

## Community Summary Long Term Plan Ōtorohanga District Council

Arts, culture and creativity contributes to thriving communities. When arts, culture and creativity is supported, strong and visible communities are strong and visible.

Arts, culture and creativity is woven through all aspects of life. It has a key role to play in creating thriving and liveable towns and cities. The creative activation of public spaces supports the preservation of council assets, and promotes social cohesion and community connection. Sustainable creative career opportunities attract and retain workers and innovative businesses.

Arts culture and creativity supports community and individual wellbeing. In Waikato, those who report being highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity have 5% higher overall wellbeing as compared to those with little or no engagement.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that recreational arts can support mental wellbeing. 'Those who engaged in 100 or more hours/year of arts engagement (i.e. two or more hours/week) reported significantly better mental well-being than other levels of engagement.'<sup>2</sup>

Councils are currently seeking community feedback around their long term plans (LTPs). Long Term Plans outline Council's activities and how they are managed, delivered and funded<sup>3</sup>. Under the Local Government Act, Councils must consult with their communities on the LTP (or 10 year plan) every 3 years.<sup>4</sup> A common theme across these consultations is the need to be strategic around prioritising investment.

It is important that investment in community wellbeing is prioritised and protected. The core role of council, as outlined in the legislation, is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities. This is the required (or statutory) purpose of council.

We have a role to play in supporting council in this work, by letting them know that we will support them to deliver these wellbeings. We can share with the council and with others in our community that we know and care about more than solely economic concerns. It is important that we share about the other things that we value in our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Huber Social, 'Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in Waikato' (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p.22, <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/researchandreports>.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Davies, Matthew Knuiman & Michael Rosenberg, 'The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population, BMC Public Health, vol.16, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7>.

<sup>3</sup> Waikato District Council

[https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20\(LTP,\(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases\)](https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20(LTP,(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases)).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

This can be as simple as writing an email or letter to council about the things that you care about.

[Here is a link](#) to the council's resources for the Long Term Plan feedback process. It is important to know that you do not need to answer every question, or go into great detail. You can speak from your own experience, and share about what you really value and care about. Anything you can do to add your voice to the chorus is powerful. You can find the submission link here:

<https://engage.otodc.govt.nz/ltp/surveys/have-your-say-submission-form>

We have pulled out some key moments where arts, culture, creativity and community are mentioned. You might want to mention some of these, and what you want to happen with regard to these. Feel very free to copy and paste from here, and make any edits or additions you would like.

In the opening of the consultation document, the mayor and councillors share:

*'Community feedback has been to stay connected to our communities, do the basics well and ensure we are prepared for the future'*

You might want to let council know that you believe arts, culture and creativity are powerful tools to achieve connection, enhance delivery of basic needs, and help us to imagine and prepare for the future.

The Ōtorohanga District council lists three main priorities:

**People:** Connected, empowered, engaged communities; welcoming, proud, thriving district

**Place:** Vibrant, diverse, liveable communities; sustainable, resilient district

**Partnerships:** Progressive, enduring, supportive partnerships for district wellbeing; Aspirational, united, responsible leadership

So if you talk about these things, and use these key words, then good stuff.

There are three main issues the council is specifically seeking feedback about:

7. Funding Depreciation: (you can read more about this on pages 19 and 40 of the consultation document)

8. Community Presence:

One way that council proposed to increase presence with community is through the implementation of a multi-purpose van. For now, council are proposing to not purchase the van and continue instead with their enhanced community connections approach. This is council's preferred option, and doesn't impact on our debt or current level of service.

Having the van would mean: • the library could increase their outreach to include taking books selections into remote communities • improved in-place opportunities for people to have their say and connect with Council • that during an emergency event Council could provide satellite WIFI connection and a diesel generator for charging devices.

0.23% rates increase (between 5-12 dollars per year more for ratepayers, dependent on where you live). See pages 30 and 41 of consultation document for more information.

Let council know what you think. Is this something you would like to see now or in the future? What benefits can you see flowing on from this idea? What ideas do you have to add?

#### 9. Kāwhia and Aotea Seawall rates:

You might support Council's prioritisation of investing in seawalls, for the reason they give: 'Community unity- protecting where people live helps to keep communities strong and together'. You can find out more about this on p. 42.

#### 10. What do you think about our plans for our other projects and activities?

It's helpful to know that the Majority (69%) of council's spending is in 'Resilient Infrastructure' including roading, waters, flood protection works and climate change work. There is an opportunity to infuse this work with arts and culture, to support public engagement and understanding, and to help protect assets.

**6% of council's spending goes to 'Strong Communities'** including libraries, civil defence, Enabling communities to take collective action on issues important to them, providing funding and support to organisations and other community groups, Art and culture, Promotion the District and supporting local businesses.

#### **Libraries**

You might tautoko Tori Koroheke from the Ōtorohanga Community Board, and agree that: 'Evolving our library services with the changing world ensures our community stays connected to opportunities for lifelong learning'

Check out what council are planning for the Ōtorohanga Library:

In this proposed Long Term Plan, we are introducing "Makerspace" into the Ōtorohanga library. Makerspace is an area where people can explore, design, experiment and create using resources like sewing machines and 3D printers. As well as Makerspace we will: • increase our te reo Māori collection • extend our library learning programmes to teenagers and adults (currently just for under-fives and children) • investigate expanding our collection of books by sharing with other

councils • bring library services out to you through schools, marae and community centres • add a covered mobility scooter parking area at the Ōtorohanga library. We are also going to join Fines Free Public Libraries Aotearoa which means we won't charge a fee for overdue books. It has been proven that a Fines Free service encourages people to come back to the library with their books – even if they are 'late' – and to continue using library services.

What do you think about this? Let council know. It is important to let council know if you think they are on the right track.

### **Multi-Purpose Facility**

A feasibility study has been undertaken on developing a multi-purpose community hub in Ōtorohanga to look at providing better spaces for community, arts and cultural activities, meeting social needs of residents and hosting events. This process involved discussions with and seeking feedback from partners, community organisations and stakeholders, as well as the wider community. Council is considering a preferred option based on developing existing facilities. However, no final decisions will be made until the details around the preferred option (designs, cost, funding, etc) have been established and the community and stakeholders have had the opportunity to consider and provide feedback on the proposal(s). We will let you know more later in 2024.

What do you think about this? Let council know. It is important to let council know if you think they are on the right track.

**Infrastructure Strategy:** You can read more about this on page 44

You might let council know that you agree with prioritising a 'sound management' approach above a 'do minimum approach' with regard to infrastructure management. You might want to let them know that you support them in serving the growing community, and investing in resilience to place the district in the best possible position for future challenges.

You might encourage council to include community facilities such as halls, toilets, swimming pools and other property in the continued development of Infrastructure strategies, and to integrate arts, culture and local storytelling in development of essential hard infrastructure.

You might suggest an allocation of support for the activation of these investments and infrastructure through investing in soft infrastructure (the people, programmes, and activities that bring these spaces to life).

You might encourage council to consider the role of artists and community cultural and creative groups in growing public understanding of effects of inundation, slips and drop outs, and value of water assets. Creativity is a great tool for connection.

12. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

- You might support the continued investigation for a multi-purpose community facility, and feel strongly that arts should be a key part of this essential space.
- You might commend council for taking first steps towards our future arts, culture and heritage strategy, and encourage them to work with local arts organisations, including Creative Waikato to develop this mahi.
- You might like to celebrate the wellbeing approach being taken by council and encourage them to work more closely with artists and organisations in the community to ensure those activities are engaging and accessible.
- You might let them know that you support them building closer relationships with iwi, and share why this is important to you.
- You might like to let the council know that you support them prioritising connection with the community, and their focus on co-creation with community and council.
- You might encourage their desire to reflect the vibrancy and individuality of the people within the towns and rural villages within the Ōtorohanga district, and have some ideas about how arts and culture can be used to realise this vision.
- You might share what you think about the kiwi house, and if you have any ideas about the role that arts, culture and creativity might play in supporting and activating this asset.

Creative Waikato are submitting to the long term plan too, and advocating for support for arts, culture and creativity in the Ōtorohanga district. If you want to read some of what we will be sharing, you can check out these documents:  
<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/standing-up-for-the-arts>