



Summary of Waikato Mayoral Forum meeting on Friday 29 June 2018

WAIKATO LASS

Kelvin French was introduced by Waikato LASS Board chair Gavin Ion as the agency's new chief executive to facilitate a transformation for the organisation over the next 12 months. The former AgResearch finance leader said he was excited to be part of helping the Waikato region and its councils.

The forum heard that over the past few years WLASS had achieved success largely around procurement and delivering savings for councils. But looking to the future, the WLASS Board had engaged a consultant to review opportunities for the organisation to deliver a lot more benefit to shareholders.

As a result, the WLASS Board had resolved in April to expand the capability and resourcing of the company. That will include a strong focus on digital transformation and improving the customer experience.

The forum heard that chasing such opportunities required the employment of a fulltime chief executive and support staff. A detailed implementation plan will now be developed and consulted on with shareholders.

REGIONAL SPORTS FACILITIES FUNDING FRAMEWORK

Matthew Cooper and Leanne Stewart from Sport Waikato provided an update on the review of the Waikato Regional Sport Facilities Plan, adopted by the forum in November 2014. The forum heard that the 2018 review is well underway, but already the plan had helped leverage funding and efficient resource allocation.

The forum also discussed the Community Facilities Funding Framework drafted by Waikato Regional Council, which it had endorsed in September 2017. The framework was developed to guide Waikato's local authorities to make collective, equitable, strategic investments in new facilities so that communities benefit from these investments now and into the future. The forum heard that the framework is seen as the benchmark in New Zealand.

The forum voted in favour of writing to the Waikato Regional Council to encourage it to reconsider its decision in June not to adopt the Community Facilities Funding Framework, as well as to encourage local authorities to consider adopting the framework if they hadn't already.

WAIKATO PLAN

Peter Winder was commissioned to undertake an independent review on the challenges and opportunities of implementing the Waikato Plan. He presented the findings of his six-page report to the forum, acknowledging that implementing the Waikato Plan will be hard. But he said there were very high levels of optimism from some of the partners for the Waikato and to leverage Government resources.

Mr Winder made a number of recommendations to reshape and reenergise the programme and the way that it works.



The forum supported the recommendations in Mr Winder's report and requested the Chief Executive's Steering Group, in conjunction with the Waikato Plan Leadership Group, implement the key findings.

AUCKLAND TO HAMILTON CORRIDOR PLAN

The forum heard that the Auckland to Hamilton corridor plan is being driven by Ministers Phil Twyford and Nanaia Mahuta, supported by Jamie Strange and Julie-Anne Genter. The initiative comes from the Government's growth agenda. There are three parties to the partnership – Government, councils, iwi.

Through the plan the Government wants to ensure growth with the right outcomes: improving housing affordability and choices, enhancing the quality of the natural environment and vitality of the communities on the corridor, improving access to employment, public services and amenities, and creating employment opportunities.

The forum heard that conversations so far had also extended to corridors in other parts of the region, including Hauraki and the Coromandel Peninsula.

The dual purpose of the project is to develop an integrated spatial plan and establish an ongoing growth management partnership for the transport corridor between Hamilton and Auckland. They're not starting from scratch, the forum heard. Existing plans, including Future Proof and the Waikato Plan, will inform the corridor plan.

THREE WATERS REVIEW

Representing the Waikato on this review is Waitomo Mayor Brian Hanna, Waikato Regional Council CEO Vaughan Payne and Matamata-Piako District Council CEO Don McLeod.

They briefed the forum on a three waters review underway by the Government in the wake of the Havelock North incident. The cross-agency work programme is being led by the Department of Internal Affairs to develop options and recommendations to create a strong and sustainable three waters system.

The forum was told the timeframes they're working to are very tight and there could be huge implications for local councils including regulation – something which would be broadly supported. Ministers require a report with high level options and recommendations in October 2019. The direction of reform will be signalled in 2019.

WAIKATO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The morning's meeting concluded with forum members joining with stakeholders to celebrate the establishment of the Waikato Regional Economic Development Agency (REDA).

But first, the forum heard that the Waikato REDA has three objectives that are broad enough to cover the range of activities the agency will need to undertake and provide a good sense of what it is trying to achieve:

- Lift economic performance across the Waikato region.
- Attract, retain and grow investment, talent and business across the region.



WAIKATO MAYORAL FORUM

- Champion and provide 'one voice' for economic and business needs and opportunities across the region.

A communications strategy has been developed for the Waikato REDA to help it establish itself as the eminent regional economic voice for the region. The strategy identifies the organisation's value proposition and key messages through the establishment phase.

Waikato Economic Summit

The forum also had an update on plans for the Waikato Economic Summit – a significant milestone in the early life of the Waikato REDA. As well as signalling the agency's leadership mandate and role in the region, the summit will help to build a consensus around the agency's agenda and the pipeline projects it will deliver, advocate for and support over the next 12-24 months.