

Minutes Living Together Committee – 6 March 2025

 WHAKATĀNE District Council <i>Kia Whakatāne au i ahau</i>	Details of Meeting:	LIVING TOGETHER COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE TŌTARA MEETING ROOM, WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT COUNCIL, 14 COMMERCE STREET, WHAKATANE ON THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 2025 COMMENCING AT 9:00 AM
	Present:	Deputy Mayor L Immink, Councillors T Boynton, G Dennis (Chairperson), A Iles, J Jukes, T O’Brien, J Pullar, N Tánczos and N Rangiaho <i>Via Teams: Councillors W James</i>
	In Attendance:	L Woolsey (GM Strategy and Growth) A Pickles (GM Community Experience), B Gray (GM Finance and Commercial Services), E Hatch (GM People and Partnerships), M Hingston (Acting Kaihautu Strategic Māori Partnerships), K Summerhays (Senior Development Advisor), A Naidoo (Strategic Analyst), C King-Hazel (Team Leader Administration / Transport), A Reynolds (Manager Transport), N Burgess (Manager Tourism and Event) V Fergusson (Strategic Property Manager), I Molony (Manager Open Spaces Operations) and C Viljoen (Manager Governance Services)
	Apologies:	Mayor Dr V Luca

In accordance with standing orders 13.10, Chairperson Wilson James attended the meeting remotely; therefore, Deputy Chair Gavin Dennis undertook the Chairperson duties for this meeting.

The meeting was opened with a Karakia by Deputy Mayor L Immink at 9:00 am.

Chairperson Dennis welcomed General Manager Alexandra Pickles to her first Living Together Committee meeting as the lead General Manager.

1 MEETING NOTICES

Meeting participants were advised that the meeting was being live streamed, and Health and Safety points were relayed to all attendees.

2 APOLOGIES

Moved Councillor Pullar / Seconded Councillor Boynton

RESOLVED:

THAT the apology from Mayor Victor Luca away on Council business be **accepted**.

RESOLVED

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / TRIBUTES

Chairperson Dennis welcomed Councillor James who attended the meeting online.

Councillor Boynton also took a moment to acknowledge the recent success of the Taranaki Matatini event, highlighting Ngāti Whakaue named the champions of Te Matatini but also the achievements from Ngāti Rangiwewehi and Te Arawa.

The acknowledgment was a source of pride for the Whakatāne district rohe, emphasising the community's strong cultural heritage and the spirit of manaaki (hospitality and support).

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflict of interest declared.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5.1 Whakaari Memorial Deputation

During the Living Together Committee meeting held on 6 March 2025, the Whakaari Memorial Steering Group made a significant presentation. The group was represented by Carolyn Hamill, Mark Inman, Romana Graham, Rosemary Sloman, and Kay Boreham. Carolyn Hamill led the presentation, discussing the initiative to establish a memorial for the Whakaari/White Island tragedy.

Carolyn explained that the project was initiated in response to a community request for a physical space to commemorate the Whakaari tragedy. The Whakatāne Ōhope Community Board initiated discussions with Ngāti Awa to explore the possibility of a permanent memorial. They received a blessing from Ngāti Awa, indicating that the timing was appropriate to progress with something of significance to the community and the families affected by the tragedy.

The steering group, which includes representatives from the community board and Ngāti Awa, has been engaging with the families of the victims, survivors, and first responders to ensure the memorial is appropriate and meaningful. They have also been in discussions with local creatives to develop a design concept for the memorial. The group emphasised the importance of having a green space in town with accessibility and a view of Whakaari.

Carolyn highlighted that the preferred site for the memorial is beside Te Hōteo Park, but they are still working to clarify whether this is the right location. They are considering feedback from the families and Ngāti Awa and are open to exploring other potential sites. The group is seeking Council's awareness and support as they move forward with consultation and long-term site maintenance.

The memorial is intended to honour first responders and community members who supported the tragic event. Carolyn expressed gratitude for the role that Ngāti Awa played during the entire event, and the Chairperson acknowledged the variety of presenters and their contributions.

In response to questions from councillors, Carolyn explained that the steering group is still in the engagement stage with the families and Ngāti Awa and is considering all options for the memorial site. They appreciated the support from the councillors but emphasised that the families and Ngāti Awa must come first in the decision-making process.

Attendance: GM Finance and Commercial Services entered the meeting at 9:14 am

Attendance: GM People and Partnerships entered the meeting at 9:20 am.

5.2 Kai Security Sector Research Deputation

The team Kai Security Sector Research was represented by Nikki Harnett, Renee Bolkowy, and Chris Barnard. Nikki Harnett led the presentation, discussing the challenges and needs of the Kai security sector, emphasising the importance of education and collaboration with social services.

Nikki explained that food security is defined by the World Health Organisation as when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle. She highlighted the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on food supply chains and the subsequent cost of living crisis, which has made food harder to afford even for working families. Nikki emphasised that the issue is not poor budgeting but rather incomes not keeping up with the cost of living.

Renee Bolkowy shared findings from a Kai Security Survey conducted with early learning services (ELS) in the Whakatāne district. The survey found that 61% of lunchbox centers reported that tamariki (children) do not bring enough food for meals and snacks. Food insecurity was prevalent across all socio-economic levels, with a higher need identified for kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) at 70%. ELS staff often used their own funds to top up children's lunches, and one in five centers reported needing food donations or financial support.

Nikki continued by discussing the barriers to Kai security in the community, including the cost of living crisis, loss of basic life skills such as gardening and cooking, stigma attached to accessing food support services, and limited knowledge about available services. She also highlighted the challenges faced by social organisations, such as inconsistent funding and the need for a central hub to coordinate resources and bulk buying.

Chris Barnard shared his experience with Heather Hart Charitable Trust, emphasising the importance of collaboration and the need for a central hub to support food distribution. He explained that their organisation has had to become innovative to keep their doors open, providing affordable food options and maintaining dignity for those seeking assistance¹.

The presentation concluded with recommendations for creating a regional Kai security coordinator role to support social organisations, provide education, and coordinate resources. Committee members engaged with the presenters through questions of clarification, which helped to further understand the challenges and potential solutions.

Attendance: Manager Properties and Facilities assets entered the meeting at 9:46 am.

Attendance: Acting Kaihau Strategic Māori Partnerships left the meeting at 9:52 am and returned to the meeting at 9:55 am.

Attendance: Councillor Iles left the meeting at 9:54 am and returned to the meeting at 9:59 am.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Refer to page 9 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor Pullar / Seconded Councillor Rangiaho

RESOLVED:

THAT the Public (and public excluded) minutes of the Living Together Committee meetings held on 14 November 2024 and 5 December 2024 be **confirmed** as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

6.1 COMMUNITY BOARDS and SUBCOMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND MINUTES

Refer to page 11 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor O'Brien / Seconded Councillor Tánczos

RESOLVED:

THAT the following minutes be **received** by the Living Together Committee:

- Community Funding Committee - 5 November 2024
- Whakatāne Ōhope Community Board - 18 November 2024
- Murupara Community Board - 19 November 2024
- Rangitāiki Community Board - 27 November 2024
- Tāneatua Community Board - 2 December 2024
- Murupara Community Board - 10 February 2025
- Whakatāne Ōhope Community Board - 10 February 2025
- Youth Council - 13 February 2025

CARRIED

7 REPORTS

7.1 Better Off Funding Update Report

Refer to pages 15-21 of the agenda.

General Manager Strategy and Growth introduced the report. It was noted that a table from the Better Off Funding report, Appendix 1, was omitted from the agenda. The agenda was recirculated with the additional page included and follows page 17 of the agenda.

The report covered the progress of the seven remaining Better Off Funding programs approved by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in 2023. Five of these projects were confirmed still in progress, and the report detailed their current status.

A correction was noted for the Hono Hapori fund balance, which should be \$150,012.00 instead of the initially reported \$162,951.00.

There was a discussion about the consequences of unspent funds by the set completion dates. Leny assured the committee that the team is working closely with the DIA to navigate the invoicing processes and ensure that the funds are spent within an acceptable timeframe.

ACTION:

The Chairperson requested an update from staff regarding the maintenance plan for the Thornton to Edgumbe Arbour Trail, to address concerns raised by community members about inadequate maintenance of the trail.

Attendance: GM People and Partnerships left the meeting at 10:04 am

Moved Deputy Mayor Immink / Seconded Councillor Boynton

RESOLVED:

THAT the Living Together Committee **receive** the Better Off Funding Programme Update Report.

CARRIED

7.2 Road Naming Proposals Report

Refer pages 22-41 of the agenda.

Transportation Team Leader of Administration introduced the report.

The report proposed the naming of seven private roads and one public road, all following the principles of the reviewed policy. The policy emphasised that road names should reflect the history, culture, and identity of the area they are located in and should not be offensive, racist, derogatory, or demeaning

The following corrections were made to the first sentence in section 4.1.4 685 Wainui Road, Page 26.

...“proposed name was recommended by Wiki Mooney, a local kaumatua, and the proposed name, which is supported by the Waimana Kaaku Chairperson, Te Uru Taumatua Chairperson and Tuwhakairora Chairperson and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.”

ACTION:

- Staff have been requested to provide Councillors with information on the process of road sign maintenance.
- Following the approval of the new road name, staff are to provide Councillors with information regarding options to possible sealing of Withy Road.

Moved Councillor O'Brien / Seconded Councillor Boynton

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Road Naming Report be **received**; and
2. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the private road name of “Roberta Lane”, for the subdivision off 30D Melville Road; and
3. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the private road names of “Kahu Lane, Ruru Rise, Rangipare Lane”, for the subdivision off 220 Withy Road; and
4. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the private road name of “Iramoko Lane”, for the subdivision off 230 Withy Road; and
5. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the public road name of “Panekaha Road”, for the subdivision off 685 Wainui Road; and
6. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the private road name of “Kererutahi Road”, for the subdivision off 100 Stanley Road; and
7. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the private road name of “Burma Rise” for the subdivision off 10 Burma Road.

CARRIED

Councillor O'Brien congratulated the team, noting that there had been a lot of controversy in the past but great progress had been made. It was nice to see subdivision work coming through.

Attendance: Manager Spaces and Open Places entered the meeting at 10:13 am.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am and reconvened at 10:31 am.

Attendance: GM People and Partnerships and Manager Strategic Properties entered the meeting at 10:31 am.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order and decided to prioritise the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy. Consequently, the Committee addressed the DEI policy before proceeding to the Whakatāne DC Plantation Forestry Block report.

7.3 Adoption of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Refer pages 54-184 of the agenda.

Development Advisor, Karen Summerhays, introduced the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy. The introduction highlighted the comprehensive consultation process undertaken to develop the policy, which included engaging with various community groups, special interest groups, and the general public, and the need for council to deliberate on the written submission before considering adopting the policy.

Key updates to the draft policy included rewording sections for clarity, adding principles such as "nothing about us without us," and updating definitions to be more inclusive. The policy also incorporated feedback from the community, such as the inclusion of sensory environments and equipment to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Moved Councillor Jukes / Seconded Councillor Tánczos

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Living Together Committee receive the Adoption of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy Report; and
2. THAT the Living Together Committee receive the draft and revised version of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (Appendix C, D & E); and
3. THAT the Living Together Committee receive the written submissions and deliberate on the draft Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy; and
4. a) Either: THAT the Living Together Committee adopt the revised Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (Option 1, Appendix D)

CARRIED

Councillor O'Brien and others acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the staff in developing and finalising the policy, emphasising its importance in promoting social cohesion and inclusivity within the district.

7.4 Whakatāne District Council Plantation Forestry Block Report

Refer pages 42-53 of the agenda.

Manager of Open Spaces Operations introduced the Whakatāne District Council Plantation Forestry Block Report. The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with the findings of a forestry block analysis and associated recommendations for the ongoing management and future use of the four plantation forestry blocks owned by the Council.

The report highlighted the current status and future plans for each of the four forestry blocks: Valley Road, Mangamate, Eagle Hill, and Onepu. The analysis included considerations for replanting, harvesting, and potential reversion of ownership to the Crown. The recommendations aimed to ensure sustainable management and maximize the benefits of these forestry blocks for the community

Key points discussed included the cost of harvesting, major replanting, legal expenses, future budget costs to maintain native vegetation, and the use of helicopters for harvesting purposes. Discussion

also included the impact of Treaty Settlements on land ownership and the involvement of local community businesses in the replanting process.

Attendance: Manager Tourism and Event entered the meeting at 10:50 am.

Attendance: Strategic Property Manager entered the meeting at 10:31 am.

Moved Councillor Iles / Seconded Councillor Boynton

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Whakatāne District Council Plantation Forestry Block Report be **received** by the Living Together Committee.
2. THAT the Living Together Committee **approve** the Whakatāne District Council Plantation Forestry Block Plan.

CARRIED

7.5 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Refer pages 185 of the agenda.

Moved Deputy Mayor Immink / Seconded Councillor Jukes

RESOLVED:

THAT the public be **excluded** from the following parts of the proceedings of this Living Together Committee meeting, namely:

1. Tourism Bay of Plenty Report

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

	General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
1	Tourism Bay of Plenty Report	Good reason to withhold exists under Section 7.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists. Section 48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on sections 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 7 of that Act, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

Item No	Interest
1	Enable Councils to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities Section 7(2)(h)

Item No	Interest
2	Enable any Council holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) Section 7(2)(i)

CARRIED

The meeting moved into the Public Excluded session at 11:02 am and returned to the public session at 11:21 am.

The following resolutions were restated from the Tourism Bay of Plenty Report during the public section of the meeting.

1. THAT the Tourism Bay of Plenty report be received; and
2. THAT the Living Together Committee confirms that the report will be released to the public on the Chief Executive's approval.

THE MEETING CLOSED WITH A KARAKIA GIVEN BY DEPUTY MAYOR IMMINK AT 11:21 AM.

Confirmed at the meeting dated:
CHAIRPERSON