

# OPEN Briefing on Council's Role in Developing a Resilient Food Network

**Date of Briefing: 21/4/2021 – 4pm**

## Attendees

---

**Elected Members:** Mayor Barry, Deputy Mayor Lewis, Crs Briggs, Dyer, Mitchell, Shaw, Hislop and Edwards

**Staff:** Director Neighbourhoods and Communities, Healthy City Manager, Systems Innovator, Lead Systems Innovator, Systems Innovator Smokefree Environments, Strategic Communications Manager and the Ecology/Horticulture Advisor

## Apologies / Absences

---

Elected Member Apologies: Crs Brown, Rasheed and Sutton

## Key Objectives of the Briefing

---

The purpose of the briefing is for the Healthy City Manager to brief members on Council's role in developing a resilient food network.

## Discussion

---

The Director Neighbourhoods and Communities and the Healthy City Manager used a slide show presentation to explain work underway to understand the local food environment and address issues. They elaborated on slides 1-3 as follows:

**Slide 1** – A draft strategic framework is being developed with a focus on activities to support the four Wellbeings, a COVID-19 recovery response plan, and a successful and thriving community. Council has already supported a number of local food distribution and growing initiatives including during the COVID-19 lockdown.

**Slide 2** – A work programme is underway to enable activities and projects that support wellbeing.

**Slide 3** – SOLGM Wellbeing indicators are top of mind when considering a resilient food system that improves wellbeing, livelihoods and protects the natural environment.

**Slide 4** – Heading- Making Good Kai a Reality for our People

The Lead Systems Innovator used the slide show presentation to explain the history of Lower Hutt and the challenges of creating a resilient food system. He elaborated on slides 5 – 16 as follows:

**Slide 5** - The people of Te Āti Awa were acknowledged along with their history and their contributions to Lower Hutt.

**Slide 6** – Lower Hutt in 1839 - The whenua was fertile and a major source of food.

**Slide 7** – Lower Hutt in 1840 – Māori used traditional methods for growing food and had arrangements with other iwi for mahinga kai (food gathering). Māori ate good quality food from the whenua and were healthy.

- Slide 8** – Lower Hutt in 1902 - Māori were no longer able to protect their resources. They were no longer able to provide for and sustain their people and suffered loss of mana.
- Slide 9** – Lower Hutt in early 1900s – The Wellington region was almost entirely dependent on food grown by the Chinese on gardens in the Hutt Valley. Nevertheless Chinese people were pilloried and excluded.
- Slide 10** – Naenae and Taita in 1939 – The area was still mostly market garden and had rich alluvial soil.
- Slide 11** – Naenae in 1945-1958 – Farmers were forced into selling their land for development. Houses began to cover the gardens in Naenae and Taita.
- Slides 12-17** - Urban development spread over the Lower Hutt whenua, covering the area. Over the past 100 years but especially more recently, good kai has been replaced with convenient kai that is not good for health and uses targeted marketing. It takes effort to resist the temptation of these foods. With an increasing population, existing productive land is at risk. There is a responsibility to balance the preservation of green space and food growing with the need for urban development. As trusted kaitiaki we need to take care of the land and the people so we can look to a resilient future. Looking back to the past and reviving some of the lost skills and ways of life could help create future resilience.
- Slides 18- 21** - The Director Neighbourhoods and Communities and the Healthy City Manager elaborated on slides 18-21 and outlined the work of food related initiatives that are currently supported by Council.

The Director Neighbourhoods and Communities and the Healthy City Manager detailed the following:

- Working with Kāinga Ora on submissions to the District Plan to ask for more green space and common areas where food can be grown.
- The current food system is not meeting the needs of the communities; this became more obvious during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Funding for Council's community partners has helped to reach people but more work is needed to help whānau move away from food dependency.
- Council has opportunities to address inequities by making good food more accessible using the District Plan, as well as transport planning and support for community groups.
- Food security at a regional level could be considered through the Wellington Regional Growth Framework. Also when planning for emergency events and disasters.
- A Government led food in schools programme that is currently underway could potentially create employment opportunities as well as providing healthy food.
- Progress on food system improvements will be community led. They will most likely be reported on through Community Engagement Grant projects.
- Council has been providing funding to the Common Unity Project for a food resilience project. This project is to understand the food system across Lower Hutt for developing a food plan and finding local solutions.
  - A healthy city urban design guide provides guidance on best practice in other cities and the idea could be leveraged for Lower Hutt.
  - Consider the most effective levers - where we will get biggest impact and if we are missing anything.

Elected members raised the following suggestions:

- It is difficult to get a balance of land for housing and for food growing without the cost of housing continuing to rise.
- There is an opportunity to partner with the community, Kāinga Ora and developers for productive green space.
- Partner with food collection organisations as well as food growing organisations.
- Partner with community organisations like Common Unity Project to further enable them to do this work.
- Not every model works in every community – it is important to look at each community and what they need.
- Existing bodies doing this work are already at capacity. Schools are already overloaded with work. New initiatives are needed.
- Parents learn from their children –investigate opportunities for land in schools. Also Kāinga Ora land and sportsfields. Kāinga Ora are supportive and have land where food can be grown and composted.
- District Plan changes may not be a cure-all. Lots of people have front yards and don't use them. People don't have the knowledge or the time.
- Our society has changed and it may not be realistic to expect people to compost.
- Ensure existing organisations doing this work get funded – connect the dots.
- Education is important.
- Investigate allowing residents to grow food on their berms.

The briefing closed at 5.05pm.

Attachment: Powerpoint presentation