

AGENDA

TABLED

Council
Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 10.15am

Northland Regional Council Tabled Agenda

Meeting to be held in the Turner Centre, 43 Cobham Road, Kerikeri
on Tuesday 25 February 2025, commencing at 10.15am

Recommendations contained in the council agenda are NOT council decisions. Please refer to council minutes for resolutions.

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**TITLE: Receipt of Tabled Report: Fast Track Approval Act Processes
Funding**

From: Chris Taylor, Governance Specialist

Executive summary

Council is requested to receive the tabled report 'Fast Track Approval Act Processes Funding'. This item was not included in the main council agenda given the matter arose from the council workshop held on 19 February 2025 which was after the deadline for agenda publication.

Recommendation

That as permitted under section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the following tabled report be received:

- Item 7.7: Fast Track Approval Act Processed Funding

TITLE: **Fast Track Approval Act Processes Funding**

From: Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager and Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist

Authorised by Group Manager: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 20 February 2025

Executive summary/Whakarāpopotanga

The Fast Track Approval Act 2024 (the Act) came into force on 23 December 2014. The Act establishes a permanent fast-track regime for significant development and infrastructure projects that would deliver regional and national benefits.

The Act includes eleven Listed Projects in Northland. These are infrastructure and development projects that can apply directly for consideration by an Expert Panel. The Act also provides a pathway for other applications to be referred to an Expert Panel through the Minister of Infrastructure.

Applications can be lodged with the Environmental Protection Agency from 7 February.

There are various points in the Fast Track process in which council will be engaged by the EPA or the applicant for consultation, comments, feedback or information to inform the Fast Track approval process. Given the Act is intended to provide for large scale projects of national and regional significance, it is expected application documentation will be substantial and much of it will be highly technical in nature. Council has not budgeted for any work associated with reviewing fast track application documentation for the purpose of providing comment.

To enable council to respond to requests for comment on proposals within the timeframes set by the Act, it is recommended that \$100,000 be transferred from salary savings for 2024/25 financial year to council operational budgets to provide a budget to fund professional services for reviewing Fast Track applications.

Recommendations:

1. That the report 'Fast Track Approval Act Processes Funding' by Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager and Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist and dated 19 February 2025, be received.
2. That the council approve the transfer of \$100,000 from 2024/25 financial year salary savings to operations budget to provide a budget for engaging professional services to review applications processed under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Options

No.	Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	Provide no dedicated budget to fund professional services for reviewing fast track applications.	No funds are needed to be transferred	The quality of the technical assessment of Fast Track Approval applications to support comments from the Council will be limited (staff may not have the

			relevant expertise or capacity).
2	\$100, 000 is transferred from Salary Surplus to support contracting independent expert technical assessment of / advice on Fast Track Approval applications to inform the Council's comments requested by the EPA	The quality of the technical assessment of Fast Track Approval applications to support comments from the Council will be improved.	Funds are needed to be transferred
3	Staff capacity is diverted from other projects to support technical assessment of Fast Track Approval applications to inform the Council's comments that will be requested by the EPA	The quality of the technical assessment of Fast Track Approval applications to support comments from the Council will be improved.	Staff capacity would be diverted from delivering on the Council's current LTP deliverables Staff may not have subject matter expertise required.

The staff's recommended option is Option 2

Considerations

1. Climate Impact

The matter subject to this report is of an administrative nature and does not warrant any specific considerations in respect of climate change.

2. Environmental Impact

Fast Track Applications each will have their own environmental impacts. However, the matter of transferring funds to support comments on applications is of an administrative nature and does not warrant any specific considerations relating to council's management of environmental impacts.

3. Community views

Transferring funds to support comments on Fast Track Applications will support the Council with communicating community views gathered by the Council through Council processes.

4. Māori impact statement

Although the outcome of decision made under the Fast Track Approvals Act may have impacts on Māori, the matter subject to this report is of an administrative nature.

5. Financial implications

Net Salary savings across all of council for YTD January 2025 is \$1.1m. There is therefore sufficient favourable salary variance available.

6. Implementation issues

There are a number of implementation issues associated with council's role of providing feedback and comment on Fast Track Applications. There is however no known

implementation issues associated with the decision to transfer funds to support making comments on applications.

7. Significance and engagement

In relation to section 79 of the Local Government Act 2002, this decision is considered to be of low significance when assessed against council's significance and engagement policy because it is part of council's day to day activities. This does not mean that this matter is not of significance to Tangata Whenua and/or individual communities, but that council is able to make decisions relating to this matter without undertaking further consultation or engagement.

8. Policy, risk management and legislative compliance

There are no material policy or legislative compliance risks associated with the budget transfer.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Nil