

3 May 2018

Chief Executive
Hutt City Council
Private Bag 31-912
Lower Hutt 5040

Regarding: Draft Long Term Plan

Tēnā koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on the 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. Hutt City Council's (HCC) policy and planning are an integral part to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Please note a separate joint submission between Te Awakairangi Health Network, the Primary Healthcare Organisation (PHO) 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:

Kiri Waldegrave, Senior Public Health Advisor
kiri.waldegrave@huttvalleydhb.org.nz, 04 570 9130

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 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).

In light of the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake¹ and an increase in adverse weather events² RPH commends HCC 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 organizations 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 HCC 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. HCC are already engaged in this process with consultation on the CBD spatial plan. We recommend this consultation is linked with the Proposed District Plan Change No. 43: Residential and Suburban Mixed Use.

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).

D. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q1. Do you think we should continue to rejuvenate our city?

Option1: (Our preferred option): Complete our planned sportsville and community hub projects

We support Option one to complete the planned sportsville and community hub projects. Generally, RPH supports the aim of this investment to continue to bring communities closer together and improve the wellbeing of residents. RPH would recommend Council actively works with the communities mentioned to ensure the development reflects the views of the community.

Q2. The Hutt City Development Charges and Rates Remissions Policy has fulfilled its purpose. We are proposing to suspend the policy from 31 December 2018. What do you think we should do?

No comment.

Q3. Do you support the Council introducing a rates postponement scheme for residential ratepayers aged 65 years and over?

No comment.

Q4. If you answered yes to question 3, tell us whether you think the draft rates postponement policy, for consultation purposes, best ensures that the total cost of rates postponements is cost neutral to the Council and will be paid only by the applicant ratepayer(s).

No comment.

Q5. Should the Council extend the rates remission policy to include all charitable organisations, which are used exclusively or principally for sporting, recreation or community purposes, regardless of whether they hold a liquor licence or not?

No comment. However, we would note that an application for a liquor licence has increased significantly in cost and is risk related. With this in mind we would suggest that the regulatory system is more likely to be a factor in determining whether a club applies for a liquor licence rather than the rebate itself.

Q6. Tell us whether you think Council should maintain the rates remission at the rate of 50% of the general rate or should this be increased to 100% of the general rate?

No comment.

Q7. If you have any other feedback on any of the projects, strategies or policies covered in this document or supporting information please tell us about it below.

Regional Public Health (RPH) has submitted on the Proposed District Plan Change No. 43: Residential and Suburban Mixed Use. RPH welcomes the active role Hutt City Council (HCC) is taking to enable greater housing capacity and a wider range of residential development within the existing Lower Hutt urban area to ensure greater availability of affordable and quality housing.

RPH commends HCC commitment to “supporting the less well-off areas of the city”³. Prioritising the northern and eastern suburbs of Lower Hutt for the development of sustainable community facilities and the provision of services is a beneficial approach. Facilitating ongoing community engagement will enhance the community, health and social benefits in the rejuvenation process.

RPH supports the focus on resilient infrastructure and the ongoing work to deliver better flood protection. This is an important part of creating a safe and healthy city. RPH also supports the Councils Environmental Sustainability Strategy and the focus on climate change and emergency preparedness.

³ Hutt City Council, Draft Long Term Plan 2018-2028, p.8

Q8. What do you think are the key issues the Council should focus on over the next ten years?

We are aware of councils interest and work in many spectrums of housing, for example the research currently underway looking at homelessness, collaboration with Housing New Zealand on their proposed housing developments, participating in the regional healthy housing group and the delivery of free eco design advice. We commend council on this work and would encourage council to package this much needed and valuable work into a comprehensive work plan or strategy.

We would encourage council to continue to investigate the potential of a regional spatial planning approach to urban development⁴. As mentioned earlier in this submission there are efficiencies to be gained by taking a regional approach to planning. The environment we live in has a huge impact on the health of a community. The World Health Organisation estimates 23% of all global deaths are due to modifiable environmental factors⁵.

In other words nearly 1 in 4 deaths across the globe are due to environmental factors such as air, water and soil pollution, chemical exposures, climate change and ultra violet radiation. These factors contribute to more than 100 diseases and injuries⁶. The considerate design of spaces and place can help to promote good health.

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 the Hutt Valley are thriving.

⁴ Hutt City Council Urban Growth Strategy 2012-2032, p. 10

⁵ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2016/deaths-attributable-to-unhealthy-environments/en/>

⁶ <http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/environmental-disease-burden/en/>