

# Council Policy Development Committee Meeting

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Minutes of the Policy Development Committee Meeting of the South Taranaki District Council held in the Council Chamber, on 23 February 2009, commencing at 1.00 pm.

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**PRESENT:** Mayor R Dunlop, Councillors A Ballantyne, A Beccard, K Bourke, A Hickey, P Johnson, G Lawson, D Packer, I Smith and I Wards.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive (Mr Stevenson), Group Manager Community Services and Development (Mrs Martin), Group Manager Environment and Information Services (Mr Young), Group Manager Engineering Services (Mr McCann), Support Services Manager (Miss Cox), Communications Manager (Mr Langford), Community Development Manager (Mrs Mekalick), Corporate Planner (Mrs Jane), Economic Development and Tourism Manager (Ms Greenhill), Economic Development Advisor (Mr Stockwell), Hawera Community Board Representative (Mr Greaves), Patea Community Board Representative (Mrs Dew-Hopkins – 1.17 pm), two members of the public and two members of the media.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Armstrong, Powell and Rangiwahia, Egmont Plains Community Board Representative Mrs Arlidge, Eltham Community Board Representative Mrs Cave and Patea Community Board Representative Mrs Dew-Hopkins (for lateness).

## RESOLUTION

(Cr Packer/Cr Bourke)

01/09 PD **THAT** the apologies from Councillors Armstrong, Powell and Rangiwahia, Egmont Plains Community Board Representative Mrs Arlidge, Eltham Community Board Representative Mrs Cave and Patea Community Board Representative Mrs Dew-Hopkins (for lateness) be received.

**CARRIED**

## 1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

(a) Council Policy Development Meeting held on 17 November 2008

## RESOLUTION

(Cr Wards/Cr Lawson)

02/09 PD **THAT** the minutes of the Council Policy Development Committee meeting held on 17 November 2008 be received and confirmed as a correct record of proceedings.

**CARRIED**

## 2 REPORTS

### (a) Community Development Manager

#### (i) Southlink Bus Service

The Council was asked to support making a submission to the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) on the Southlink bus services for their consideration.

The Mayor commented that the TRC had already made their decision on the bus services. Mrs Mekalick replied that they had made a decision due to their contract with the New Zealand Transport Agency requiring any new tenders to be advertised four months in advance. The TRC had still requested input from the Council and the submission included a suggestion that consideration be given to altering the Opunake to Hawera route to pass through Manaia and to maintain a separate service from Kaponga via Eltham to Hawera.

Councillor Beccard supported the submission and was pleased with how well utilised the bus service was between the towns in the district.

Councillor Hickey questioned the reference to a targeted rate for the gold card users and whether this had been allowed for in the budget for the Council. The Mayor clarified this was a Taranaki Regional Council targeted rate.

### RESOLUTION

(Cr Beccard/Cr Smith)

03/09 PD

**THAT the South Taranaki District Council support the submission to the Taranaki Regional Council as presented.**

**CARRIED**

### (b) Corporate Planner

#### (i) Ten Year Plan Policies and Funded Depreciation

The Ten Year Plan policies were provided for the Council's formal consideration prior to audit inspection and then formal consultation with the district's residents. The new funded depreciation policy developed at the Ten Year Plan workshops was included for the Council's formal consideration for inclusions in the draft Ten Year Plan.

Some clarification was sought regarding the funded depreciation policy. Mrs Jane advised that for strategic assets funds would be set aside to pay off loans for any assets that had loans ie water supplies. For non strategic assets enough funds would be set aside to cover renewals, however, it would not be for the full replacement of any assets.

Councillor Hickey asked if the Opunake Town Hall required a toilet upgrade whether this was classed as a renewal. Mrs Jane replied the project would need to be examined to determine whether it was simply a replacement of existing components (renewals) or funding involved raising the level of service which was loan funded.

The councillors requested that consideration be given to the proposed removal of the Patea Domain playground and whether it could remain in place even though it would not receive an upgrade.

Councillor Hickey referred to the *Enhancing Maori Capacity to Contribute to Council Decision-Making* policy and questioned whether it implied that Maori would be involved in the citizenship ceremonies. It was clarified that the Mayor would lead the ceremonies and would decide on the level of involvement in those ceremonies by Maori.

*Mrs Dew-Hopkins arrived at 1.17 pm.*

Councillor Wards expressed some concerns at the *Revenue and Financing Policy*. He noted that when the levels of service workshops had been held there had not been any financial information available and it was difficult to consider the rating impact for the district. He noted that our Council was one of a few who did not charge for library issues. He suggested that this should be considered as a user pays service and that those residents who were not ratepayers received a free service. By charging for library issues library users would pay their *fair share*.

Councillor Wards referred to the differentials and considered that the reasons for removing the differentials were inconsistent, for example it was considered that the Patea Dam had an isolation factor, whereas a number of rural properties were also isolated.

Councillor Ballantyne suggested that the library charges would not affect the UAGC as it was now a minimum charge. He referred to the differentials and suggested that the Patea Dam was no different to a large farm or business and he considered that the Patea Dam was a listed company and had assets of over \$40 million which was more than sufficient to be able to pay their fair share of rates.

Councillor Johnson supported the libraries remaining a free service, noting that if the Council decided to implement charges for the libraries then the same exercise could be undertaken for swimming pools and parks. He noted that the membership at each LibraryPlus was high throughout South Taranaki.

Councillor Beccard considered that building capital reserve funds was a prudent financial method for building up assets and that borrowing was a good way of splitting the cost of assets over the generations. He supported the Revenue and Financing Policy.

Mr Stevenson indicated that the staff would be able to reword the explanation for the removal of the differentials to provide better clarification.

Councillor Wards acknowledged the comments about the libraries and suggested that if the Council was serious about keeping rating levels at a low then this should be investigated further. He noted that fines had been abolished a number of years ago as it was considered that they were too difficult to collect. Councillor Wards commented that he was not entirely comfortable with the change in the UAGC to a minimum charge as he considered this was removing the transparency of the UAGC.

Councillor Ballantyne referred to the *Financial and Development Contribution Policy* and asked what the rural road capability study meant. Councillor Lawson clarified that the Taranaki Regional Council had undertaken a rural road strategy and the three local authorities were also required to undertake a similar study.

**RESOLUTION****(Cr Bourke/Cr Beccard)**

**04/09 PD** **THAT the policies be included in the draft 2009/2019 Ten Year Plan for auditing and public consultation; and**

**THAT the funded depreciation policy as outlined in the Corporate Planner's report be the basis for calculating funded depreciation for the Council's assets in the draft 2009/2019 Ten Year Plan.**

**CARRIED****3 INFORMATION REPORT****(a) Economic Development and Tourism Manager****(i) Quarterly Tourism Report**

Two components were included in the quarterly tourism report. The first was a progress report on the implementation of the Taranaki Tourism Strategy which the Council endorsed and Venture Taranaki Trust was contracted to implement. The second component highlighted the key activities the South Taranaki i-SITE visitor centre had undertaken during the same period.

Ms Greenhill tabled the latest statistics highlighting the record number of visitors to South Taranaki since records began. She noted that some of this related to a number of maintenance *shut downs* throughout November 2008.

Councillor Packer referred to the walkway brochure that she had received and expressed some concern that the map did not include the whole of the South Taranaki district. She noted that it promoted the Patea Historical Walkway yet the map only went as far as Mokoia. Ms Greenhill clarified that this was a first attempt at the brochure and a number of suggestions had been made for improvements.

Councillor Johnson asked if it was possible to include statistics relating to the number of visitors which shared comparison to various other regions. Ms Greenhill indicated that she would speak to Mr Paul Stancliff-White from Venture Taranaki Trust to see if those figures could be included in his report.

Mr Trundle advised that Taranaki as a region was significantly ahead of other areas in relation to visitors. He noted that while Taranaki had a much lower percentage share of the national and international market it was definitely ahead in percentage increases compared to other regions.

**RESOLUTION****(Mayor/Cr Smith)**

**05/09 PD** **THAT the Economic Development and Tourism Manager's Quarterly Tourism report be received.**

**CARRIED**

