

Report for: Hurunui Community Committee Meeting 23 October 2024

Prepared by: Cr Karen Armstrong

Subject: Results of Community feedback about the 'Future of the Halls' project

Date: 10 October 2024

Background:

At the 23 July Hurunui Community Committee Meeting, the Committee agreed to seek community feedback about the draft proposed plans to upgrade the United Rugby clubrooms in Hawarden and plans for a new build in Waikari, providing options for consideration by the Hawarden and Waikari communities.

Drop-in Sessions:

On 28 August, HCC confirmed its intention to hold drop-in sessions for the community to come and view the plans, look over the Halls and provide their feedback on what was being proposed. Committee members agreed to be present for both of these sessions, in order to explain the plans, respond to questions and hear what people had to say. The Committee also agreed on 28 August to ask everyone to put their thoughts in writing, along with their names. It was agreed that feedback would close on Saturday 14 September. A double set of the plans and costings were displayed on pin boards, enabling people to walk around and view these, while interacting with Committee members and others to informally discuss them, on the day.

Drop in sessions were held on 7 September, as follows:

Waikari Hall 10am - 11.30am

Hawarden Hall 1.30pm - 3pm

An opportunity to view a 'fly through' of the Rugby Clubrooms Upgrade was most appreciated by many who had the time to view it, commenting that it really assisted them to better understand the proposal.

Publicity / Information Availability / Council Support:

In alignment with their Engagement and Communications Plan, Council Officers supported this project by developing and printing a poster, as well as publicising the drop-in sessions using this in the local Newsletter and relevant social media. They also provided sufficient copies of the the A4 1-pager approved by the Committee, with the poster on the reverse, to enable me to insert one in each of the local Newsletters – distributed to every household in our area. In addition, paper copies of the engineering reports and the repairs and maintenance for both Halls were available on the day.

Officers also placed all of the relevant information on the Council website and provided a neutral email address to receive feedback, for those that preferred that option.

Participation:

68 people attended the Waikari session and 31 attended in Hawarden, excluding Hurunui Community Committee members. 40 pieces of written feedback were received on the day – some neglected to add their name to this (see below).

Email feedback:

4 emails were received by me; 4 emails were received via the Council 'submissions' email.

'Save the Waikari Hall' Petition:

This was presented to Pete, with a total of 164 signatories. 15 of these had also provided feedback saying the Waikari Hall should be kept.

'No to New Builds' Petition:

This was presented to Pete at the same time as the one above, with a total of 117 signatures - all but 5 of which had also signed the petition above. Note: this petition specifically states both the Rugby Clubrooms upgrade as proposed, and the Waikari new build, are too expensive. Additional commentary was provided by those who initiated the petitions, based on the comments made by those signed a petition. This commentary is also summarised in the spreadsheet.

Note: The petition organisers commented that they ran out of time to canvas Hawarden people, so we are unable to conclude, for instance, whether Hawarden people would have supported 'saving' the Waikari Hall; or whether Hawarden people would have signed a similar petition to 'save' the Hawarden Hall, had they been canvassed.

Level of Participation:

204 people participated by providing feedback of some sort. Given that there are only 854 ratepayers, this appears to represent 23.88%! However, as can be seen in the attached spreadsheet summarising the results, in quite a few cases, both members of a couple provided feedback individually, thus 2 or more views from one rate paying property or household.

While there were a small few who, in providing their addresses indicated they live outside the rate paying area, in most of these cases, their surnames would suggest they have strong family connections to this area. 12 responders have been labelled as 'Anon', as they did not put their name on the written feedback - all were people who attended one or other drop-in session.

Spreadsheet:

Please find attached (Appendix 1) a spreadsheet recording all of the feedback we received. The text from all written submissions is summarised, as is the text from each petition. Quite a number of people provided written feedback on the day and also subsequently signed one or both petitions. Where I have been able to discern who provided information, the person has been named; separate columns have been used to provide greater detail about the nature of the views expressed. While those who signed the petition provided some form of contact information, this has been excluded from the spreadsheet, in line with Council policy.

Themes:

- 18 people specifically supported the rugby clubrooms upgrade; seemed to approve of it as shown, while 14 provided feedback on design modifications. The 'No New Builds' petition implies some may be open to a much more modest upgrade, at significantly less cost. Common responses included: the cost is unaffordable; a double set of changing rooms/ablutions is unnecessary for the few games currently held there - much better use of this space is possible e.g. smaller spaces that could be rented out, or made to suit the Playgroup, or the gym could be incorporated, to generate income; the current ownership is concerning, if ratepayers money is to be sent on it; consider getting an events manager to promote and manage the facility.
- 6 people specifically supported the Waikari new build, if located near the Scout Den, or to replace that building, whereas 136 people specifically stated they do not want this building
- 4 people specifically requested that the Hawarden Hall be retained
- 174 people specifically requested that the Waikari Hall be retained
- A strong theme throughout was that the proposed plans are unaffordable for our ratepayer base; that we can earthquake strengthen and make better use of what we currently have
- 7 people specifically advocated for new, purpose-built multi-use facility that would meet the needs of both communities – 5 advocated for this to be on the existing Hawarden Hall site, whereas 1 said in front of the medical centre (Waikari) and the other didn't specify where.

Workshop:

An informal meeting of the Hurunui Community Committee was held on 25 September in the Waikari hall, where all of the feedback was laid out for the Committee to read and consider. Chairperson Peter Black invited everyone to share their initial thoughts, based on what they had read and heard on the Drop-in day.