



20 April 2015

Draft Long Term Plan  
Upper Hutt City Council  
Private Bag 907  
Upper Hutt 5140

**Draft Long Term Plan 2015-2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Upper Hutt City Council Draft Long Term Plan 2015 -2025 (LTP).

Council and Regional Public Health have a common agenda – working with communities where they live, work and play to improve and protect their quality of life. Regional Public Health (RPH) wants to work with Council to make our common goal achievable and easier for our communities. By finding mutual points of interest and working together we can be more efficient, reduce the burden of engagement on our communities and be more effective in our policy implementation. A collaborative approach will also facilitate smarter use of each agencies finite resources.

This submission provides a public health perspective and information for Council to consider in their planning decisions. Upper Hutt City Council's (UHCC) policy and planning are an integral part to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

We recognize that this is the first round of the new LTP Consultation Documents and congratulate you on summarizing a large amount of important information into a short document. We hope to reflect this process with a concise submission. To achieve this we have selected two priority areas RPH would like to progress with Council during 2015-2025, Smokefree NZ 2025 and reducing obesity through healthy food policies.

We would appreciate the opportunity to make an oral submission and we will be pleased to provide further information or clarification on any of the points raised in our submission. The contact point is:

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Yours Sincerely

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## How this document is structured.

- A. An overview of Regional Public Health
- B. General comments on the LTP
- C. Responses to your specific questions
- D. RPH priorities on improving the wellbeing of our shared communities by working towards:
  - a Smokefree New Zealand 2025
  - reducing and preventing obesity.

## A. WHO WE ARE –Regional Public Health

Regional Public Health (RPH) is a regional service based at Hutt Valley District Health Board and serving the greater Wellington region. Our business is public health action - working with our community to make it a healthier, safer place to live. We have a particular focus on children, Māori and Pacific populations. We are funded mainly by the Ministry of Health but also have contracts with District Health Boards and other agencies to deliver specific services.

Our staff include a range of occupations comprising: medical officers of health, public health advisors, health protection officers, vision and hearing technicians, public health nurses and public health analysts.

RPH respects and acknowledges that Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) decisions have a significant impact on health. We see this through appropriate management of infrastructure (water and sewage) and creating environments that support wellbeing, for example, through reducing the impact of non-communicable diseases by reducing exposure to tobacco, facilitating access to healthy food and promoting good urban design that encourages physical activity. This is the basis for making a submission on your LTP.

RPH's key message in this submission is that **we seek the support of elected members to work with council officers to:**

- **progress Smokefree New Zealand 2025**
- **reduce and prevent obesity.**

## B. GENERAL COMMENTS ON YOUR LONG TERM PLAN – Life. Leisure. Live it!

*“A great place for families and communities to thrive in years to come.”*

RPH congratulates UHCC on producing a high quality document that delicately balances the needs of our communities now and in the future. It is great to see families and communities at the heart of your planning.

RPH supports your initiative in looking to the future and making sure that there is enough water to drink, that waste water and storm water systems are well maintained and built to reduce the impact of earthquakes, droughts and floods. RPH welcomes opportunities to work with you further on these and other resilience measures.

RPH supports your planned renewals and upgrades of your water supply pipeline, storm water pipeline, waste water pipeline, Pencarrow waste water project and a new reservoir. As the LTP consultation document highlights, well-maintained infrastructure which has sufficient capacity and resilience, is critical to the economic prosperity and social wellbeing of people living and working in Upper Hutt.

RPH would welcome the opportunity to work with you in these high priority areas. We think a way to work towards communities living more enjoyable and fulfilling lives<sup>1</sup> is to incorporate a 'Health in All Policies'<sup>2</sup> approach. That doesn't mean 'doing health policy'. It means looking at the impact of policies, planning and decisions on the wellbeing of our shared communities. This collaborative approach acknowledges that each stakeholder has different drivers but has shared goals. An example of where this approach has been working well is with Christchurch City Council (CCC). RPH has been learning from our public health colleagues in Christchurch about this approach and would be willing to explore such an approach further if it is of interest to Council<sup>3</sup>. CCC has been using 'Health in All Policies' for the last five years with some great outcomes<sup>4</sup>.

RPH can assist council with public health policy advice on request. We have skilled staff who can participate in or provide advice on policy/planning development and implementation processes.

RPH congratulates UHCC Community Services Team for the production of the Upper Hutt Health Contacts book. This is a great initiative and highlights that UHCC has a great understanding of how health and wellbeing of our communities is wider than the health sector.

### *Community Water Fluoridation*

It is likely that there will be submitters to the LTP who are opposed to community water fluoridation. RPH supports the continuation of community water fluoridation, based on national and international scientific research.

The Hutt Valley District Health Board covers the UHCC geographic area and therefore for consistency in advice we have included HVDHB's position on community water fluoridation.

"The Hutt Valley District Health Board endorses community water fluoridation as an effective public health measure contributing to the maintenance of oral health, prevention of tooth decay and reduction in health inequalities. Community water fluoridation is a low cost measure that benefits people of all ages with natural teeth and has proven over the last 65 years to be very safe. Local drinking-water supplies that are already fluoridated should remain so. Where technically feasible, where local supplies are not fluoridated, local authorities are encouraged to implement water fluoridation programmes as soon as possible to improve the oral health of their communities."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Draft LTP p.7

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cph.co.nz/Files/CHIAPPInfoSheet1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cph.co.nz/About-Us/Health-in-all-Policies/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cph.co.nz/files/CHIAPPAnnualReport2014.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.huttvalleydhd.org.nz/content/8a1169c4-4853-46b7-84d6-15038832547d.cmr>

RPH can provide Council with the latest scientific research on this matter and a comprehensive tailored workshop for elected members and/or council officers, if it would be of interest.

### **C. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

Overall do you support our proposed direction?

RPH supports your overall direction of investing now for intergenerational equity of infrastructure costs and for continuing to develop Upper Hutt into a great place for families, businesses and communities to thrive in years to come.

Rates

No comment.

Debt

No comment.

**New Projects**

LED street light upgrade

Yes. RPH supports this use of smart technology and energy efficient lights.

Develop the walkway and cycleway network around the city

Yes. RPH supports the development of walk and cycle pathways for recreation and commuter routes. Providing safe and interesting opportunities for residents to be physically active promotes physical and mental wellbeing, prevents disease and improves social connectedness and quality of life.

Hutt River Trail upgrades

RPH supports the upgrade to the Hutt River Trail.

Cruickshank rail tunnel walkway/cycleway

Yes. RPH supports cycle and walk pathways for recreation.

Harcourt paddling pool upgrade

Yes. RPH supports facilities that encourage physical activity. The proposed power outlet and concrete pad for food vendors presents an opportunity to develop new food provision policies. RPH can assist UHCC with the development of these policies which aim to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

#### Expressions Art and Entertainment extension

If Council chooses to proceed with the extension of Expressions to include a conference kitchen, RPH recommends developing and/or reviewing the food provision policies. RPH can assist UHCC with the development of these policies which aim to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

#### Community Space – what do you think would serve our community best?

RPH would support incorporating a health impact assessment or a 'Health in All Policies' approach into the feasibility study looking at the community needs and assessing the existing facilities. RPH can assist with either of these approaches.

#### Rural roading network and safety improvements

RPH supports the introduction of an annual upgrade programme to improve safety for all road users and reduce the risk of crashes.

#### Boosting economic development

No comment.

#### Planning for our future growth

RPH supports the development of a Rural Strategy and a review of the existing Urban Growth Strategy. RPH would like to participate in the development and review of these strategies and can contribute relevant health profile data.

#### Additional comments

RPH can work with council on many areas but, for the purpose of this submission, we would like to emphasise **SMOKEFREE NZ 2025** and **REDUCING OBESITY through healthy food policies** as two key areas where we can work together to make a real difference in the next 3 years (before the next Long Term Plan review is due).

#### **D. RPH priorities**

RPH wants to support Council in planning environments that reduce exposure to tobacco, facilitating access to healthy food and increase physical activity for our communities.

#### **SMOKEFREE 2025**

RPH congratulates UHCC for the progress you have made already, for example smokefree playgrounds, and wants to continue to work with you to progress this important area.

## **What are the public health issues?**

Tobacco smoking kills approximately 5000 New Zealanders every year. Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer and is a significant contributory cause to many other cancers and chronic diseases.

Our public health advisors (tobacco) work in many areas including enforcement of the Smokefree Environments Act, supporting smokefree policies and better help for smokers to quit - all of which support the Government's goal of a Smokefree New Zealand by 2025.

Our goals are:

- Creating environments that normalises being smokefree.
- More smokefree environments.
- Fewer young people and children start smoking.
- More smokers quit.

## **RPH can work with UHCC to demonstrate leadership in achieving Smokefree NZ 2025 by:**

1. Increasing the number of smokefree environments.
2. Extending smokefree parks, including all UHCC properties, reserves etc.
3. Helping UHCC in the development of a licence scheme for tobacco retailers (thus facilitating reducing the sales to young people and minors).
4. Encouraging Council and workplaces to provide smoking cessation workshops for staff.
5. Working with Council to develop smokefree policy and clauses for Council sponsored or affiliated events and all Council venues.
6. Working with Council to promote smokefree cars carrying children.
7. Working with Council on providing smokefree rental accommodation.
8. Working with Council to ensure bars, restaurants and cafes are smokefree.

RPH also has a range of smokefree resources and health information available, including banners for loan free of charge. Please contact us if you would like support for your smokefree community events.

## **REDUCING OBESITY**

RPH recognises and supports Council's previous work in prioritising cycleways and increasing pedestrian walkways. RPH recommends Council now gives focus to creating an environment that supports easy access to healthy, affordable food where people live, learn, work and play. Councils have an opportunity to show leadership in identifying and implementing strategies that support and promote healthy food provision in communities, Council owned cafes, vending machines, catering and sponsored events.

## **What are the public health issues?**

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having good food choices and opportunities for physical activity is imperative. The Prime Minister's chief

science advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman, recently stated in a World Health Organisation report on ending childhood obesity:

“There is an understandable tendency to see obesity as a problem for the health sector, but preventing childhood obesity demands the coordinated contributions of government ministries and institutions responsible for policies on education, food, agriculture, commerce and industry, finance/revenue, sport and recreation, media and communication, environmental and urban planning, transport and social affairs.”<sup>6</sup>.

By 2016, it is projected that high body mass index will overtake tobacco use as the leading risk to health, making obesity a significant issue for New Zealand<sup>7</sup>. International research recognises the close relationship between healthier populations and economic prosperity, arguing that healthy populations stimulate economic growth, lower health care costs, lure new businesses and create jobs<sup>8</sup>.

### **What role does the Council have in reducing obesity via healthy food policy?**

A wide range of opportunities are available to Council to contribute to affordable, healthy food access (which contributes to the reduction and prevention of obesity) including supporting:

- fruit and vegetable co-operatives
- community gardens and markets
- opportunities for cooking and nutrition literacy
- nutrition standards
- food policy for council owned facilities and events
- implementing good urban design principles
- reviewing food retail zoning conditions.

Policy and environmental change have been identified as the foundation of obesity prevention in an environment that promotes eating too much and moving to little<sup>9,10,11,12</sup>. Food policy is a cost effective and sustainable tool<sup>13</sup> to support a healthy nutrition culture and is a strategy utilised as

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<sup>6</sup> WHO interim report of the commission on ending childhood obesity. World Health Organization 2015, p.23  
<http://www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/commission-ending-childhood-obesity-interim-report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Briefing to incoming health minister 2014. <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/briefing-incoming-minister-health-2014>

<sup>8</sup> Reeve, B., Ashe, M., Farias, R., Gostin, L.. State and Municipal Innovations in Obesity Policy: Why Localities Remain a Necessary Laboratory for Innovation. American Journal of Public Health: 105.3 (March 2015): 442-450.

<sup>9</sup> Egger G, Swinburn B. An “ecological” approach to the obesity pandemic. BMJ 1997;315: 477-80.

<sup>10</sup> Harvard School of Public Health: The Obesity Prevention Source [www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/) (accessed 2 June 2012)

<sup>11</sup> Haby M, Vos T, Carter R et al. A new approach to assessing the health benefit from obesity interventions in children and adolescents: the assessing cost-effectiveness in obesity project. Int J Obes 2006;30:1463-75.

<sup>12</sup> Vos T, Carter R, Barendregt J et al. Assessing Cost Effectiveness in Prevention (ACE Prevention): Final Report. Brisbane: University of Queensland and Melbourne: Deakin University; 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Vos T, Carter R, Barendregt J et al. Assessing Cost Effectiveness in Prevention (ACE Prevention): Final Report. Brisbane: University of Queensland and Melbourne: Deakin University; 2010.

part of Healthy Together Victoria's *Achievement Programme*<sup>14</sup>, and by an increasing number of District Health Boards and some councils. For example, Hutt City Council has been designated as a site for the Healthy Families NZ initiative, which is based on the Healthy Together Victoria programme. This provides a local case for how healthy nutrition culture can be implemented, with cross sector engagement with central government, local government and District Health Boards.

RPH would like to work alongside Council to support and prioritise strategies that impact the food environment and reduce the significant and unequal burden of nutrition related diseases in the greater Wellington region.

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<sup>14</sup> Healthy Together Victoria, Achievement Programme. Healthy Eating Benchmarks. Accessed 03 March 2015 at [http://www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au/downloads/Accessible\\_PDFs/Workplace/Benchmarks/Healthy\\_Eating\\_Benchmarks\\_WP.pdf](http://www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au/downloads/Accessible_PDFs/Workplace/Benchmarks/Healthy_Eating_Benchmarks_WP.pdf)