by a governance group involving a partnership between business, iwi, and local and central Government.

Further work on the way forward will be done over the next few months by Waikato Means Business with a proposal on a funding model due at the next forum meeting in September.

Community facilities funding framework

The purpose of an agreed community facilities funding framework for the Waikato would be to enable local authorities in the Waikato region to make collective, strategic investments in community facilities so that communities benefit from these investments now and into the future.

A draft framework and a "strawman" model have been developed with oversight from a forum governance group.

Forum members have been asked to present the strawman to their councils and provide feedback, with a view to presenting a final suggested framework to the forum's September meeting.

The draft suggests the framework ensures community facilities receive support from each local authority commensurate with the level of benefit to each authority's community now and into the future.

Regional heritage forum

The forum approved draft terms of reference for a Waikato Regional Heritage Forum to help manage historic and cultural heritage through a centralised inventory.

It was noted that some councils were already compiling records of heritage within their own jurisdictions and there were questions about whether there was a need to invest additional resources in regional heritage forum.

However, the majority view was that establishing the forum was worthwhile. An inaugural heritage forum meeting is scheduled for November this year.

Wastewater management and plant discharge consents

A report on community wastewater treatment plants was discussed. The report was expected to help councils prepare replacement discharge consent applications for such plants in "shared catchments".

Hauraki, Matamata-Piako and South Waikato mayors indicated a willingness to meet together to share information on affordability and long term planning.

UNISA overview

The forum heard that Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA) members have started discussions with port industry stakeholders on the scoping of a joint approach to land use and transport planning.

Forecasts of escalating growth in freight and population include an expectation that, in 20 years, 60 per cent of New Zealand's population will reside in the Upper North Island. Ports of Auckland will present to the next UNISA meeting and chairs of Port of Tauranga and Northport, who have already presented to UNISA, are expected to be there.

Alan Livingston, chair, Waikato Mayoral Forum