

Appendix 8

Virtual public meetings on draft Annual Plan and emergency budget

20 May 2020

Key issues discussed:

Rates increase

- happy to pay a higher level of rates to allow low income people to have a zero increase in rates
- support of a rates rise of 3.8% so the city didn't lose its services
- in the next few years rates would have to increase more steeply if Council didn't increase rates now and get on with projects needed. This would cause Lower Hutt to go backwards and projects would cost more in the end
- was there assistance for those facing rates rises and struggling with freezing houses
- suggestion that residents pay more in rates now. Preference was for a 5% increase in rates across the board rather than Naenae residents paying more
- noted there were different options in the draft AP around how rates were apportioned. She asked if Council had looked at options that would better support the management of our resources. e.g. water management.

Investment

- had Council considered Investment Bonds.

Rates differential

- explanation about the rates differential and how it worked

Water

- does the city have an emergency plan for the future for if we run out of water

Housing

- Council doing its best to progress District Plan changes so the Wainuiomata Marae can build houses on its marae.

Naenae Pool

- why Council was determined to progress Naenae Pool. Thought there might be enough pools in Lower Hutt
- the loss of Naenae pool has put the Naenae community in a depressed state. A lot of local schools went to the pool for swimming lessons, but now there were travel costs for lower income families. Having the gym go too meant Naenae was missing out on a lot. Wanted Council to prioritise the pool as soon as possible it would help the Naenae community and would give the young people something to do too
- what was the pool timeline and how much it would cost
- had been travelling to the Upper Hutt pool but if Naenae was open would be there. Thought half the people in the Upper Hutt pool were from the Naenae/Taita area and would prefer Council to start building a new pool now because costs would go up
- thought job creation was not necessarily a good justification to use for the Naenae Pool Said as all large projects were good for job creation. Hadn't seen the total costs for the pool but

noted the entry fee would be only a few dollars while the cost to Council per person per visit was \$10. Would expect all costs to be included before going ahead with the project

- agreed Naenae Pool needed to re-open. Said that when it closed, the suburb died with it and this needed to be taken into consideration, as it was a facility for everyone.

Transport

- Laings Road intersection with Queens Drive outside council dangerous
- a traffic problem with buses parking on the road (Western/Eastern Hutt Road?) even though Council had put up signs, buses were still parking there. He asked if police could be called in to enforce it
- what is happening about the Melling interchange
- suggestion that Council removed the cost of riverbank parking so people could take advantage of the fresh veges and the food at the Saturday market. Added the cost of parking was also the cost of veges for low income people and would also support our small market operators

Recycling

- recycling had taken a hit (with Covid-19) and wants to know what plans are in place for the resumption of recycling. Added that in the longer term, many countries were not accepting plastic waste and asked if Council was going to still look at introducing a new system and retain full recycling services
- big recycling bins in Naenae at ex-recycling station had been removed but people were still dumping rubbish there

Concern for lower paid workers

- wage freezes could hurt those people on low incomes. Noted at Auckland City Council, higher paid staff members were taking a pay cut. Important to make sure the Living Wage could continue to maintain wages for our people

Healthy homes

- was there assistance for those struggling with freezing houses
- the Sustainability Trust provided discounts on insulation and heat pumps

Waterways

- streams in Stokes Valley
- were there plans for cleaning up Lower Hutt water ways, and whether they were short term or long term plans. Asked if Council was interested in a product to help with it that was cheap and effective.
- regarding clean water, suggested paying the unemployed to clean up the water ways as happened in the 70s. Said this would be a positive local initiative to provide work for the unemployed rather than giving the money to big contractors.

Community groups and organisations

- how could costs for community groups, sports groups and organisations be reduced

Homelessness

- projects in the AP looked good but wanted to know what Council could do to help people who needed it in Lower Hutt. Acknowledged the Homelessness Strategy, but asked if the team

could focus on getting action on homelessness as soon as possible, rather than waiting till the end of a long process.

Sustainability and Climate change

- regarding climate change, acknowledged work was beginning but asked for initiatives that could be started soon rather than waiting until the end of a long consultation process.
- noted that only \$1.30 in every \$100 of rates money was spent on environmental sustainability, resilience and emergency management and asked if environmental sustainability would be taken more seriously in the next LTP. Said more money-focus and planning was needed.

Engagement

- understood Council had to do an emergency budget because this was not business as usual, but noted the engagement process still seemed to be required to stick to business as usual.
- Thought time to make a submission was inadequate given the closing date was in the first week that schools were back and people had lots on their mind with little time to digest the draft AP and give sound feedback.
- Noted Local Government legislation stated that consultation needed to happen before starting on the plan but Council had been unable to undertake proper consultation and asked if there could be some scrutiny of the consultation process with a report on how effective the consultation had been under the current constraints. Added that more work was needed on how to engage in this new form of local democracy.
- Wanted a commitment that the Mayor would respond to 'us' on the analysis of TC: Asked why consultation couldn't be pushed out another week.

Mārae

- asked about the equity of funding between community houses and marae given that marae provided a large amount of community house services.