

Policy & planning chairman's report

October 2021

Hello and welcome to today's meeting. As most of you are not in the room and joining via Zoom I will endeavour to be as inclusive as possible, please use the raised hand icon if you can and we will keep a tally at the council chambers end.

As you will have seen in today's agenda there is quite a lot happening, in fact the number of pages does not do justice to how much is actually going on, I will try and comment on what I see as the key pieces of work from my perspective.

We have a review of our Easter trading policy, for some of our community Easter Sunday is completely sacrosanct, for others especially those in the service sector it is one of those holiday weekend cash cows not to be missed. I hope that we have an open minded and understanding conversation if the need arises, in the meantime it is up to our community to give their opinion, I would ask councillors to encourage their community to engage and submit, it is important.

Our "happy or not" feedback mechanism does certainly produce a visually striking message for councillors and staff to interpret. I hope that there is additional feedback so that any real issues or success stories can be fully interrogated, I am sure that our staff will report on this further.

In the economic development space there are many poignant suggestions and questions in the report especially those relevant to the spatial plan formation process that we are currently undertaking. The business baseline survey is a great start and timely, one question that I would like to raise is how are we as an organisation going to touch new members of the community who are only getting their feet under our table, or small businesses that are not physically connected to the Rangitikei district but are domiciled here? Given the amount of inward migration into our district recently I suspect that there are some economic gems to be uncovered that fly well below our radar.

Our destination management plan development process is in full swing, well done to our staff who attend after hours meetings all over the district to get the message out. I hope you are getting a good responses and feedback.

In our community development update I note that we are undertaking a review of our "Volunteer health and safety procedures", that will be reported back to our December meeting. Can I say as a member of our community that has been involved in community events and projects that include an element of volunteerism, that this review is vitally important. I think that we need to be cognisant of the huge amount of work that volunteers undertake in our communities, but also what their personal boundaries should be with regards to the type of work being undertaken and when they undertake it, I for one want to see our volunteers and staff all kept safe and return home at the end of a project fit and well for the next day's endeavour.

Lastly I would like to comment on our website "visitRangitikei.nz. I have not been a regular visitor in the past, but I do like what I see. The things that really stood out though were not the advertisements for various businesses, but the unique and hidden gems that we have. They may not be the places that are easy to get to or that hordes of people should necessarily be taken to either, they are very Rangitikei unique. If nothing else, photo's or commentaries of these special places could feature as part of our wallpaper for the site and be part of our brand, it's just a thought.

Angus Gordon

Chairman