

Northland Mayoral Forum Minutes

Meeting held in the Totara Board Room
Te Kona – Digital, Business and Learning Hub
74 Guy Road, Kaikohe
on Friday 1 September 2023, commencing at 10.00am

Tuhinga/Present:

WDC Mayor Vincent Cocurullo (*Chair*)
KDC Mayor Craig Jepson
NRC Chair (*From 10.07am via audio-visual link. Left 12.30pm*)
FNDC Deputy Mayor Kelly Stratford
WDC Chief Executive Officer Simon Weston
FNDC Interim Chief Executive Officer Guy Holroyd
KDC Chief Executive Officer Jason Marris
NRC Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Jonathan Gibbard

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Part Meeting

Entity Chief Executive Officer Jon Lamonte
Entity A Establishment Board Chair Murry Bain
Entity A Council Interface Manager Catherine Harland
Te Whatu Ora Senior Advisor Endine Dixon-Harris
Te Whatu Ora General Manager Teei Kaiaruna
NRC Governance Specialist Chris Taylor

Secretarial Note: The Chair declared the meeting open at 10.00am and proceedings commenced with a welcome and karakia by the FNDC Deputy Mayor.

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 1.0)

Moved (Cocurullo/Stratford)

That the apology from FNDC Mayor for non-attendance be received.

Carried

Confirmation of Minutes - 26 May 2023 (Item 3.1)

Report from Chris Taylor, NRC Governance Specialist

Moved (Cocurullo/Jepson)

That the minutes of the Northland Mayoral Forum held on 26 May 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 4.1)

Report from Chris Taylor, NRC Governance Specialist

The action sheet was noted.

Update: Housing activity and investment in the Northland region (Item 5.1)

Item 5.1 was withdrawn.

Secretarial Note: Item 5.3 was addressed prior to Item 5.2 to allow Entity A representatives to arrive.

Update from Chair of the new Establishment Board for Entity A, Murry Bain ONZM (Item 5.2)

The new Entity A Establishment Board Chair, Murray Bain, was introduced to the Forum, who then provided a synopsis of his professional career. To start the discussion it was questioned why there was limited support for the Water Services Reform when it was likely to promote a 'significant increase in investment in Northland' and 'potentially lower costs for water'.

Key aspects of the following discussion included:

- WDC was in a unique position from the other councils and would be 'hugely disadvantaged by the entity created', 'losing income and assets with no compensation'. There was also the potential for less money to be invested in the Whangārei district.
- FNDC had not confirmed its position on the water services reform in the current term.
- While KDC and FNDC acknowledged there needed to be major investment in three waters, key concerns included that:
 - The councils would lose control of what is happening in their own areas.
 - The community would feel like it had a lack of say in the district's assets.
 - A third party entity would create 'another barrier'.
 - Northland would have a minority shareholding compared to Auckland.
 - There remained a number of unknowns.
- As a matter of urgency the 'no worse off component' funding needed to be clarified to ensure it corrected the financial challenges being faced by councils.
- It was stressed that the status quo was not an option going forward and Entity A and the councils needed to work together to resolve any conflict and get the best outcome for Northland.
- The Transition Unit was currently mid-way through a process of shifting authority out of local government departments to an entity which would be accountable to the people it was serving. It was stressed that the Entity 'stands or falls on how well it serves its community'.
- Assurance was provided that forward growth was one of the highest priorities for Entity A.
- It was also noted that the general elections would play a part in the final outcome

In conclusion the Entity A Establishment Board Chair undertook to meet individually with members of the Mayoral Forum to assist shaping processes going forward.

Secretarial Note:

- *Item 5.3 was addressed prior to Item 5.2 to allow Entity A representatives to arrive.*
- *Two documents were tabled, the presentation provided to Auckland Council, 'South Island Resource Recovery Ltd – Waste to Energy' and the information document 'Spittelau Heating Plant, Vienna – Exterior Design'.*

Update: Waste to Energy Initiative (Item 5.3)

KDC Mayor, Craig Jepson, provided a verbal update on the Waste to Energy Initiative. Key aspects of the briefing and related discussion included:

- South Island Resource Recovery Ltd emphasised that a Waste to Energy Plant did not diminish recycling in any manner. However, it did maximise the benefit from what could not be recycled.
- The Auckland Mayor was promoting the upgrade of the rail network from Avondale north which supported the establishment of a Waste to Energy Plant in Northland.
- The support and long term direction of government was critical given legislation was a key driver. For example, countries with relatively high gate charges encouraged recycling.
- It was stressed that iwi and hapu need to be brought 'on the journey'.
- It was further stressed that education was key to ensure the community understood the benefits of a waste to energy plant compared to increasing volumes of waste going to landfill.

In conclusion:

- **There was agreement that the upgrade of rail into Whangārei was critical and warranted a media release.**
- **A further Waste to Energy update to be included on the next Mayoral Forum Agenda to allow the concept to be fully socialised with FNDC elected members prior.**

Northland Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference (Item 5.4)

Report from Chris Taylor, NRC Governance Specialist

Item 5.4 'Northland Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference' was addressed in conjunction with Item 5.10 'Administrative Support for the Mayoral Forum' at the end of the meeting.

Update from the Chief Executives' Forum (Item 5.5)

Report from Simon Weston, WDC Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Chief Executives' Forum

NTA Maintenance Contracts Review

- A meeting to be held as soon as practicable for Mayoral Forum and Regional Transport Committee members to jointly receive a presentation on the Road Maintenance and Renewals Contracts Review that FieldForce4 had undertaken. The review was complete and the meeting would provide the opportunity to present the findings and conclusions, receive feedback, confirm the decision making pathway and discuss the next steps.
- A separate meeting to be set up for each council to discuss its specific maintenance contracts.
- As an aside, it was stressed that each council needed a clear process to ensure that elected members had input into the development of the Regional Land Transport Plan.

NTA – Section 17A Review

- Any further feedback to be provided as soon as possible to the WDC Chief Executive.
- (Similar to the maintenance contracts review) a meeting to be convened for the Mayoral Forum and RTC members to discuss the outcome of the review and then separate meetings with the individual councils.
- Appreciation was extended to the WDC Chief Executive for leading this process.

Three Waters Reform – council's position post national elections

- There was general agreement that each council would need to discuss the matter and confirm its position.
- An options paper to be brought back to the Northland Mayoral Forum in November.

Councils' strategic approach to central government post elections

- There was general agreement that this needed to be a priority.
- It was noted Northland Inc also had strong connections in Wellington.
- While it would be ideal for the Ministers to come to Northland, if there were important issues that need air time with the Ministers, a delegation should head to Wellington.

In conclusion the Chief Executives' Forum was tasked with preparing Briefings for Incoming Ministers (BIMs) based on the Mayoral Forum's top five priorities and targeting the relevant Ministers. BIMs to be followed up with a meeting with the relevant Minister.

Future delivery of Northland's transport programmes (Item 5.6)

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Specialist

This was addressed in the previous Item 5.5.

Joint hosted council dinner with Ministers in Waitangi (Item 5.7)

- There was general agreement that it would be most effective if this was limited to the Mayors/Chair/Deputies, local MPs and targeted Ministers.
- There would be merit developing a directory for Ministers detailing the contacts in each of the councils for specific portfolios.
- The format to be a speed dating session followed by dinner.

Round the table - Strategic issues (FNDC/KDC/WDC/NRC) (Item 5.8)

It was suggested that greater effort should be devoted to collectively smoothing rules and regulations to make the building process easier. It was advised that this would be addressed by the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 and one plan for the region.

Update: Te Whatu Ora Localities and Boundary Determination engagement (Item 5.9)

Te Whatu Ora Senior Advisor, Endine Dixon-Harris, and General Manager, Teei Kaiaruna, were in attendance to lead the briefing. Key aspects of the presentation and related discussion included:

- The health system reform was in response to the 2016 Waitangi Tribunal Health Services and Outcome Inquiry which identified the need for an equitable health system which focussed on primary healthcare and well-being outcomes for all.
- The reformed health system was based on 'localities', which were defined as an area that made sense to the community. The purpose of localities was to enable local communities to influence the design, funding and delivery of their local health care services.
- Te Whatu Ora supported localities through partnering, working with local stakeholders, providing resources/data, collaborations and alignment with hospital/specialist services.
- 12 prototype areas had been stood up to start implementing the locality approach. Taikorihī was a prototype in the Far North.
- Concern was raised regarding the list of responsibilities tagged to local government (local health planning, health promotion and public health, community health services, environmental health and emergency management) given these were not within the core roles of the sector and there was a continuing trend for it to receive unfunded mandate. There was general agreement this need to be reworded to remove reference to responsibility and clarify 'one size does not fit all' and that some councils chose to deliver these services.
- The language also to be amended to reflect that local government did not have the expertise to be making mental health assessments or determinations. However, it did have role in supporting the well-being of the community.
- Te Whatu Ora was required to consult with local authorities and Māori to determine locality boundaries. Once endorsed they would be submitted to the Minister to be gazetted.
- Concern was raised that the northern 'envelope' extending from Otahuhu to Cape Reinga was too large. Within this area 8-10 localities were likely to come on line with three in Northland.
- Further concern was raised that the number of people within a locality would be the basis for costings and that Northland would continue to be underfunded. Assurance was provided that rural adjusters had been developed to prevent this being the case.

Secretarial Note: Item 5.10 'Administrative Support for the Mayoral Forum' was addressed in conjunction with Item 5.4 'Northland Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference'. The NRC Governance Specialist left the meeting for the duration of these items.

Administrative support for the Northland Mayoral Forum (Item 5.10) and Northland Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference (Item 5.4)

1. Attendance limited to Mayor / Chair and Chief Executive of each council. Other councillors able to attend by exception and upon request and agreement by the Mayoral Forum Chair. If a Mayor/Chair is unable to attend then their Deputy will attend in their place.
2. Each Mayor/Chair is to make a decision as to whether they wish to circulate the Mayoral Forum agenda to their broader councillors (this is not the responsibility of the secretary of the Mayoral Forum).
3. NRC to continue to provide administrative support and that this be undertaken in close connections with the relevant CEO for the Mayoral Forum Chair. This term that being the WDC CEO who would stay closely connected to ensure clarity of process and support for engaging with the Chair of the Mayoral Forum.
4. The main purpose of these meetings is to allow open and transparent communication between the Mayors/Chair of the Northland councils without interference or disruption.

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm.