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*SocialLink Western Bay of Plenty is a registered charity based at The Kollektive, a not-for-profit co-working space enabling collaboration. SocialLink is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty. Its vision is a resourced, skilled and cohesive for purpose sector enabling communities to flourish. Its purpose is to build the capability, confidence, sustainability and voice of community organisations in the Western Bay of Plenty.*

As a peak organisation, SocialLink is involved in advocating for and supporting social service and community organisations to do their work on behalf of their communities of interest, as well as advocating in various ways for social justice and equity of opportunity for all people living in the WBOP.

## **Submission on Western Bay of Plenty District Council's Long Term Plan/Mahere Tautini 2024-2034 June 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We would like to make the following points.

### **Community Outcomes and Strategic Priorities**

1. We **endorse** the Council's clear community outcomes and strategic priorities of enabling housing, empowering communities, growing authentic Te Tiriti based relationships, providing well maintained and resilient and effective infrastructure and responding to climate change.
2. We draw your attention to the rich information contained in the report '**Powering up Communities to Deliver Local Wellbeing: A Think Piece for Western Bay of Plenty District Council**'.
3. This project about eight community anchor organisation case studies and the resulting report was initiated by WBOPDC, and undertaken in conjunction with Powerdigm, a consulting arm of Inspiring Communities, and with SocialLink.
4. There are many insights generated by the community anchor organisations for local organisations and local councils in the report on people-initiated projects

- in housing, improving community spaces and facilities, health and wellbeing, mana whenua community development priorities and environmental protection.
5. This report will continue to be a source of excellence for WBOPDC to draw on in its long-term plan in fulfilling its strategic priority commitments (workshops have already been held on the report within WBOPDC).
  6. The report highlighted local **Community Anchor Organisations**, whether they be iwi or hapu lead or other forms of community organising, are an important resource and source of local contextual knowledge, acumen, energy and vitality.
  7. In other regions, some community anchor organisations have taken on owning and running of community facilities, maintenance of community spaces through coordinating volunteer efforts, or running recycling initiatives and caring for local environments. There may be opportunities for similar projects for WBOPDC to support, on top of what is already being done by local anchor organisations in the western bay region.
  8. Funding or transfer of funding to such organisations or use of procurement opportunities to enable them to take on work conventionally done by Council, operating as partners alongside council, could be part of these future directions.
  9. **Social Wellbeing** –the consultation document says ‘some communities have reduced access to services and less ability to pay for services. We expect this imbalance to remain’, We urge the Council to look at how this imbalance could be actively reduced through perhaps opportunities outlined above and ensure that socially deprived areas are not subject to less services, compared to more well off areas.
  10. **Local Housing Action Plans** - We support the approach mentioned in the Long Term Plan about working with community organisations and residents on local housing action plans. Developing a range of lower cost housing options for low-income households and single individuals who have few affordable options is obviously a key part of this. The LTP needs to facilitate requirements for such options in housing developments.
  11. Developments by Abbeyfield in Katikati and partnerships between council (eg through providing land) community housing providers and iwi providers have been successfully used in Christchurch and would seem a good model (see [Christchurch makes case to government for secure community housing funding | RNZ News](#)). Security of funding from central government to enable these long term developments is a pivotal component. We all know the benefits of people having affordable, stable and secure housing from which they can plan and live their lives and if SocialLink can add its voice to improved housing stability in the WBOPDC we would be pleased to engage in this.
  12. **Significant infrastructure** – providing well maintained, resilient and efficient infrastructure should also apply to social and community Infrastructure, such as community buildings and halls, libraries, green space, parks and other

recreational space: they all contribute to supportive and flourishing communities.

13. **Climate change, environment protection and application of an equity lens** It is well established that vulnerable populations and communities (e.g. coastal marae, people on low income or with disabilities) will shoulder a lot more of the negative impact of climate change, so an equity lens should be applied to the WBOPDC long term plan as well as explicit recognition of the impact climate change will have on iwi and hapu.
14. **Community facilities fund** - We **support** the Council's preferred option to have a fixed fee/charge per property from Year Two that goes towards community facilities fund and for Council to use Year One to consult with the community on developing the fund criteria.
15. Finally **SocialLink highly values its relationship with WBOPDC** and appreciates receiving funding to support 'for purpose organisations' in the WBO. We look forward to ongoing opportunities to provide services and to continue to work with social and community organisations.

We would like to provide an oral submission.

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