

Chairman's report to Policy and Planning committee

September 2020.

Welcome to the meeting today. You will see on today's agenda we are wishing to go out for consultation on the subject of dog ownership and the number that may be held on an urban site. This is a fundamental underlying point of policy that helps both officers and ourselves both communicate with the ratepayer public and make good decisions and apply fair and reasonable outcomes, but ultimately process is our friend.

I will now delve into an area of our sphere of influence that I feel our council and especially our historic governance decisions have left us in a bit policy vacuum, both in terms of what we offer and how we justify provision of assets in terms of underlying information and metrics. The provision of assets and services on council parks, reserves, cemetery's and any other space that may fall under the leisure or community or leisure assets space is where I feel there is a gap.

There is some long term history of why, and my thoughts are that when the predecessors of this council, the boroughs and county were amalgamated in 1990 things like roading and the 3 waters had big budgets and prescribed mechanisms to measure service and expenditure that were prescribed from outside of the local government space by acts of parliament, the resource management act and other such central government statutes. Parks and reserves and leisure assets were not as far as I am aware. Coupled with this was the thinking and practice of the time of contracting out of services and the selling off of assets as part of what was the great "Neo Liberal experiment" that was the fashion of the time.

So where does this leave us? Due to the numbers of parks and reserves inherited from the former boroughs and villages and the county there has been a large amount of doing what we've always done with council doing some, sports clubs doing some, trusts doing some with a degree of formality in terms of Reserves management plans thrown in, but here is the issue as I see it. We as a governance entity have never asked for the precision of the metrics to justify our collective decisions and guide the direction of expenditure both in terms of number of assets and the levels of expenditure. Those of you that have been members of this council for more than one term ago will remember that Cr Rainey and myself stepped into an operational space and gathered information to understand the use, by size and frequency on memorial park in Taihape due to what we saw as a deficiency in the available information, but I fear that we have a similar issue on every recreational space that we manage. As we go forwards with increasingly aging assets the call for maintenance and replacement will only grow higher, but unfortunately local groups quite rightly only look at their problems through a local lens. We on the other hand must look at the provision and funding of assets on a district wide basis, and in order to do this we will need an increasingly higher resolution in our information systems in this space in order to right size and place appropriate assets in the right place. I will be looking to put this item onto a future policy agenda so that we can plan appropriately for what is a very important function of provision.

Cr Angus Gordon

**TABLED DOCUMENT**

Tabled at Policy / Planning  
on 10 September 2020