

13 September 2019

South Wairarapa District Council
19 Kitchener Street
Martinborough

Re: South Wairarapa Spatial Plan - Our Future Focus 2050

Tēnā koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the South Wairarapa District Council's 'Our Future Focus 2050'. We appreciated the opportunity to meet with Russell O'Leary in person and discuss the process behind the Spatial Plan development in August.

Regional Public Health (RPH) serves the greater Wellington region, through its three district health boards (DHBs): Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa. We work with our community to make it a healthier safer place to live. We promote good health, prevent disease, and improve the quality of life for our population.

RPH would like to **commend** South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) on the public consultation and the thought given to the challenges facing the South Wairarapa with a growing population, climate change threats and increased tourism.

RPH **recommends** that SWDC ensures continued meaningful consultation with communities who may not naturally connect through traditional channels. This is particularly important for those who traditionally have less power and representation in the planning process; this includes Māori, Pacific peoples, migrant and refugee communities, older people and those on low-income. Alternative approaches may be needed, including the use of focus group discussions or working alongside others who have existing connections with these communities.

The recent amendments to the Local Government Act to reinstate the four aspects of community wellbeing – economic, social, environmental and cultural – has highlighted the importance of putting the wellbeing of citizens at the centre of all that SWDC does. Through the spatial plan, SWDC has the opportunity to promote and improve the wellbeing and health of its citizens. Decisions around land use, housing, transport and the natural environment will all have a powerful impact on the health and wellbeing of those living in the South Wairarapa. The draft spatial plan has included a wide range of areas that promote health including clean and protected environment, creating places for all age groups, promoting active transport and outdoor activities, supporting education and employment and valuing Māori tikanga and kaitiakitanga.

The perceived lifestyle benefits of living in the South Wairarapa with its urban and rural living are challenged by the ranking of 54 (out of 66 councils) for health in the Regional Wellbeing Report¹. By using a public health lens throughout the spatial planning process, for example to identify who is

¹ <https://times-age.co.nz/report-well-being-statistics-alarming/>

likely to benefit from changes that are made and who might miss out, SWDC can use this as an opportunity to improve the wellbeing of its population.

Should SWDC be interested, RPH could facilitate a workshop for the planners involved in spatial planning to discuss how to achieve greater synergy between public health and council processes. Such discussions have the potential to strengthen what the spatial plan can achieve in terms of improved health and wellbeing for the South Wairarapa community.

There are a range of practical tools that can be used during the planning process to ensure wellbeing is a core part of the final outcome. These tools are all flexible, and can be used in their entirety or used as the basis for discussion and appraisal of spatial planning work. Tools and approaches include:

- **Integrated Planning Guide:** presents a way of ensuring sustainability, resilience and health are integrated into planning, alongside social, environmental and economic outcomes.
- **Health Equity Assessment Tool:** a tool that aims to improve equity in health in New Zealand. It consists of a set of ten questions that assess the current and future impact of policies on health equity.
- **Health Impact Assessment or Whānau Ora Health Impact Assessment:** systematic way of assessing the positive and negative health impacts of a policy, with particular attention to inequities.
- **Health Promotion and Sustainability through Environmental Design:** a planning guide developed by Christchurch City Council and Community and Public Health (Christchurch's Public Health Unit). Divided into 14 themes that identify the links between environmental design and community health and wellbeing.
- **Integrated Assessment:** a new impact assessment tool with the aim of improving resource and spatial planning to achieve multiple community benefits. Provides a structured approach to predict the potential social, economic, cultural and environmental effects of a plan.
- **Identify opportunities to have dedicated public health expertise as part of the council workforce:** given the significant impact of spatial planning on wellbeing and health, SWDC could consider funding dedicated public health expertise to work alongside planners for the duration of the project.

For further information on these tools please do not hesitate to contact us. We welcome the opportunity to remain involved as Our Future Focus 2050 continues, and to meet with planners to discuss how we can best support them in this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The point of contact for this letter of support is:

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Naku noa, na

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