



Hawkesbury City Council

supplementary special meeting business paper

date of meeting: 17 April 2007

location: council chambers

time: 7.00 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING - Supplementary

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SECTION 4 - Reports for Determination

SUPPORT SERVICES

Item: 66 SS - Proposed Special Rate Variation - Draft Community Consultation / Engagement Strategy 2007/2008 - (79351, 96332)

REPORT:

The previous item on the agenda for this meeting regarding Council's Draft Management Plan 2007/2008 and Draft Budget 2007/2008 recommends, in part, the adoption of these documents for exhibition purposes based upon a Special Variation Budget that is subject to Ministerial approval.

Subject to Council actually resolving in these terms it is suggested that it would also be appropriate for the Council to now give consideration to a community consultation/engagement strategy for use as part as the public exhibition process.

Accordingly, the following community engagement strategy details the recommended methods of involving the community in regard to Council's proposal to make a submission to the Minister for Local Government for a Special Rate Variation of 6.25%.above the estimated rate pegging limit of 3.25 %, being an increase of 9.5% in total.

The strategy follows the guidelines and principles outlined in the Council's Draft Community Engagement Policy which is currently out on public exhibition.

Proposed Community Engagement Strategy for Infrastructure Renewal

Scope of issue or proposal - within Council's *Draft Community Engagement Policy*, the development of the Management Plan and Budget is classified as a Level 1 'trigger' for community engagement, in that it will have a high level of impact on the City of Hawkesbury.

Level of community engagement - the minimum recommended community engagement strategy for a Level 1 issue is 'consult' which requires Council *'to provide information and to seek community views and input into policy, plans and decisions'*.

Recommended community engagement tools - the 'consult' community engagement strategy identifies a broad range of community engagement tools including public meetings, briefings, displays and public exhibition, electronic information on website, notification, and submissions.

Objectives of community engagement process - the primary objectives of a community engagement process to inform the community of the proposals in the 2007/2008 Draft Management Plan and Budget and the increased funding required for the Infrastructure Renewal Program can be summarised as follows:

- a) the community's level of support for increased funding to infrastructure renewal
- b) clarification of the communities priorities for capital expenditure;
- c) input into the determination of the strategic plan, budget, fees and charges and the revenue pricing policy (elements of the management plan).

Resource Implications - the proposed strategy can be achieved within the available funds of Communication Program material and printing allocations within the Corporate Communication budget.

Below are details of some recommended tools for utilisation during the period of public exhibition: 24 April - 22 May 2007.

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Tool	Audience	Actioning Officer	Comments
Advertisements	Readers of local media	Director Support Services	This is the minimum statutory requirement of the State Government for the management plan exhibition period
Media Releases	Journalists and Editors	Corporate Communication Manager	Regular feeds of information to inform the community of the impacts of the proposed funded program
Black and White Brochure	Ratepayers	Corporate Communication Manager/Executive Manager Community Partnerships	This brochure would include the detail of the funding required for the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy and the prioritisation of the funds acquired
Static Displays	Attendees at public buildings	Corporate Communication Manager/Public Relations Coordinator	To be placed at Council offices, libraries at Richmond and Windsor with feedback form. A display at the Hawkesbury Show on the weekend of 27 - 29 April can also be staffed.
Website	Local Community	Corporate Communication Manager/Public Relations Coordinator	Electronic versions of brochure, frequently asked questions and other information as necessary
Briefing Session	Invited Chairpeople, Presidents and leaders of community organisations and business	Mayor of Hawkesbury and Councillors, supported by Management	The purpose of this briefing would be to provide information to the community leaders on the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy and its funding source.
Briefing Session	Media	Mayor, Director Support Services, Corporate Communication Manager	The media tend to have a different focus to community leaders, so it is recommended to have a separate briefing for them
Briefing Session	Staff of rates department and other customer service areas	Management	Staff need to be fully informed in order to be able to answer the questions asked of them during this process.

As can be seen a significant aim of this plan would be to get the support of various leaders of community groups, businesses and organisations.

Key Messages in written and verbal communication

1. With increased resources Council can fund an Infrastructure Renewal Program. This funding will be spent on renewing roads, kerb and gutter, bridges, stormwater drains, parks and community buildings around the Hawkesbury. This increased spending on Hawkesbury's infrastructure will prevent further deterioration and provide a safer environment for us all to live in.
2. Council is proposing an increase in rates funding of 6.25% above rate pegging which would be spent on renewing Hawkesbury's infrastructure and this increase will be partially offset by the discontinuance of the current Environmental Levy, effectively reducing the actual increase above rate pegging by approximately 4.7% to approximately 1.55%.

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3. This increased spending on Hawkesbury's infrastructure will assist in reducing further deterioration and provide a safer environment for us all to live in. We need to act now.
4. Details of the approximate increase per week extra on the average rates notice.
5. Details of the increased funds available as a result of the Special Rate Variation will be able to be spent on community assets with the increased funding during the 10 year program with Council continuing to pursue other avenues such as loan funding, etc.

Possible Message on rates notice

It is also proposed that a short message will be included on the 4th quarter rates instalment notice drawing attention to the exhibition of the Draft Management Plan, Budget and Special Rate Variation and directing attention to sources of information about these issues.

In view of the recommended strategies, that incorporate a number of meetings and briefing sessions, it is suggested that a general public meeting not be held. In this regard, the Departmental guidelines in respect of public consultation in support of a special rate variation proposal indicated that a council must "consider" conducting a public meeting rather than specifying that one must be held.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information concerning the Draft Community Consultation/ Engagement Strategy for use in association with Council's Proposed Special Rate Variation for 2007/2008 be noted and the various proposals detailed in the report in this regard be implemented.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

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special
meeting

end of
supplementary
business
paper

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