

30 April 2018

Chief Executive
Masterton District Council
161 Queen Street
PO Box 444
Masterton 5840

Regarding: Draft Long Term Plan

Tēnā koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on the Masterton District Council Draft Long Term Plan 2018 -2028.

Council and Regional Public Health have a common agenda – working with communities where they live, work and play to protect and improve their quality of life. Regional Public Health (RPH) wants to support Council with public health knowledge and skills where appropriate. By working together we can be more efficient, reduce the burden of engagement on our communities and be more effective in achieving our common goal. 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. Masterton District Council's (MDC) policy and planning are an integral part to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Please note a separate joint submission between Compass Health, the Primary Healthcare Organisation (PHO) in the Wairarapa, and RPH has also been made with a particular focus on the impacts of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes on our communities.

We are happy to provide further advice or clarification on any of the points raised in our written submission. We request to be heard in support of our written submission. The contact point for this submission is:

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Kind regards

Dr Stephen Palmer
Medical Officer of Health

Peter Gush
Service Manager

How this document is structured:

- A. An overview of Regional Public Health
- B. General comments on the Long Term Plan (LTP)
- C. The three waters
- D. Responses to your specific questions

A. WHO WE ARE – Regional Public Health

Regional Public Health (RPH) serves the greater Wellington region, through its three district health boards (DHBs): Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa and is based at the Hutt Valley District Health Board, and are located at three bases – Porirua, Hutt Valley DHB and Masterton.

Our business is public health action – working to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and to reduce health disparities. We work with others to promote and protect good health, prevent disease, and improve quality of life across the population, with a particular focus on children, Māori and working with primary care organisations. We are funded mainly by the Ministry of Health and we also have contracts with the District Health Boards and other agencies to deliver specific services. We have 130 staff with a diverse range of occupations, including medical officers, public health advisors, health protection officers, public health nurses, analysts and evaluators.

B. GENERAL COMMENTS ON YOUR LONG TERM PLAN

RPH respects and acknowledges that MDC 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).

In light of the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake¹ and an increase in adverse weather events² RPH commends MDC on their approach to assessing and investing in key infrastructure that will protect the health and wellbeing of our communities in an adverse event.

Council and RPH have important roles to play readying and responding to adverse events in our region. For RPH that means maintaining civil defence and public health emergency planning and response capacity, and ensuring there are appropriate numbers of staff trained in emergency management. For council that could mean readying similar response mechanisms as well as protecting core infrastructure such as water supply and public transport from the effects of emergency events, and making sure they are in a position to recover.

¹ The risk for a significant earthquake affecting the Wellington region has increased following the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake. A significant earthquake would affect infrastructure and key transport routes

² Many of New Zealand's towns and cities are affected by flooding from rivers, lakes, overland flow, the sea and in some cases, a combination of all of these. Regular flooding has a toll on communities, it can move people out of their homes and make it difficult to move around and get to work. This impacts on the economy and an individual's social connectedness.

It is important that we continue to work together in building resilient infrastructure and communities. Through this collaborative emergency planning and response, the impact of emergency events on vulnerable communities (particularly Māori) will be minimised. We will also be able to grow each other's knowledge and skills.

Our organisations are already working together on issues around disease surveillance, drinking water, wastewater and stormwater. We look forward to continued and enhanced collaboration. We also have staff who work with other agencies in emergency preparedness and management and are willing to assist MDC on request.

C. THE THREE WATERS

The LTP process provides an opportunity to document the council's pathway to addressing the management of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater ('the three waters') infrastructure as a critical factor in building long-term resilience and emergency management. RPH acknowledges that there are significant challenges and drivers around actions to be taken in this area. These include:

- the development of infrastructure to keep pace and meet the need for new urban development;
- the challenge of increasing frequency of severe weather events (e.g. leading to flooding) and other natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes) which determine how well the infrastructure can perform;
- the impacts of the DIA three waters infrastructure review and government recommendations from the Havelock North Drinking Water Campylobacter Outbreak Inquiry Report;
- meeting the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management targets;
- the current review of the Greater Wellington Proposed Natural Resource Plan and associated new requirements for monitoring and management of stormwater and wastewater discharges; and
- progressive implementation of the catchment specific whitua committees to determine local water quality and quantity parameters.

The response to such large challenges requires a strong focus on collaboration between multiple agencies with a willingness to share expertise and resource across traditional council boundaries, it also requires consideration of models of shared resources and asset management to achieve economies of scale and equitable access to the limited technical expertise at the regional and national levels.

One such collaborative approach that has resulted from the Havelock North Inquiry is the regional drinking water joint working group. That is in the process of being established for the greater Wellington region but requires the mandate and support from all councils to achieve the agreed aim of "safeguarding the Wellington region's drinking water".

A significant challenge is the management of water demand while maintaining water quality. Water demand is an issue for the whole region and not only in areas that have had to implement or explore a more urgent response.

Due to the complexity and inter-relatedness of managing all three waters infrastructure and the impact that this infrastructure has on the built environment (e.g. location of urban growth; how we use the environment for recreation and activity) we recommend a spatial planning approach. Such an approach would see the use of citizen panels, and other forms of face to face community consultation, that captures the interactions and supports coordinated decision making for the built environment.

The LTP consultation process also provides another opportunity to engage the community in awareness of the challenges around the three waters management and being part of finding the best way forward. Often this infrastructure is hidden and not well understood compared with other infrastructure such as roads.

Raising the profile of this critical part of a safe and healthy urban environment will facilitate community “buy-in” for the hard decisions that need to be made around how to distribute funding for maintenance, improvement and capacity building.

Additionally there are actions the community can take to support additional planning, performance and resourcing. It is important to have ongoing initiatives which increase the community’s understanding and engagement with the hidden infrastructure and the values they attach to the impact on their environment.

A collaborative and coordinated regional approach would strengthen this awareness raising, including linking to current actions that are associated with specific programmes (e.g. enviroschools) or legislative requirements (e.g. resource consent requirements including public engagement for managing specific discharges).

D. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Do you want to present your views in person?

Yes we wish to present our views in person

Do you support the proposed overall rates increase of 4.9% in 2018-19? Without the projects we are consulting on in this document, average rates increases would be approximately 4.3% in Year 1, 3.3% in Year 2 and 2.3% in Year 3. (page 23)

No comment.

Do you agree with the change in our funding policy which sees a movement of 15% of urban water and wastewater costs from uniform (flat) charges to rates based on capital values? (page 24)

No comment.

Do you support our proposed investment in our Wellbeing projects? (page 6)

Yes, we support the proposed investment in your wellbeing projects.

We commend MDC for the development and release of He Hiringa Tangata, He Hiringa Whenua in February 2018. It is pleasing to see that MDC, with the strong support of their community (72%³), has put people at the heart of everything that MDC does.

We note that MDC is currently developing implementation plans for each of the development areas. We would encourage MDC to engage with Mana Whenua and community organisations like Connecting Communities to help shape these plans. Similarly RPH could offer advice from a public health perspective.

In particular we support MDC making air quality improvement a priority under the environmental development area of He Hiringa Tangata, He Hiringa Whenua.

We support your increased investment from year 2 to support projects identified in the implementation plans of He Hiringa Tangata, He Hiringa Whenua.

Overall, do you support the general direction that we are proposing for the next 10 years?

Yes, we support the general direction that we are proposing for the next 10 years.

Please indicate which option you support for the proposals discussed in the consultation document.

Building a new performing arts and events centre (p.11)

We support option 1. The provision of such a facility would provide a shared community focal point.

Enhancing the town Centre (p.12)

We support option 1. We agree that a thriving and vibrant town centre with improved access and high quality community facilities will yield many benefits for the Masterton community.

Developing the library (p.14)

We support option 1. We commend council's preparation in reviewing the changing nature of libraries and acknowledging the broader role they can play.

Installing smart water meters (p. 15)

We support the investigation and implementation of additional strategies to manage water demand management.

We support the introduction of installing smart water meter uses - Option 1. This option will have the effect of meeting statutory obligations under the National Policy Statement Fresh Water and the Proposed Regional Natural Resources Plan in regard to the requirement for efficient use of fresh water. The installation of water meters will have the effect of reducing costs and adding resilience to water treatment and storage capacity. Whilst this is likely the outcome for any meter the smart meters may increase water use savings.

³ MDC LTP 2018-2028 p. 6

In addition, there are other councils in the region who can share their lessons learned around the best approach to use. It is important that the option chosen has been assessed for any potential unintended consequences that might disproportionately impact on already disadvantaged groups – if identified, then mitigation measures can be planned for to avoid potential inequitable impacts.

Additional water pipe renewals (p. 17)

We support option 1. This option will have the effect of meeting statutory obligations under the National Policy Statement Fresh Water and the Proposed Regional Natural Resources Plan in regard to the requirement for efficient use of fresh water. Water Pipe renewal and leak remediation will have the effect of reducing costs and adding resilience to water treatment and storage capacity.

We also support undertaking additional work on wastewater pipe private laterals at the time of sewerage main upgrades. We know that private laterals can be sources of contamination that impacts water bodies. This can represent a public health risk when the water is used for recreational or food gathering purposes.

Kerbside wheelie bins (p. 18)

We support option 1.

Providing for e-waste services (p. 19)

We support option 1.

Introducing kerbside food waste collections (p. 20)

Generally support although we would also encourage MDC to take into account that many households may have their own compost systems that are working well.

Establishing a recycling/recovery centre (p. 22)

We generally support this idea and suggest partnership with charities could be mutually beneficial.

Comments

We commend MDC on making drinking water quality a priority. We note that MDC is committed to ensuring drinking water supplies are compliant and meet the potable water requirements⁴.

However, there is a need for ensuring sustainable water quality and quantity in the future and we would encourage MDC to consider this further. We would encourage MDC to embrace regional collaborative work especially around improving the three waters infrastructure. We believe this collaboration would add value.

Whilst there is no specific mention of housing in the long term plan, we understand that housing supply and quality is an issue in the Wairarapa. There is a very clear link between housing and

⁴ Masterton District Council Long Term Plan 2018-2028 p.9

health. We would encourage MDC to investigate the housing need in the Wairarapa and pursue the development of a Wairarapa housing strategy.

RPH offers its support, skills and knowledge in the areas of housing quality, public and active transport, community development and empowerment, and healthy food environments to ensure the people of Masterton are thriving.

We note that in your consultation document a lot of a groundwork was undertaken to shape the direction of the Long Term Plan. RPH is always keen to participate in these early direction setting discussions. We understand that this is a significant time of influence. Please add us to your database of community and agency consultation stakeholders.