

**REPORT OF THE ORDINARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 29 CIVIC AVENUE, GORE ON TUESDAY 23 MARCH 2010, AT 7.28 PM**

**PRESENT** His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks JP), Cr Bolger (Chairperson), Crs Davis, Dixey, Gardyne, Harvey, Heller, Highsted, McLennan and Sharp.

**IN ATTENDANCE** The Chief Executive (Mr Stephen Parry), General Manager, District Assets (Mr Paul Withers), General Manager, Corporate Services (Mr Russell Duthie), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Roading Manager (Mr Murray Hasler), Asset Manager, Utilities (Mr Ross Haslemore), Building Control Manager (Mr Russell Paterson) and Corporate Support Officer (Mrs Tracey Millan).

**APOLOGY** Crs Dixon and Grant apologised for absence.

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**1. URGENT LATE BUSINESS – MATAURA POOL WORKING PARTY REQUEST TO WAIVE POOL ADMISSION CHARGE (24.2.3)**

His Worship raised an item of urgent late business about a request from the Mataura Pool Working Party to waive the admission charge to the Mataura Pool for the remainder of the season.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of His Worship, seconded by Cr Sharp, THAT the Mataura Pool Working Party request to waive admission charges for a period of time be considered as urgent late business.**

**2. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY 2010 (1.1.4)**

A financial report for the seven months ended 31 January 2010 had been received from the Management Accountant and was perused by the Committee.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Highsted, seconded by Cr Sharp, THAT the financial report for the seven months ended 31 January 2010 be received.**

3. ENVIROSCHOOLS SOUTHLAND: 2009 ANNUAL REPORT (18.85)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive advising the Council made an annual grant of \$5,000 in favour of the Enviroschools programme conducted by Environment Southland. A copy of the 2009 report of the programme had been circulated with the agenda.

Cr Harvey thought it would be worthwhile to have a representative from the Enviroschools programme to speak to the Council in the near future.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr McLennan, seconded by Cr Harvey, THAT the 2009 report of the Southland Enviroschools programme be received.**

4. SOUTHLAND WARM HOMES TRUST – ANNUAL REPORT  
(50.40.3)

*His Worship declared an interest and withdrew.*

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive, together with a copy of the annual report of the Southland Warm Homes Trust for the year ending 30 June 2009.

The Gore District Council provided an annual grant of \$15,000 to the trust. A total of 667 homes had benefited from insulation in the year under review. A further 1,000 insulation installations were anticipated in the current financial year.

In response to Cr Gardyne, the Chief Executive advised he had made enquiries to establish how many of the insulation installations had been to homes in the Gore District. He would report back to the Council once the information was available.

His Worship said the project had been established quickly in Gore compared to other areas.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Dixey, THAT the annual report of the Southland Warm Homes Trust for the year ending 30 June 2009 be received.**

5. PROGRESS TOWARDS ATTAINMENT OF NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (46.35.4)

A memo had been received from the General Manager, Corporate Services regarding progress towards attainment of non-financial performance targets.

The Council was required to provide its stakeholders with information about its level of service, the specific performance targets it had set and the level of attainment of those targets as well as the dollars and cents outcomes.

The Chief Executive said the Council was tracking well overall. A few areas would not make it as the emphasis on those areas was on quality, not quantity. There was always room for improvement with performance measures. He would like to see an improvement in the resource consent area. Last year 80% achievement was reached which was the highest in the region.

In response to Cr Davis, the Chief Executive said the survey referred to in the report related to a bi-annual resident satisfaction survey. A cross section of the community would be surveyed in May-June and results would be reported back in July-August.

Cr Gardyne did not think the targets set in the gravel roads section related very well to the last customer survey results. He thought more effort was required in regard to consultation happening with rural areas as to what the concerns were.

He wondered whether employing contractors was the best model to work with. Perhaps more work was needed to see if the District would be served better by going back to an in-house roading service. Some LATE's that had been introduced by the Council, had now disappeared.

Cr Bolger said it was always good to consider if things could be done better. He had been privy to an independent roading report a couple of years ago that stated the Gore District's roading was of the highest calibre.

The Roding Manager said in regarding to performance measures, to compare the public customer survey with Council audit results was not comparing apples with apples. Performance measures were a technical measurement as compared to an objective opinion from the public.

He said there had been a huge trend away from in-house roading services as they had proved to be inefficient and more

costly than the avenue of competitively priced tenders. The indicators on the network showed the current system was achieving well.

The Manager said the Clutha contract was based on unit rates, as opposed to the Gore District Council's system of mainly lump sums where the contractor was paid a set lump sum per month. There were pluses and minuses for both methods in terms of under or over supply; however it was the Contract Manager's job to ensure that did not happen. In his view the current method was the most appropriate and cost effective method for the Gore District.

The Chief Executive advised that law changes in the mid 1990s prevented Councils from providing an in-house service delivery mechanism for roading. The principal funder deemed that it had to be a competitive pricing procedure which was why Gore decided to divest its roading assets. Some districts decided to establish LATE's. There were no Councils in New Zealand that delivered its roading in-house because it was not lawful.

Cr Gardyne said he might have been misunderstood. By bringing it back in house, he was meaning at an arms length process like CCO's.

The Chief Executive said LATE's had to tender and win tenders on their own merits.

Cr Bolger thought if the Council decided to go down the avenue of change, an increase in the roading specification might be the only option to consider.

Cr Gardyne said he had no problem with the specification. His concern was with the corrugations that had been evident since January despite complaints being lodged. He wondered whether it was a lack of inspection or lack of willingness to attend to the maintenance to comply with the specifications set that was the problem.

The Manager said there were response times set in the maintenance contract for attending to complaints. Corrugations were a symptom of dry weather. He said Cr Gardyne was wrong in saying the contractor had not been responding to complaints. To have roads corrugation free all year round, some roads would need to be graded every couple of days and the cost would be horrendous, so an element of reason was applied. He did not know of any roading control authority in the country that could afford to take that approach. The most severe and frequent

sites for corrugations were being be addressed with a longer term solution as well as maintenance.

His Worship said he made a point of travelling rural roads regularly and asked Cr Gardyne for some examples of where corrugations were an issue so he could go and inspect them.

Cr Gardyne said Gardyne Road, Sandy Knowes Road and Clinker Hill Road were some examples.

The Manager said those roads were on the programme to have traction completed done at the spot where most corrugations occurred and a long term approach was being looked at as the Council could not afford to have the grader attend to the roads every couple of days.

Cr Gardyne said the Manager was distorting the truth. He objected to the fact that he was demanding a service every two or three days. He had said he had not seen a grader on those roads since prior to Christmas.

Cr Bolger did not agree with the comment from Cr Gardyne about distorting the truth. The Mayor and he had travelled Smillie Road, via Gardyne Road and Sandy Knowes Road just a couple of months ago. The assumption that Gardyne Road was off the radar was not correct.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr McLennan, seconded by Cr Harvey, THAT the report on attainment of performance measure targets be received.**

6. MATAURA POOL WORKING PARTY REQUEST TO WAIVE POOL ADMISSION CHARGE (24.2.3)

His Worship said the Mataura Pool Working Party was looking to improve the pool facility and its patronage. There had been a lot of discussion around the admission fee and whether it was a barrier. The working party thought it was an ideal time of year to trial a period where the pool had free entry.

In response to His Worship, the Parks and Recreation Manager confirmed the admission takings at present were just over \$100 per day.

Cr Davis wondered what the working party was wanting to achieve by waiving pool admission charges.

His Worship said the working party was trying to define what the barriers were for the pool in terms of patronage. The issue

of cost had been raised, so it was decided to settle it once and for all and trial free entry to the pool.

Cr McLennan was happy to support the idea, if it was going to help the patronage problem.

Cr Sharp agreed a trial of free admission was worth a try.

Cr Gardyne thought the “Mataura Benevolent Society” was at work again. He said “welfareism” did not solve problems, it created them. If the Council wanted to save money, it should close the pool. If the free entry idea went ahead, he thought it was the wrong time of year to trial it. By introducing it at the beginning of the season, swimmers would be more likely to keep coming through the doors.

His Worship said the idea was not about saving money.

Cr Highsted said awareness to the public that the entry was free would have a big impact on the outcome. The initiative would need to be well advertised.

His Worship said it would also be promoted through local schools.

**RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr McLennan, seconded by Cr Sharp THAT the Mataura Pool admission charges be waived for the remainder of the 2009-10 season to conclude on 18 April 2010.**

The meeting concluded at 7.56pm