



USH COUNCILLORS WORKSHOP

Date	5 Feb 2025	Time	10.55 am
Location	Council Chambers		

Chair: Cr Lyall

Attendees:

- Mayor Broughton (online)
- Councillors: Cr Reid, Cr Miller, Cr Hasson, Cr Mugford, Cr Gliddon, Cr Dean, Miss M McKay, Cr McInnes, and Cr Mundt
- Apologies: Cr Epiha
- Staff: Sarah Carnoutsos (Communications Manager), Allison Sneddon (Chief Financial Officer), Tim Harris (Executive Director Strategy and Engagement), and Denise Kidd (Executive Director Community Services and Facilities).
- Presenters: Monique Eade (Associate Consultant, Climate Response, Jacobs), Chris Mene (Independent Facilitator, Mene Solutions), Andrew Dark (Principal Engineer, Aqualinc Research), Andrew Henderson (Principal Planner, Jacobs).

Opening Comments

Tim Harris introduced external parties

Cr Lyall opened the workshop, noting that staff are looking for a way forward.

Presentations and Discussions

Tim Harris: Provided an overview of the engagement process, looking for direction from Councillors today, direction might look at high-level triggers, and a building inspections programme.

- Background information presented (Slide 1).
- Community engagement feedback discussed.

Andrew Dark (Aqualinc) Delivered a presentation on climate change impacts, this was presented to licence holders at the December meeting.

Chris Mene (Independent Facilitator): Discussed the importance of trust and confidence in community engagement.

- Initially, there was less trust, but engagement improved relationships.

Monique Eade (Jacobs) : Shared insights on community engagement. Key points included:

- Diverse demographics at the huts.
- The USH Committee does not represent the entire community.
- Tensions exist within the community, with some unwilling to engage.

- Concerns over vulnerable groups (40s & 50s age group are who Monique sees as the most vulnerable).
- Some residents accept occasional flooding as manageable.
- Loss of access is not perceived as a major issue.
- Insurance is not universally held but is not a major concern for most.
- Suggested a reactive trigger system reviewed every five years, ensuring flexibility for future councils.

Council Discussion:

- Recognised the complexity of the system, including groundwater, lake levels, and potential sea inundation.
- Lake Management: Uncertainty about whether current management will continue in the future.
- Lake Openings: Concerns that the lake is not being opened for as long as it should be. Staff advised Ecan Staff spoke at a residents' meeting, confirming that management is becoming more challenging but is expected to continue.
- Community Understanding: Discussion on whether the community fully comprehends the risks.
- Flood Risk: Cr questioned if potential flood scenarios from the Selwyn River bend had been considered. Response: No specific review of river breaks has been conducted.
- Community Feedback: Positive feedback from community members on engagement efforts from Monique and Chris and Councillors thanked the facilitators.
- Management Approach: Some concern that council has "dropped the ball" in certain areas.
- Building inspections: Baseline set from 1947; approach must be pragmatic and consider worst-case scenarios.
- Future Planning: Review of extreme scenarios and modelling, including projections for 2050 and 2100.
- Lake Opening Consent: Expires in 2029, raising the possibility of advocating for higher lake levels.
- Stormwater Management: A Councillor advised this may lead Taumutu to a shift in position concerning other settlements.
- Ms Eade explained pausing the engagement process to consult with councillors before returning to the community.

Historic Flooding & Emergency Response

- Past evacuation experiences at USH's discussed; noting that some residents refused to leave.
- Aqualinc conducted modelling calibration from 1960-2100 using data up to 2020/2022.

Retreat & Housing Options

- Six retreat options were developed with community input.
- Some hut owners mistakenly believe they own both the hut and the land.
- Buyout / land banking options considered, but residents do not own the land they currently live on.
- Potential support packages explored on a case-by-case basis.
- Staff advised that Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) are unlikely to engage unless there is a demonstrated need and at present they don't present as homeless.
- Rental Properties: Council previously decided in 2015 not to allow rentals at USH's, without Council permission; currently aware of 12 rental properties at the settlement. Discussion was held that this may have been a Chief Executive decision at the time and not Councillors.

Decision-Making Considerations

- Flood Risk: Consideration of the 8.5 scenario (worst-case flooding).
- Workshop Request: A further workshop was requested to work through Section 5 of the report and assess options.
- Legal & Social Implications: Recognising the need to support vulnerable populations.
- Triggers Approach: Supports a trigger-based approach that evolves over time to manage risk.
- USH Committee Representation: Again, acknowledged that the committee does not fully represent the entire community.
- Community Support Coordinator: Suggestion to introduce a dedicated support role.

Considerations

- It was discussed that the hut owners preferred retreat timeframe is 30 years but ideally would be indefinite.
- Statement of Proposal: Staff suggested that there was the view that high-level triggers should be included, USH should be on the District Wide Rate, to relook at the licence fee and a dedicated resource allocated to USH as a point of contact.
- National Retreat Policy: It was discussed whether council should pause actions to align with upcoming national policy. Monique advised it is a legislation update which is expected in the second half of the year; and unlikely to include central government funding.

Inspections & Safety

- Concerns Over Inspections: Some councillors feel the standards are being diluted.
- Second Dwellings: A Councillor request for data on the number of second dwellings that hut owners own.
- Houses vs. Huts: Clarification needed on how properties are classified.
- Flood Costs: Who bears financial responsibility for flood mitigation.
- Evacuation procedures: Council cannot force residents to evacuate.
- Rental Standards: Compliance with Healthy Homes Standards questioned.
- Health & Safety Risks: Fire hazards and council liability discussed.

Next Steps

- Additional workshop / more time requested to refine decision-making framework.
- Establishing timeframes and triggers.

Meeting Closed: 12:27 PM