
AGENDA ITEM 10.4

BETTER OFF FUNDING REPORT

Purpose of Report

To present the Māori Standing Committee with information on the intended use of Three Waters Reform Better Off Funds.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the Better Off Funding Report.*

1. Executive Summary

This report presents information on the intended use of the Three Waters Reform Better Off Funds to create a South Wairarapa Community Wellbeing Fund and invite feedback and discussion on the initiative.

2. Background

The better off Tranche 1 funding package is one of a suite of Three Waters reform funding packages announced by Government to be administered through Te Tari Taiwhenua, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

Council have resolved to apply for the money from DIA and delegated authority to the CEO to enter into a Funding Agreement between DIA and SWDC and Crown Infrastructure Partners Limited (as monitor) for Three Waters Reform – Better Off Package (Tranche 1 Funding) of \$1.88m. Applications must be submitted by 30th September 2022, or a waiver granted by DIA.

It is intended that the Better Off package of funding be used to support councils to transition to their new role post-reform through meeting some or all of the following criteria:

- Supporting communities to transition to a sustainable low emissions economy, including by building resilience to climate change and natural hazards.
- Delivery of infrastructure and/or services that enable housing development and growth, with a focus on brownfield and infill opportunities where those are available.
- Delivery of infrastructure and/or services that support local place-making and improvements in community well-being.

3. Discussion

It is within the context of a post-reform future for local government and post-COVID environment for the community that SWDC wishes to utilise the Better Off funding to invest in an operational fund targeting community wellbeing. The thing that would bind the enterprise is the sense of bringing the South Wairarapa together, connecting and supporting one another, as we navigate the next few years.

The creation, governance, and funding of a South Wairarapa Community Wellbeing Fund (CWBF) will be an entirely new mechanism for community and mana whenua involvement in the prioritisation and delivery of community wellbeing projects, including some of those already included in the LTP years 4 - 10.

There would be three dimensions to the South Wairarapa Community Wellbeing Fund (CWBF) initiative; Creation and Governance, Eligibility of Projects to be funded, and ensuring delivery of projects.

3.1 Creation and Governance

This will be an initiative that will preserve a high degree of flexibility in selecting which projects should be eligible for funding support with the Better Off Tranche 1 funds available whilst engaging the community and iwi in the selection process.

The fund would be marketed through council media channels – an active rather than passive approach to elicit community ideas.

The governance group will include Councillors, ELT members, mana whenua and community representatives who would make sure the fund was accessed equitably, fully, and appropriately.

Funding would be via grants, co-funding, and/or an equity investment.

3.2 Eligible Projects

Two categories of projects will be eligible for support via the CWBF: a) Community Wellbeing Projects and b) Accelerated Long Term Plan Projects.

a) Community projects that aligned well with the LTP and were a strong fit with enhancing social wellbeing would be considered in an open and transparent application process by the governance group. The focus would be on the South Wairarapa but initiatives that were scalable and worked across neighbouring regions would be looked on favourably.

The fund criteria would guarantee that only projects focussed on wellbeing outcomes would be selected. To encourage appropriate applications the focus areas of interest would be:

- Reconnecting and regenerating our communities after COVID
- Community development initiatives that focus on Māori wellness
- Promoting safer, welcoming, and inclusive communities
- Economic development connected to the region's natural assets

b) Accelerated long term plan projects with a wellness component would be brought forward by council management working closely with Councillors on the selection of projects. This category would bring promising projects that have already

been endorsed by the community, and are focussed on wellbeing outcomes, to fruition ahead of time.

3.3 Delivering quality projects on time and within agreed budgets

Council will secure project management resources using Better Off funding to ensure all projects are delivered on time, on budget, and within agreed quality standards. Capacity and capability would be increased as demand on the Fund increased in concert with the project management resources brought in by the applicants themselves. The community will benefit from the increased project management resources and capability brought in through this initiative.

4. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to consider provide feedback on the intended use of the Three Waters Reform Better Off Funds to create a South Wairarapa Community Wellbeing Fund

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