

27 April 2018

Chief Executive
Upper Hutt City Council
838 – 842 Fergusson Drive
Private Bag 907
Upper Hutt 5140

Regarding: Draft Long Term Plan

Tēnā koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on the Upper Hutt City 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 agency's 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.

Please note a separate joint submission between the Te Awakairangi Health Network in the Hutt Valley 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 UHCC 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 UHCC 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 UHCC 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 that 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).

RPH supports your focus on resilience and growth. We agree that shocks and stresses don’t respect the boundaries between different geographical areas or governing arrangements like councils and that we have to actively work together to build our collective resilience³.

RPH commends council on the approach of your financial strategy that aims to ensure intergenerational equity is maintained in the funding of infrastructure assets.

D. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Overall feedback

Do you support our proposed direction in the next ten years set out in the Long Term Plan?

RPH supports your proposed direction in the next ten years set out in the Long Term Plan.

Rates - What is your preferred option?

No comment

³ Upper Hutt City Council Long Term Plan 2018-2028 p. 4

Debt - Tell us what you think

No comment

Policy consultations

No comment

Significance and Engagement Policy - Do you support the changes?

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We are pleased to see Council acknowledges the unique status of Māori and aims to engage with the wider Māori community to ensure their views are appropriately represented in the decision-making process.

We also understand and support your move toward a higher level of digital communication across platforms. Please add us to your database of community and agency consultation stakeholders

Development Contributions Policy - Do you support the policy's reinstatement and changes?

No comment

Optional projects

H2O Xstream upgrade: Do you support this project? (page 9 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support access to affordable leisure activities that promote physical activity. We would encourage an approach that ensured low-income families can continue to access this venue at an affordable rate. We also support further community consultation on this matter.

Community Hub

No comment

Regional cycle trails: Do you support this project? (page 10 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support the development of cycle trails 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.

Walking and cycling network: Do you support this project? (page 10 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support 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.

Maidstone Max upgrade: Do you support this project? (page 11 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support play areas for recreation. RPH recommends features that have health benefits be considered as part of the upgrade such as water fountains, shade and shelter and equipment that can be used by a range of age groups (e.g. the elderly). 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.

Maidstone sports hub: Do you support this project? (page 11 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support council 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.

City centre open space: Do you support this project? (page 12 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support council providing safe and interesting opportunities for residents to be physically active and connect with their environment. This promotes physical and mental wellbeing, prevents disease and improves social connectedness and quality of life.

Trentham Memorial Park upgrade: Do you support this project? (page 12 of the Consultation Document).

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support play areas for recreation. RPH recommends features that have health benefits be considered as part of the upgrade such as water fountains, shade and shelter, equipment that can be used by a range of age groups (e.g. the elderly). 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.

Freedom camping facilities: Do you support this project? (page 13 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support investment in infrastructure and planning for an increase in visitors such as freedom campers; appropriate public toilets, drinking fountains or other sources of drinking water, more dumping stations and more rubbish and recycling points. The local community will also benefit from the investment in this type of infrastructure.

Footbridge to river: Do you support this project? (page 13 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

We support 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.

Major events fund

No comment

Economic Development Stimulus Policy: Do you support this project? (page 14 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

A thriving and vibrant economy has a positive effect on community health and wellbeing.

Residential Stimulus Policy: Do you support this project? (page 15 of the Consultation Document)

Yes | ~~No~~ | ~~Don't know~~

As mentioned in councils Urban Growth Strategy providing for a greater variety of housing types will ensure that people of all ages and lifestyles can live in Upper Hutt. This will be particularly relevant when considering a Residential Stimulus Policy.

Other comments

UHCC works with Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD), Upper Hutt Community Youth Trust and Vibe to run events like the Hackathon. These events are important because they actively engage the community to improve youth well-being, but also foster collaboration, community connection and pride in being from Upper Hutt. We congratulate UHCC for their support in these youth activities.

We note that in your consultation document a lot of ground work 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.

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