



Establishing a Group of Well-Respected Business People

In its Draft Annual Plan 2013-14 consultation process last month Council highlighted the topic of establishing a group of business people to lead economic development projects; and to fund this group initially with \$1 million from the Investment Fund. Many submissions on the Draft Annual Plan 2013-14 responded to this proposal.

After consideration of all the submissions and acknowledging the general support of the idea as demonstrated by a 79% support rate, Council has agreed to form a group of well-respected and experienced business people to help encourage economic growth in the South Waikato.

This group will be provided with \$1 million of establishment funding from the South Waikato Investment Fund.

But what exactly does this all mean? Many people had questions about how it would work, so the FAQs below have been included for your information.

What will the business group do?

The group will focus on medium to large scale projects and will aim to:

1. develop the district's competitive advantages
2. look for investment opportunities
3. link investors and businesses together and
4. look for district promotional opportunities to attract business to the district.

Who will be in the business group?

As yet we don't know who these people are, but the focus will be on national, regional or locally recognised business leaders who are experienced, well-respected and effective; who have national industry contacts and who are able to identify medium to large scale opportunities for the district.

Council believes that the business people chosen:

- need to understand the issues being faced by the district;
- need to be experienced business people; and
- must have demonstrated their success already in their business lives.

This way we can trust them to make astute business decisions to get the maximum economic development benefit out of the money they spend.

The first step for Council will be to establish how to attract these people and decide on an open and transparent process to choose the successful candidates. The legal structure and constitution of the organisation are the other priorities.

How will accountability of the group be achieved?

The new economic development group will have clear ground rules to govern it and objectives to meet. Council is also concerned how the group will be held

accountable for the decisions they make. The organisation will be established with a robust founding document that will require specific transparency and reporting standards.

Why will the business group be given \$1 million?

Without this monetary support, the group would be hamstrung to do any work - for example, it is planned that the money will be spent on setting up and running the business group, establishing a standard method of operating and prioritising projects, identifying and establishing a few lead projects, and providing the group with administrative support. One million dollars for the first year should be enough as it will take some time for the group to get up and running.

What will happen to the group over the long term?

In the long run, it is anticipated that this group will become a semi-independent organisation. The ground rules and objectives

will be set up in advance to ensure that accountability is rigorous and transparent. This will provide the group with the ability to act quickly in response to opportunities or to create new ones. The group will work with education providers, research organisations, Council and business to promote economic development in our district. The group needs to have very clear terms of reference around what it should do, but will also be given enough scope to allow it to undertake what it needs to do.

Council thanks you for your feedback

