

**Report of the ordinary meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held in the Council Chambers, 29 Bowler Avenue, Gore on Tuesday 22 August 2017, at 6.15pm.**

**Present** His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks, JP), Cr Bolger (Chairperson), Crs Beale, Davis, Gardyne, D Grant, P Grant, Highsted, Phillips, Reid and Sharp.

**In Attendance** The Chief Executive (Mr Steve Parry), Chief Financial Officer (Mr Luke Blackbeard), General Manager Infrastructure (Mr Ramesh Sharma), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Transport Manager (Mr Peter Standring), 3 Waters Asset Manager (Mr Matt Bayliss), Senior Corporate Support Officer (Ms Ceri Macleod) and 3 Waters Project Manager (Mr Sam Bunting).

**Apology** Cr Dickson apologised for absence.

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**1. RATES REBATE SCHEME 2017 (SC1911)**

A memo had been received from the Chief Financial Officer providing an overview of the rates rebate scheme and its implementation within the District. Cr Bolger asked whether the Council could work towards increasing take-up of the scheme and whether there was any feel for the number of residents who could potentially qualify for a rebate.

The Chief Financial Officer noted the Council's disappointment in the reduction in the number of people accessing the scheme and said it was difficult to determine who could potentially be eligible.

In response to Cr Reid the Officer said rates rebate information was available to Grey Power and the Council aimed to further promote the scheme to it and other organisations, including the Budget Advisory Service and Work and Income. He emphasised the rebate eligibility was determined by the person's level of rates, their income and number of dependants.

Cr Davis said the availability of rebates was a very positive message for the community.

In response to Cr Gardyne, the Chief Executive said a question regarding rates rebates could be factored into a future residents' survey. That would help raise awareness of the fact that level of income was an indicator in determining rebate eligibility and potentially, rebate uptake across the community.

In response to Cr Reid, the Officer said the rebate table presented in his report could be made publically available and could form part of an awareness campaign going forward.

Cr Phillips said low rebate uptake was probably attributable to a lack of awareness that income was the determining factor rather than age.

Cr Davis agreed and said in the past there had been a focus on raising awareness of rebates being potentially available to elderly residents.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Davis THAT the report be received.**

**2. CLEAN AIR LOANS QUARTERLY REPORT 30 JUNE 2017 (SC1633)**

The Committee considered a Clean Air Loans quarterly report from the Chief Financial Officer for 30 June 2017.

Cr Bolger complimented Environment Southland on the level of funds available locally.

The Officer noted the Council's disappointment in the relatively low levels of loan uptake to date, but took into account the lengthy timeframes involved in developing and processing applications. He said the Council had received good feedback from members of the public that had submitted applications and noted a need to readvertise to increase demand.

Cr Bolger suggested promoting the scheme to relevant retailers could assist.

Cr Highsted noted through his involvement in the Warm Homes Trust that the insulation scheme was coming to an end in June 2018, with no insulation subsidies available from July 2019.

Cr P Grant said he was struggling to determine the difference between the clean air and warm home schemes. Cr Highsted confirmed the EECA initiative was available to landlords and property owners with community service cards, and

that the clean air scheme was managed by Environment Southland for people within the Gore air shed.

Cr Phillips and His Worship the Mayor said they had both received enquiries from Maitua residents wanting to access the clean air scheme but were unable to as Maitua did not have an air quality problem.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Gardyne THAT the report be received.**

**3. RATE ARREARS REPORT 1 JULY 2017 (SC1912)**

The Committee considered a rate arrears report from the Chief Financial Officer.

Cr Bolger noted the Council was tracking reasonably well compared to historic levels.

The Officer agreed and said the Council's level of rate arrears had tracked at around 3% in previous years, which was not out of step with other councils in the country.

Cr Bolger said rate arrears was a delicate issue and noted the Council's commitment to being as helpful and supportive as possible in addressing problems as they arose.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Bolger seconded by Cr Reid THAT the report be received.**

The meeting concluded at 6.33pm.