

COUNCILLOR REPORT
for
South Wairarapa District Council Meeting
Wednesday 14 December 2016

Councillor's Name	Colin Wright
Meeting – Date & Venue	WaiConnect Steering Group Friday 9 December 2016 Carterton Events Centre
Key issues from meeting	<p>WaiConnect is the Wairarapa council's joint project to bid for a portion of the additional \$350 million funding which the government is to allocate for improvements/extensions to UltraFast Broadband (fibre), Rural Broadband, and Mobile Blackspot from 2017. See www.waiconnect.org.nz</p> <p>The project was initiated in 2014 and an application was lodged for Wairarapa improvements in July 2015 with the required Digital Enablement Plan submitted in September 2015. There has been little visible progress since then, but decisions are expected soon on which NZ towns are to have fibre installed for UltraFast Broadband. Note Masterton has had a fibre optic cable network installed already as part of the original government funding.</p> <p>Further information now needs to be submitted by April 2017 in relation to our Rural Broadband and Mobile Blackspots applications.</p>
Specific item/s for Council consideration	In 2014/15 Council contributed a share of the costs on a population basis for the earlier work by WaiConnect (approx \$10K). Additional costs will need to be incurred to provide the further information now required. A budget will be prepared shortly, but SWDC costs are expected to be less than previously. The steering group considers it essential to submit high quality information in the Wairarapa applications as the funding is being strongly contested across the country.
General	<p>Should South Wairarapa receive additional broadband capacity and speed, there will then be an obligation on the Council to encourage uptake within the community as set out in the Digital Enablement Plan.</p> <p>The Steering Group, which is chaired by Tim Lusk of Martinborough, is to meet next on 17 January 2017.</p>