

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Gore District Council, held in the Council Chambers, James Cumming Wing, 10C Ardwick Street, Gore on Tuesday 9 June 2020, at 4.18pm

Present His Worship the Mayor, Mr Tracy Hicks JP, Crs Bolger (via Zoom), Davis, Dickson, Gardyne, D Grant JP, N Grant, Highsted, MacDonell, McPhail, Phillips and Reid.

In attendance The Chief Executive (Mr Stephen Parry), General Manager Infrastructure (Mr Ramesh Sharma), HR/Administration Manager (Susan Jones), Communications-Marketing Manager (Sonia Gerken), Project Manager Infrastructure (Mr Hashem Ramezan-zadeh), Roading Asset Manager (Mr Peter Standring), Planning Consultant (Mr Keith Hovell), senior Roading Operations Officer (Mr Murray Hasler), Planning Manager (Mr Dean Balkin), Corporate Support Officer (Mrs Karla Brotherston), Graduate Planner (Leigh Clutterbuck-Young) and Accountant (Mrs Donna McKewen).

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Dickson, seconded by Cr Reid, **THAT** the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Gore District Council, held on Tuesday 12 May 2020, as presented, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and complete record.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr D Grant, **THAT** the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Gore District Council, held on Tuesday 26 May 2020, as presented, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and complete record.

Cr Gardyne referred to the part-time Animal Control Officer that had been removed from the 2020-21 budget and asked whether it should have been included in the motion.

The Chief Executive agreed and suggested it be incorporated as part of the motion.

The motion to adopt the minutes with a notation that the part-time Animal Control Officer would be removed from the 2020-21 budget, was put and it was carried.

2. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR APRIL 2020

A financial report for April 2020 from the Accountant had been circulated with the agenda and was perused by the Council.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr McPhail, THAT the financial report for April 2020 be received.

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3. ELECTION SIGNAGE POLICY (SC0110)

A memo had been received from the Planning Consultant advising that the current Election Signage Policy had been adopted in 2011. The intent of the policy was to list the requirements for signage erected for local authority elections, however, it included a clause “for national parliamentary elections, sign must comply with the policy.” That gave rise to errors in the policy as there were differences between the two election processes. The current policy was also incorrect in stating approval was required from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) where signage was erected on a state highway. NZTA had delegated responsibility for all signage on state highways, where the speed limit was less than 70kph, to local authorities. NZTA remained the administering body for signage on state highways where the speed limit was 70kph or more.

A new proposed policy had been circulated with the agenda. It contained more detail on all aspects of election signage that reflected best practice throughout the country. In particular, detail was provided on the approval and enforcement processes to ensure more certainty for candidates and political parties, the public and Council staff administering the policy.

Cr D Grant referred to clause 3.2.7 of the proposed policy and questioned whether there should be restrictions on residential zoned land and a limit of two signs for a rural property. The Consultant said if there was to be specific areas for signage then the District Plan zoning maps would need to be included which could be confusing. It could also be difficult to administer if there were different signage permitted for different areas. It would be more complex than it needed to be.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Highsted, THAT subject to clause 3.2.7 being deleted, the proposed Election Signage Policy be adopted.

2020/59

4. REPORT ON THE RECENT CONSULTATION CONDUCTED FOR A DRAFT SPATIAL PLAN (SC2878)

This item was withdrawn as there were two submitters who wished to present their submissions. These would be scheduled for the extraordinary meeting to be held prior to the end of June.

5. SOUTHLAND WARM HOMES TRUST (SC2588)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive together with a copy of the annual report of the Southland Warm Homes Trust for the year ending 30 June 2019. Since 2008, the Council had contributed an annual sum of \$15,000 to the Trust to provide subsidised insulation to Southland homes in order to provide a far healthier living environment for people living in those properties.

Cr Highsted said a recent change in the scheme had resulted in the Government funding 95% of the cost of insulation and the Trust may have surplus funds as a result. There was still a very high demand for the scheme. In response to Cr Gardyne, Cr Highsted said the Trust was turning its mind to the prospect of perhaps being able to assist rental properties or ones in Matura that were unable to benefit from the clean air loan scheme due to being outside of the air shed.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Dickson, THAT the annual report from the Southland Warm Homes Trust be received.

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6. PRESENTATION FROM SOUTHERN AREA POLICE COMMANDER (SC2588)

Inspector Mike Bowman, Southland Area Commander joined the meeting by Zoom and provided an update on police activities including the presence of organised crime in Matura. The Police were taking an overt rather than covert approach to it. Staff were being asked to have an open mind with deployment to a range of areas such as the front line, road policing, CIB etc in order to have the most needed areas well resourced. The Gore Police were doing a great job supporting the local community. Firearms and associated offenders were becoming an increasing issue.

In response to Cr McPhail, Inspector Bowman advised the crime statistics had dropped quite dramatically during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, it was now starting to increase again and it was important for the Police to utilise the tools it had to target problem areas and offenders.

His Worship extended thanks to Inspector Bowman for making the presentation and he departed the meeting at 4.52pm

7. COVID-19 RATES DEFERMENT UPDATE (SC2450)

A memo had been received from the Rating Officer updating the Council on the rates deferral scheme that had been approved by the Council earlier in the year. At the date of the report, of the 6057 properties, 16 applications had been made for deferment. A total of \$24,435 had been deferred as at 28 May. The demographics of the applicants had been four residential, five rural and six commercial.

Cr D Grant complimented the Rating Officer for the way he had recently encouraged a ratepayer to pay their rates via direct debit.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Reid, seconded by Cr D Grant, THAT the report be received.

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The Accountant and Graduate Planner departed the meeting at 4.56pm

8. 2020 GORE RESIDENTS' SURVEY (SC2862)

A report had been received from the Communications Manager together with a copy of the 2020 Gore residents' survey and appendix. The survey had been conducted in February-March and due to the Covid-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown, the survey was ended earlier than expected to reduce undue stress on residents. The survey company contacted 355 respondents via telephone and there was a further 201 who took part online. Satisfaction levels rose from 37% to 46% while those dissatisfied dropped by 5% to 22%. The ouvea premix issued dominated people's responses, although removal of the dross was only a priority for 54 people. The main priorities were roading, water, wastewater/stormwater and footpaths. Responses from Managers in relation to their areas had also been included in the report.

Cr Dickson noted the communication with Councillors was not as good as it could be. She was not sure what could be done to improve it. She felt she was connected as were other Councillors. His Worship said it was a recurring challenge for the Council. He thought there needed to be more proactive approaches made for Councillors and the organisation to engage with the community. He thought there was progress being made but it took time and some of the issues being promoted by the Council needed trust. He thought the Council was being as proactive as it could be. The Manager said community engagement did take time and also resourcing. Engagement was a two way conversation. His Worship said Councils that had good engagement spoke with the community before making any decisions about the way forward. He thought the Council was working towards that. Communication was becoming more and more digital and that was getting a good uptake. The Council was leading the country with its uptake through Antenno. There was still work required.

Cr Highsted questioned the way the survey company took the answers about elected members. The Chief Executive said he had asked the same question, and the questions that had been posed offered slightly different response options due to the category. The easiest solution for the next survey would be to reconfigure the response options to ensure there was more consistency. The Manager added the survey was linked to the Council's KPIs.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Phillips, seconded by Cr Reid, THAT the report be received.

2020/62

9. RESIDENTS' SURVEY FLOOD RESPONSE (SC2862)

A memo had been received from the Communications Manager following the state of emergency being declared for Southland in response to heavy rainfall causing severe flooding throughout the province in early February.

Cr Reid thought the response from the whole team had been amazing and felt the survey responses reflected that. It had been well done by everyone involved. With the Covid response everyone had done a great job and again, it was the EOC working behind the scenes. The public did not get to see the extra work contributed by the staff. From a community point of view, the flood response had been excellent. His Worship said with the Covid response, the civil defence function within the Council was probably invisible to the community. He added the community welfare group that had been established as part of the Covid response was continuing to meet on a regular basis. It had not been an area that the Council had been overtly connected with in the past. There were organisations involved who would normally never connect with others which was great to see.

In response to His Worship asking about the likelihood of financial compensation for flood damage being received, the Chief Executive said there was a minimum threshold of \$250,000 able to be made through LAPP. There was a \$100,000 excess and the Council was then able to claim 40% of the balance. The Council was still working through the process. LAPP was the only real insurance option. However, there could be subsidies available through NEMA and NZTA. A further report will be provided to a future meeting.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr Highsted, THAT the report be received.

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The Planning Consultant departed the meeting at 5.15pm

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (SC2752)

A report had been received from the Human Resources Manager outlining the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the activation of the Council's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as part of the response. The Manager noted that the EOC had been something that "flew under the radar" for the majority of people in the community during the seven weeks it had been operational for.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D Grant, seconded by Cr Dickson, THAT the report be received.

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11. RURAL SPORT NEW ZEALAND

A copy of the report from the Rural Travel Fund Sub-Committee meeting held on Thursday 28 May had been circulated with the agenda, for the Council's information.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Reid, seconded by Cr McPhail, THAT the information be received.

2020/65

12. GREAT SOUTH – REVISED DRAFT STATEMENT OF INTENT 2020/21 (SC2586)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive together with a revised draft Statement of Intent for 2020/21. The Statement of Intent had to be overhauled in light of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the consequential decimation of international tourism in particular. The draft Statement of Intent was more geared to economic revival and job retention. Supporting local businesses was accorded a high priority. The year ahead promised to be a challenging one for Great South. The Council had invested heavily in the new agency to propel Southland forward in line with the vision set out in the Southland Regional Development Strategy.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Highsted, seconded by Cr MacDonell, THAT the Council endorse the Great South draft Statement of Intent 2020/21.

2020/66

13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT PANEL – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE (SC2697)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive following the November 2019 meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee when the concept of a Treasury Management Panel had been suggested to assist Council management with interest rate management of Council debt. Since that time, the Audit and Risk Committee had met and had an opportunity to reflect on the proposed operation of the Treasury Management Panel. Draft terms of reference had been created and had been circulated with the agenda.

Cr Reid thought the panel should be made up of the two independent members and the Chair of the Audit and Risk and the CEO and CFO. That would make a total of five members and in the interests of flexibility, that was where it should sit.

Cr MacDonell thought it was important to have another elected member in addition to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Cr D Grant moved THAT with the removal of the two Councillor representatives, the Council approve the draft Terms of Reference for the Treasury Management subcommittee, to be known as the Treasury Management Panel.

The motion was seconded by Cr Reid.

Cr MacDonell moved as an amendment THAT in addition to the two independent members, one elected member be appointed to the Panel together with the Chair of Audit and Risk.

The amendment was seconded by Cr Gardyne.

The Chief Executive said one of the independent members had noted in his experience, the panel was heavy with elected members when it was in fact undertaking a specialist function. He believed the Chair of Audit and Risk and the two independent members would be sufficient for the panel.

Cr Davis asked what the downside was of having another elected member. His Worship said the agility of the panel. Cr Highsted said he saw what Michael Chamberlain brought as the independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee and his expertise was invaluable.

The motion was put and it was carried.

2020/67

The meeting concluded at 5.31pm