



30 April 2015

Draft Long Term Plan
Hutt City Council
Private Bag 31-912
Lower Hutt 5040

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

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. Hutt City Council's (HCC) 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 Long Term Plan (LTP)
- C. Responses to your specific questions
- D. RPH priorities on improving the wellbeing of our shared communities by working towards a Smokefree NZ 2025 and 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 to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and to reduce health disparities. We aim to work with others to promote and protect good health, prevent disease, and improve quality of life across the population. We are funded mainly by the Ministry of Health but also have contracts with District Health Boards and other agencies to deliver specific services.

We have a particular focus on children, Māori and Pacific populations. Our staff include a range of occupations comprising: medical officers of health, public health advisors, public health analysts, health protection officers, vision and hearing technicians and public health nurses.

B. GENERAL COMMENTS ON YOUR LONG TERM PLAN

RPH respects and acknowledges that HCC decisions have a significant impact on health. We see this through appropriate management of infrastructure (e.g. water and sewage) and creating environments that support wellbeing through reducing the exposure to tobacco, facilitating access to healthy food and promoting urban design that encourages physical activity. This is the basis for making a submission on your Long Term Plan (LTP).

RPH congratulates HCC on the bold vision it has to make Hutt City a great place to live, work and play. We commend Council on taking steps towards smart investment options to respond to future demographic changes and ensure services are resilient with changing demands.

RPH commends the work HCC has been undertaking to rejuvenate Hutt City. We support Council continuing to focus on creating a vibrant, strong city full of opportunity for all the people of the HCC community. Utilisation of robust community engagement will support the council in ongoing efforts to improve amenities and facilities for those in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

RPH notes the significant opportunities that the Healthy Families NZ programme can bring for the people of the Hutt City region. We suggest Council continue to complement the health promotion measures undertaken by Healthy Families NZ, with investment in supportive environments for better health and wellbeing. A great example of this was HCC's decision to make healthy choices easy by providing a healthy food environment at the Taita Sport and Community Centre by removing deep fried foods. Another example of this could be targeted projects such as cycle way infrastructure or walking promotion programmes in schools situated in particular neighborhoods.

A specific approach that can be used towards improving quality of life for residents is to incorporate a 'Health in All Policies' approach. This doesn't mean 'doing health policy'; rather, it means looking at the impact of policies, planning and decisions across-the-board on the health and wellbeing of our shared communities. An example of a "Health in All Policies" (HiAP) approach has been undertaken by Christchurch City Council, with a focus on improved quality of life and how this can be achieved via actions from policy decisions. The HiAP approach incorporates problem solving by integrating health, wellbeing and equity into the planning, implementation and evaluation cycle. It seeks to maximise conversations between Council and community, and problem solving with evidence to support action. Furthermore, it has an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of projects.

RPH has been learning from our public health colleagues in Christchurch about this approach. We are willing to explore such an approach if it is of interest to Council.

RPH provided specific recommendations during consultation on the [Urban Growth Strategy](#), [Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy](#) and the [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#). We would like to reiterate implementation of these recommendations to support the intention of your LTP.

RPH can assist HCC 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.

Fluoride

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.

Hutt Valley District Health Board (HVDHB) covers the HCC 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"¹.

RPH can continue to provide Council with the latest scientific research on this matter and work alongside council staff to ensure clarification is provided to the community on water fluoridation issues.

¹ <http://www.huttvalleydhb.org.nz/content/8a1169c4-4853-46b7-84d6-15038832547d.cmr>

C. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. To what extent have you noticed change around Hutt City, especially in the past twelve months or so?

No comment.

2. What are the main changes or enhancements you have noticed, that you think have improved or will improve the city?

RPH congratulates HCC's increased level of investment in cycleways, responding to feedback that saw an additional spend to accelerate the city's cycle network upgrade and funding for the remaining sections of the Eastern Bays Shared Path between Lowry Bay and Days Bay from 2016 to 2022².

RPH suggests that in areas identified for intensification, HCC commits to development and implementation of long term neighbourhood plans. These plans can manage more intensive growth in a way that safeguards local communities' wellbeing and maximises the potential opportunities of more compact development.

The plans would include:

- carefully targeting higher density development
- providing robust and supportive regulatory frameworks
- utilising a collaborative approach to planning higher density - working with developers, communities and other stakeholders
- committing to public and streetscape improvements to support development and encourage active and vibrant streets.

We suggest that Council continue it's planning and implementation work to allow for transport choice and networks that enable safe, comfortable street systems, with supportive social environments³. Such an approach creates a socially diverse environment as everyone – affluent or poor, young or old – has equal access to facilities regardless of whether they own a car.

Creating environments that support walking, cycling and public transport use, and mixed-use neighbourhoods, is particularly important in areas of high deprivation and in existing centres along the rail spine. The changing accessibility requirements of an ageing population favour a more compact development approach. The vast majority of our older population will not live out their lives in rest homes, but rather will need to 'age-in-place' in communities that meet their changing needs. These needs include:

² Hutt City Council. Shaping our City: Consultation Document for Proposed Long Term Plan 2015 – 2025. p. 3. 2015

³ Ministry for the Environment. The Value of Urban Design: The economic, environmental and social benefits of urban design. 2010

- smaller, low maintenance homes and sections
- close and walkable proximity to shops, services and other amenities
- quality, safe public open spaces and recreational facilities
- access to public transport
- opportunities for social and community connections.

Many older people will still want to live within their local neighbourhood, especially where it is well serviced by infrastructure and other facilities. High quality intensification will give these people the opportunity to continue to live in their local neighbourhoods as they age, while increasing the overall resilience and connectivity of Hutt City.

3. Is there anything about the rejuvenation programme that you dislike, or feel does not contribute to the city in a positive way?

RPH recommend HCC strengthen the rejuvenation programme by ensuring the inclusion of the youth voice. Often in our planning, families and young children are considered in the provision of services but the voice of youth is relatively silent. It will be useful for HCC to consider how to further encourage positive youth participation and contribution to the rejuvenation programme. Encouraging youth participation in the development, planning and implementation of any changes or new projects will contribute to increased well being for the Hutt City community. RPH have staff who focus on working with youth and would be willing to work alongside HCC to strengthen work with youth.

4. To what extent do you support the overall direction Council is taking to rejuvenate Hutt City as a whole, through increased investment?

RPH supports the progress HCC has made so far with the Taita Community Centre. We support HCC direction of investing in activities, programmes and centres that promote physical activity and community/social connectedness such as:

- Huia Pool Learn to Swim and Hydro therapy facilities
- Hutt Recreation Ground improvements
- Stokes Valley community hub
- Hutt River Trail
- Avalon Park development

5. How well informed do you feel about the current programme of work that Hutt City Council is implementing?

In light of recent staffing changes at RPH, we are not as up to date with HCC council projects as we would like. RPH will look to re-establish our collaboration with HCC so we are better informed about project and work streams being undertaken at HCC.

6. Overall, what are the three issues that are the most important to you as a Hutt City resident?

No comment.

D. RPH PRIORITIES

RPH wants to support HCC in planning for environments that reduce exposure to tobacco and facilitate access to healthy food and increased physical activity.

SMOKEFREE 2025

RPH congratulates HCC for the progress you have made in this space already, for example through smokefree parks, playgrounds and, in Wainuiomata, the community initiative of trying to reduce smoking in vehicles. RPH 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 Council to demonstrate leadership in achieving Smokefree NZ 2025 by:

1. Increasing the number of smokefree environments.
2. Extending smokefree parks, including all Council properties, reserves etc.
3. Helping Council 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, this could involve working on the success of the Wainuiomata smokefree cars programme.
7. Working with Council on providing smokefree rental accommodation.

8. Working with Council to ensure bars, restaurants and cafes are smoke-free.

RPH 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 event.

REDUCING AND PREVENTING OBESITY

RPH recognises and supports HCC's previous work on supporting increased physical activity, for example, developing cycleways and increasing pedestrian walkways. We would like to continue to support HCC with strategies to increase physical activity, such as supporting promotions of public and active transport utilisation.

RPH recommends HCC now gives focus to the next level of intervention, to create an environment that supports easy access to healthy, affordable food in communities where people live, learn, work and play. HCC has shown leadership in this area already with the ban of the deep fryer at the new Taita Community Centre. HCC can continue with this momentum by 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 21st 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.”⁴

By next year, it is projected that excessive body weight will overtake tobacco use as the leading risk to health, making obesity a significant issue for New Zealand⁵. 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 jobs⁶.

⁴ 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>

⁵ Briefing to incoming health minister 2014 <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/briefing-incoming-minister-health-2014>

⁶ 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.

What role does the Council have in reducing and preventing obesity via healthy food policy?

A further range of opportunities are available to HCC to contribute to affordable, healthy food access, as well as the reduction and prevention of obesity. These opportunities could include further 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 too little⁷⁸⁹¹⁰. Food policy is a cost effective and sustainable tool¹⁰ to support a healthy nutrition culture. The success of HCC's bid for the Healthy Families NZ initiative provides a local case for how healthy nutrition (in addition to focussing on other risk factors for poor health) can be implemented, utilising cross sector engagement with central government, local government and District Health Boards.

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

⁷ Egger G, Swinburn B. An "ecological" approach to the obesity pandemic. *BMJ* 1997;315: 477-80.

⁸ Harvard School of Public Health. The Obesity Prevention Source www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/ (accessed 2 June 2012)

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.