

Northland Regional Council Minutes

Long Term Plan Amendment Hearings held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Thursday 3 April 2025, commencing at 10.15am

Tuhinga/Present:

Acting Chairperson, Jack Crow

Councillors:

John Blackwell

Amy Macdonald

Marty Robinson

Tui Shortland (*Via audio-visual link. Left 11.21am*)

Rick Stolwerk

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Pou Taumatua – GM Corporate Services

Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement

Organisational Project Specialist

Corporate Planning Specialist

Corporate Policy Analyst

Kaiāwhina Kaupapa Māori (*Via audio-visual link*)

Governance Specialist

Part Meeting

Senior Kāiaraahi Tikanga Māori

Secretarial Note: In the absence of the Chair of council, the Chief Executive Officer declared the meeting open at 10.17am and proceedings commenced with a karakia by Councillor Crow.

Ngā whakapāha/Apologies (Item 1.0)

Moved (Macdonald/Stolwerk)

That the apologies from the Chairperson, Councillor Crawford, and Councillors Carr and Jones for non-attendance be received.

Carried

Nga whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Item 2.0)

It was advised that councillors should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

Election of a Chairperson for the hearing of submissions to the Long Term Plan Amendment (Item 5.1)

Report from Chris McColl, Organisational Projects Specialist

Moved (Stolwerk/Blackwell)

1. That the report 'Election of a Chairperson for the hearing of submissions to the Long Term Plan Amendment' by Chris McColl, Organisational Projects Specialist and dated 31 March 2025, be received.
2. That in the event more than one nomination for Chairperson is received, "System A" as specified in Clause 25 of Schedule 7 to the Local Government Act be used for the election of the Chairperson.

Carried

It was further moved (Stolwerk/Blackwell)

3. That Councillor Craw be elected the Chairperson for the 3 April hearing of submissions for the proposed Long Term Plan amendment 2024 – 2034 meeting.

Secretarial Note: With no further nominations for Chair forthcoming, the Chief Executive then put the motion.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Councillor Craw assumed the position of Chair and presided over the remainder of the hearings.

Proposed amendment to Te Mahere Roa | Long Term Plan 2024-2034 - Hearings on public feedback (Item 5.2)

Report from Kyla Carlier, Corporate Strategy Manager; Robyn Broadhurst, Corporate Planning Specialist and Chris McColl, Organisational Projects Specialist

Moved (Macdonald/Stolwerk)

1. That the report 'Proposed amendment to Te Mahere Roa | Long Term Plan 2024-2034 - Hearings on public feedback' by Kyla Carlier, Corporate Strategy Manager; Robyn Broadhurst, Corporate Planning Specialist and Chris McColl, Organisational Projects Specialist and dated 19 March 2025, be received.
2. Receive, and where appropriate, hear feedback relating to the proposed amendment to Te Mahere Roa | Long Term Plan 2024-2034.
3. That council does not receive late feedback received after 5pm Monday 31 March as per council's submissions policy.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Due to technical issues, audio was not operational for online participants until this time and therefore Councillor Shortland could not participate in the previous decisions.

Summary of hearings

1. Tim Robinson – Bernina Northland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted as a local business owner and interested individual. In favour of the proposed restructure to unlock the value in the port and deliver growth opportunities for Northland.
2. John Bain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stated he had ‘great faith in what could happen’. Raised concern that NRC was offering a 14% sale of shares which took away NRC’s majority shareholding. Further concern was raised regarding the borrowing of funds and sale of land holdings, resulting in a lack of income, in order for NRC to fund the proposal. It was stated that if NRC allowed ‘that money to leave the system it will need to subsidise it with rates’. It was stressed that council needed to look after all the people in Northland and consider the impact of the proposal and further rate increases on low income families which were already struggling.
3. Peter and Eva Vaughan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarised points 1-4 in the written submission: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ko Wai te Tangata Whenua o tenei whenua? William Carruth – the first pakeha settler 1840 The treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi Northport, Marsden Point lands – Poupouwhenua Encouraged NRC ‘to move forward to identify the true Tangata Whenua to all lands within the Whangārei Harbour and the coast’. Objected to the NRC proposal to sell low return endowment lands to raise capital for the new structure. Stated endowment lands should be ‘restricted assets’ and not sold; they should be returned to the rightful Tangata Whenua. Concern was raised that Tupu Tonu had not consulted sufficiently with Tangata Whenua.
4. Marie Olsen - WDC Councillor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed she was submitting in her personal capacity and was in opposition to the proposal. Raised concern that WDC, which had facilitated the re-zoning of land behind the port to industrial, had not been included in the development of the proposal. Raised concern regarding the ‘lack of consultation with the community’. Concern was raised that Tupu Tonu (Ngāpuhi Investment Fund Limited) could sell its interests for Ngāpuhi settlement which was ‘a slippery slide to loss of control’. It was stated the shares should be put on the open market to gauge interest of other parties.
5. Mere Kepa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported, with reservations, for Ngāpuhi iwi to have a 7% venture. Shared her Māori cultural heritage including the lineage of ‘independent women of Te Parawhau Hapu’. Supported the success of Māori business and securing change in order for hapu to be financially independent.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was stressed that Te Parawhau Hapu and Patuharakeke were 'deeply familiar with this place' and it was important to share their insights. • Stated that Northland had the highest proportion of the population on job seeker benefits and stressed the need to reduce this dependence. It was also stressed that 'getting the right services and support to Māori is important'. • Concern was raised that the proposal ignored the Waitangi Tribunal findings regarding the land confiscated from Te Parawhau Hapu. • Stressed that the government had failed to act in good faith and honour the principle of partnership.
<p>6. Dave Milner and Deborah Harding – Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With reference to the previous submitter it was acknowledged that while there were overlapping interests, that Patuharakeke hapu 'hold our own mana' and the Patuharakeke Trust Board was the mandated entity to represent Patuharakeke hapu. • Noted the three key areas of the submission being; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The investment based in Te Taitokerau and not outside of the region; 2. The importance of decoupling from the NZX system; and 3. Simplifying the ownership model. • Concern was raised regarding the proposal to 'bank' 7% of shares for a pre-empted settlement. It was stressed that settlement was 'a challenging space' and the proposal 'pre-empts what a settlement might look like' and was 'trying to push hapu into an expediated process that can be challenging'. • It was requested that there be a greater understanding of what investment assets would be sold. • It was noted that Ports of Tauranga had a different experience in terms of settlement processes and if the proposal came to fruition, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board would be 'leaning on NRC' to ensure Ports of Tauranga had a better understanding of the dynamics in Northland.

Secretarial Note: The hearings adjourned at 11.19am and reconvened at 11.21am.

<p>7. WDC Mayor, Vince Cocurullo, and Deputy Mayor, Phil Halse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised concern regarding the 'lack of transparency between NRC and WDC' which went against the commitment to work together. • It was stressed that WDC had been enabling, heavily involved and invested in the development of Marsden Point and surrounding areas. In this manner WDC should have been included in the development of any proposal. • WDC had developed the Marsden Point – Ruakaka Structure Plan in 2000 which was then revised in 2008. This Plan served as the policy framework to guide the spatial development of the area. • It was stated that in discussion with residents and hapu the overriding feeling was that Northland should retain majority control so it had a majority say. • It was further stated that Ports of Tauranga was technically Tauranga/Bay of Plenty Council who were entering the arrangement as a business venture with profits going back to their region. It was stressed that this was 'excluding Northland being a majority shareholder'.
<p>8. Mira Norris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised concern that there was no business plan to give a balanced view. • Raised further concern that the proposed structure not only weakened regional control but did not provide a stake for mana whenua and further removed land ownership from Te Parawhau.

- Attention was drawn to the Waitangi Tribunal ruling that 1000 acres had been removed from Te Parawhau under false claims. It was stressed that the surrounding lands to Marsden were important to Te Parawhau and referred to as 'The pearls of Whangārei Harbour'.
- Concern was raised that a significant portion of the proposed arrangement sat outside of Northland when 'strategic regional assets should benefit those most connected with the region'.
- It was stressed that the connection with Tangata Whenua was critical and Te Parawhau and hapu should be allowed to have ownership of assets that influenced their future.
- In summary the submitter supported:
 - The restructure of investments and Tupu Tonu as a partner;
 - Enablement of intergenerational Māori investment;
 - The economic benefit of the port going back into Northland to allow broader participation; and
 - That the council ensured hapu with customary rights were acknowledged in the ownership structure.

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 11.51am with a karakia by the Senior Kāiarahi Tikanga Māori.