

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 207th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND  
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW  
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 4 APRIL 2024 AT 11.00 AM**

**Present**

Crs. Ngahi Bidois, Debbie Oakley, Lindsay Lyons, Jay Tapsell, Alan Simmonds, Mike Jarvie, Mark Sceats, and Murray Ferris.

**In attendance**

Arash Alaeinia, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Mark Sherburn, Matt Osborne, Cheyenne Robson (Eastern Fish & Game); Ken Raureti (Te Arawa Lakes Trust); and Barry Roderick.

**1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA**

1.1 Cr Ngahi Bidois opened the meeting at 11.12 am with a karakia and welcomed all present.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs. Scott Nicol, and Kevin Coutts; Ken Raureti informed the Chair that he would need to leave by 12pm.

2.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Mike Jarvie) that the apologies for the 207th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/04/2.2]*

2.3 Cr Ngahi Bidois recommended moving the item on Lake Okataina Access forward to enable Ken Raureti to contribute to this discussion, considering his need to leave early.

2.4 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Jay Tapsell) that Agenda item 12 regarding Lake Okataina is moved to forward to enable Te Arawa Lakes Trust representative, Ken Raureti, to speak to the meeting. [24/04/2.4]*

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (1 FEBRUARY 2024)**

3.1 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois//Jay Tapsell) that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [24/04/3.1]*

**3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**

No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy from the minutes of the meeting held 1 February 2024.

**3.3 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held 1 February 2024.

**4.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

Ngahi Bidois – Letter from Hon. Todd McLay

Mark Sceats – Hunter survey sub regions

Mark Sceats – ReWild Campaign

Mark Sceats – NZ Health Survey

Murray Ferris – Lake Aniwhenua

Lindsay Lyons – Reduction in councillor numbers for 2024 election

Lindsay Lyons – Acknowledgement of councillor contributions

**5.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

5.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

## **6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY**

6.1 Health and Safety Report – Arash Alaeinia informed Council that the near miss incident reported in the agenda item was highlighted at Council’s previous meeting and no further incidents had occurred.

6.2 Discussion occurred around whether a resolution was required to accept the Health & Safety report or whether Council just needed to receive it. Cr Ngahi Bidois felt that a resolution was required, however others suggested it was sufficient to be received.

**6.3 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [24/04/6.3] Cr Ngahi Bidois wished to record his opposition to this motion.***

## **7.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW**

7.1 Arash Alaeinia informed Council that since the last meeting the anglers notice review items had been circulated to clubs and asked if Council had any further questions on the suggestions submitted for consideration.

7.2 Cr Murray Ferris spoke to his General Business item for Lake Aniwhenua informing Council of a query he had recently received regarding Lake Aniwhenua and why there was still a two fish limit when there are plenty of fish and whether this could be a hangover from the big fish days? Staff felt it could have been a hangover but also pointed out that it is a wild fishery and most of our wild fisheries have a two fish limit except for the Waikato River and the tributary streams to Aniwhenua were also two fish limits.

7.3 Council proceeded through the recommendations as presented.

### **7.4 Czech nymphing**

Matt Osborne informed Council that feedback from one club was received highlighting no concerns with this method. Staff also have no concerns and recommend the status quo. Cr Mike Jarvie suggested it is controlled by the catch rate. Cr Alan Simmonds understood the argument to be that it was targeting the juvenile fish and commented on a recent event which took very high numbers of fish, and his primary concern was the mortality of these fish. Mark Sherburn advised that this event on the Tukituki last year had recorded/reported 166 fish caught.

**7.5 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mike Jarvie) that Council supports maintaining the status quo as recommended by staff. [24/04/7.5]***

### **7.6 Whether ‘GPS anchoring systems’ should be considered ‘anchors’.**

Matt Osborne informed Council that historically around landmark poles and particularly in areas where there are shore-based anglers also present, we have had a regulation that requires a physical anchor that is connected to the lakebed. This is to stop boat anglers trolling through these areas and causing social issues with shore-based anglers. He advised that we are seeing fewer shore-based anglers in recent times and the new GPS based anchoring systems will often hold a vessel in place better than a vessel swinging on an anchor rope. Staff propose to allow the use of a GPS anchor in these areas given their increasing popularity with anglers.

7.7 Discussion on the subject included.

- Significant investment in these system by licence holders.
- DoC Taupo has said no to GPS anchoring systems.
- The issue between trolling and shore-based are not so much of an issue as both these methods have reduced in recent years.
- Query electric motors – only GPS motors.

7.8 Council supported the proposal to permit GPS anchoring systems on staff recommendation and obviously issues arising from this will be monitored.

7.9 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Mark Sceats) that Council supports the use of GPS anchoring systems and to amend note 5.4 of the Eastern region regulations from; 'Note 5.4 Anchored boats should be securely anchored with no more than two anchors.'*

to,

*'Note 5.4 Anchored boats should be securely anchored with no more than two anchors or a GPS anchor system.'* [24/04/7.9]

**7.10 Definition of Rotorua lakes**

Matt Osborne advised that this item is for clarification of regulations as the term 'Rotorua lakes' is referred to in several rules.

7.11 *Agreed (Mike Jarvie/Jay Tapsell) that Council supports the inclusion of the following under 1 Definitions within the Eastern region regulations.*

*'Rotorua lakes means Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotoma, Rotoehu, Rotomahana, Rerewhaaitu, Okareka, Okataina, Okaro, Ngahewa, Ngapouri, Tarawera, and Tikitapu.'* [24/04/7.11]

**7.12 Update of Anglers Notice Policy 2018**

7.13 Matt Osborne commented on a prior season regulation amendment to permit the use of scented soft baits which was outside of the Council's current Anglers Notice Policy. This request is to update that policy to remove scented soft baits from the definition of baits.

7.14 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mark Sceats) that Council updates its Anglers Notice Policy 2018 to remove Scented Soft Baits from 3.2(ii) Definition of Baits.*

7.15 *Agreed Jay Tapsell/Lindsay Lyons that Council did not identify any further proposals for incorporation to the 2024-25 Anglers Notice Regulations for Ministerial signoff.* [24/04/7.15]

**8.0 LAKE OKATAINA ACCESS AND TE ARAWA LAKES SETTLEMENT ACT**

8.1 Arash Alaeinia expressed that this paper is to discuss the relationship of the Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act, understand the concerns of Ngāti Tarāwhai and the wider Te Arawa iwi, and find a pathway that operates within the law and the Act while advocating for anglers and others access to Lake Ōkataina in a safe manner.

Currently MPI as the lead agency has put in place a CAN order with requirements needed to access Lake Ōkataina. The Act also clearly states the right of access for recreation and navigation rights (subject to all legal requirements and bylaws). Grey area is that iwi and Ngāti Tarāwhai are not comfortable with the trust process of the CAN for people to Check, Clean, Dry and have put in place a controlled manned access managed by iwi checking that users have been to the Wash Station. As access security is manned, it is only accessible for 4 days a week until the 29<sup>th</sup> of April then 3 days per week until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. The concerning issue is that the legal authority to manage biosecurity has a process in place and there is a legal right to allow recreational access to the Lake but this is not being upheld.

8.2 Arash acknowledged that Ken Raureti was in attendance, and it would be of great value to have Ken's insight and assistance with answering any questions at the end of the consultation.

Council discussion ensued with a variety of points:

- Concern was raised by two Councilors that there had been a lack of communication of events to the Council and the Council was not aware of the different discussions and meetings that had occurred through this process.
- Support for a robust association with iwi.

- Biosecurity concerns of Didymo and how ineffective MPI had been at managing that at the time. Belief that this Clam will unfortunately enter all our waterways in NZ over time and are we going to close down all fisheries and recreational activities?
  - Concerns about the newly discovered Clams in the Taupo Waterpark and questions as to how they got there as this water body does not have boats or fishing and is a closed water body?
- 8.3 Cr Ngahi Bidois raised the positive developing relationship between Eastern F&G and iwi over the past 12 months, and the growing relationships through Corina Jordan and Barrie Barnes of the National office. Ngahi complemented Ngāti Tarāwhai on standing up and pushing back on MPI for stronger control measures and informed Council that Ngāti Tarāwhai had the support and backing of all 56 subtribes, and suggested we should be mindful that it is not just Ngāti Tarāwhai that we are dealing with. Ngahi also questioned why F&G had been silent on pushing for more stringent control measures over the Clam but for Didymo they closed lakes and water bodies?
- 8.4 Discussion continued
- F&G, like iwi pushed that MPI should be doing more at the source as a control measure.
  - Concern raised that iwi may decide to close all other 12 lakes as some of the other lakes are more susceptible to the Clams. It was added that if you are going to close all the Te Arawa lakes because of the Clam then you need to consider closure of all water bodies around NZ.
  - Consideration of management going forward was needed. Since NZ Council have been involved all the way through in the liaison, then the NZ Council should liaise with the Government and escalate as a National issue and put together a management plan to act on any pest or disease issue now and in the future for all New Zealand waters. Acknowledged similar to the one currently being done for the possible threat of Avian Influenza.
- 8.5 Cr Ngahi Bidois invited Ken Raureti to speak.
- Ken Raureti expressed that he had just come from a Te Arawa Lakes Trust and Ngāti Tarāwhai Executive meeting and if he wasn't here would be attending the MPI meeting that had been arranged. He had come with the support and authority of the Te Arawa Lakes Trust and as Chair of Komiti Whakahaere Te Arawa Lakes Trust to speak to Council. Key points raised by Ken were;
- Update on current thinking of how the Golden Clam arrived at the Taupo Aqua Park, 1. Via inflatable product moved/purchased from infected area. 2. A child with a bucket of sand and infected clams transferred over from the Waikato region, the former considered to be the more plausible.
  - Erosion of relationship between Eastern Fish & Game and Te Arawa Lakes Trust with the headline that F&G put out stating that "Lake Ōkātaina Closed". The lake access was reduced to 4 days a week (until 29 April and then to 3 days from 30 April to 30 June).
  - Relationships between F&G and iwi will and are suffering if you are to reflect and question the Te Arawa Settlement Act and Article 32 of committing to give unrestrained recreational access to all 14 lakes. This is not helpful in building relationships.
  - The concern that EF&G did a liberation of trout in March after knowing of Ngāti Tarāwhai and TALT's wish to pause releases.
- 8.6 Ken highlighted that Lake Ōkātaina was not a high-pressured fishery noting maximum anglers ever on an opening day was 80 pax. He advised that iwi are wanting Fish & Game to reduce the numbers of trout liberated to Lake Ōkātaina as they believed that there was sufficient natural spawning.

8.7 Arash Alaeinia acknowledged Ken's points and appreciated his honesty and openness for engaging in this discussion. He highlighted that Opening day is a singular snapshot of a moment in time of the season and over the entire season is a high valued fishery. Arash acknowledged again Ken's statement and points raised but stated that he does not agree entirely with his views and there is a need for further conversation to be had outside of this forum.

8.8 Further discussion

- It was reiterated that the process for Council to consider changing its Fish Management plan had been explained to Ngāti Tarāwhai Chair.
- Acknowledgement that all parties are passionate about the wellbeing of the lake.
- Concern that these discussions and meetings are of news to the Council members and that they need to be kept informed and involved in the discussions and decisions being taken by others.
- Question was asked of the Minister of Hunting & Fishing's involvement and knowledge of the situation?
- This issue is a political issue and is at a higher level than EF&G and needs to have the Minister and the Government involved as F&G are not going to be able to resolve the situation.

There was a general agreement that Arash Alaeinia should write a letter to the Minister of Hunting & Fishing bringing this concern to his attention.

8.9 Ken Raureti thanked the Council for their time and for bringing the item forward on the agenda to enable him leave early.

Cr Ngahi Bidois thanked Ken for his attendance and korero.

**9.0 Council adjourned for lunch at 12.20pm and reconvened at 12.47pm.**

## **10.0 2024-2025 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**

10.1 Arash Alaeinia spoke to Council about the New Zealand Council's recommendation to reduce regional budgets by 3% and highlighted that this level of reduction would impact project expenditure by some 20% as overhead costs are largely fixed. He advised that while the 3% reduction was not able to be met, project expenditure had been reduced by \$14,800. Inflationary adjustments including an amount unbudgeted for FBT in this current year totalled \$29,300 a net difference of \$14,500. This increased requirement had been able to be absorbed by increasing the amount budgeted for staff working on national projects and supporting other regions. Arash informed Council that two contestable fund bids were being sought which related to staff remuneration and for the ongoing Tarawera research, the latter to be funded from the non-resident levy reserve.

10.2 Cr Mark Sceats spoke to his general business items regarding the Mental Health & Wellbeing Survey and the ReWild campaign. He questioned the value of these and was disappointed that regions were being asked to reduce costs when he believed the National Office had been spending money on these projects. Some Councillors were concerned about the cost and content of the survey and commented that a survey was not needed to prove that hunting and fishing was good for mental health.

10.3 Arash Alaeinia provided some background to the survey advising that the intent was to have data to support fishing becoming an accredited activity that a doctor can prescribe to you. He said this was happening in the UK and a South Island region had seen some value in this and it was supported by the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. Council questioned why the UK data could not have been used and Arash advised that it was also being utilised. Mark Sherburn cautioned utilising the British research solely as they are quite different and really Fish & Game could not campaign based on UK research.

10.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons questioned the intent of the Ministers letter and whether this might impact the 2024-25 OWP. Arash Alaeinia believed the intent was to give the minister an understanding of how Fish & Game is operating and whether we are giving value for money to our licence holders while undertaking our mandated responsibilities. He said that any changes would likely be at an organisational level and expected that NZC and the regions would all have a part to play in the consultation process. Cr Ngahi Bidois suggested further discussion could be addressed in general business.

**10.5 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mike Jarvie) that Council supports managements approach to the cost saving measures and absorption of increased operational costs. [24/04/10.5]***

**10.6 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council approves the draft Operational Work Plan and the two accompanying contestable fund bids as presented. [24/04/10.6]***

#### **11.0 DRAFT NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

11.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that the New Zealand Council's intention is to create an overview policy that all regional councils adhere to and to highlight where responsibilities fall.

11.2 Cr Mike Jarvie queried that staff were happy with the regional plan? Arash advised that this was up for review, but staff were happy with the content.

11.3 Barry Roderick question where staff Health & Safety inductions were? Arash advised that these were in the detailed regional plan and that this policy was an overview.

11.4 No additional feedback was supplied apart from a request that anagrams have definition included within the document.

#### **12.0 DRAFT HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY FOR RANGERS**

12.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that this was another policy to give a national overview for all regions to adhere to certain expectations/standards and Anthony van Dorp had been at the forefront its development.

12.2 Having been involved in ranger training Cr Murray Ferris wished to highlight the importance that Anthony has placed on the Health & Safety of rangers. Arash added that there was a need to be consistent across the organisation and that this was the intention of the policy.

#### **13.0 DRAFT PROTECTED DISCLOSURES POLICY**

13.1 Arash Alaeinia advised that the primary purpose of this policy was to protect any person bringing an issue to the attention of the organisation. No additional feedback was supplied.

#### **14.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

##### ***Finance Report***

14.1 Cr Debbie Oakley questioned the small outstanding agent debt noting that there seems to be a carry over each month. Kate Thompson informed Council of the agent's detail and advised that it was not unusual to need to chase this agent because of inadequate systems in place for payment, but payment was forthcoming.

**14.2 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the finance report approves payments for January and February 2024 totalling \$488,644.79. [24/02/14.2]***

##### ***Management Report***

14.3 Arash Alaeinia informed Council that it had been a very busy period for staff with duck banding, fisheries surveys, and East Coast river investigations.

- 14.4 Cr Ngahi Bidois commented on the offence table within the Management Report and wanted reassurance that our staff were safe. Arash advised that staff have ranging processes and do not engage if they believe a situation to be unsafe.
- 14.5 Cr Mike Jarvie questioned whether staff know why the visibility of the Rangitaiki River is poor. Matt Osborne advised that the visibility has degraded over several years and is likely contributed to by cropping around Lake Pouarua on the Lochinvar Station. He felt that the conversion of another large station off the Napier/ Taupo Rd (SH5) from a high intensity dairy heifer quarantine block to a solar farm would help to reduce the overall nutrient load going into the Rangitaiki and could contribute to some improvement in the Rangitaiki water quality in coming years.
- 14.6 Cr Lindsay Lyons was aware that Avian Influenza had been found in Antarctica and questioned staff on when or if it will arrive in New Zealand. Matt McDougall advised that it has been found in the South Polar Skua which migrate from South America to Antarctica and up to Japan, and they have been seen in NZ. He said it was a high priority for Fish & Game and that he was involved in discussions with MPI and DoC currently and gave a brief overview of potential impacts should it arrive in NZ.

#### ***Licence Sales Report***

- 14.7 Arash Alaeinia provided a summary of the licence sales report noting the current variance of 1.8% below last season was the same as the national variance YTD and highlighted the decline in the South Island sales suggesting this could be related to the poor weather they have had down there. Cr Lindsay Lyons expressed disappointment with the licence sales performance considering NZ visitors numbers are up considerably. He believed the higher licence price was pushing people into the cheaper short-term categories and suggested we needed to market more in not the usual places. Arash advised that the NZ Council was looking at obtaining an economic impact assessment to show what freshwater angling brings to the NZ economy to engage more support in what Fish & Game contribute to the economy.

### **15.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

- 15.1 *Report from Bay of Plenty Conservation Board*  
Not present – report within papers for information
- 15.1 *Report from New Zealand Council*  
Cr Debbie Oakley's report covered:

- TFAC meeting upcoming on 11<sup>th</sup> April
- NZC report included in papers for information
- Research committee
- Ranger/Maritime compliance
- Audit compliance
- Future Structure Working Group – full report due at NZC's April meeting
- Future Funding Working Group

### **16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 16.1 *Letter from Hon. Todd McLay*  
Cr Lindsay Lyons asked that Council be provided a copy of the response to Ministers letter and questioned the purpose of it. Cr Debbie Oakley felt that if we are wanting to change the legislation that Fish & Game operates under then it makes sense that the Minister obtains a summary of the regions. Council also discussed the structure review by DoC which has not progressed and Arash Alaeinia added that to progress any change it starts at the Ministers office.

16.2 *Hunter Survey – Sub-regions*

Cr Mark Sceats requested that an additional question is added to the Game Bird Hunter Survey this season to identify which sub-region a licence holder was hunting. He was wanting an overview of hunting on one side of Raukumara's being the Rotorua side and the other being Gisborne Wairoa in relation to hours hunted and harvest. Matt McDougall informed Council of how the survey was developed to detect a 20% change in mallard harvest 80% of the time and this was achieved through seven surveys of 120 hunters (5 being conducted during the mallard season), this was determined to be the minimum number required to identify the 20% change 80% of the time. Matt was keen to understand the purpose for obtaining this additional information as statistically, based on the number of surveys conducted each season currently that there would be insufficient data to make informed decisions on a sub-region basis, particularly in relation to harvest and provided an example of this. He said we can do it but suggested that the cost would increase significantly, and interviewers might also have difficulty identifying sub-region. Matt advised that if he understood the purpose of the request, he might be in a better position to advise the most appropriate and reliable method to obtain the information sought. No outcome from this discussion occurred.

16.3 *Reduction to councillor numbers for 2024 Election*

Cr Lindsay Lyons proposed a reduction in the number of Councillors standing in the next Election for the Eastern Region, noting that a reduction in numbers would generate an election and this had been highlighted in the Governance Review. Council agreed that this matter should be placed on the June agenda for a more in-depth discussion and to enable a decision to be made.

16.4 *Acknowledgement of councillor contributions*

Cr Lindsay Lyons requested that acknowledgement of Councillor contributions be highlighted in agendas and publications. He felt that licence holders did not have a real understanding of what Councillors contribute, voluntarily, in their own time. Arash Alaeinia agreed with Lindsay's sentiments and asked that Councillors also share our stories to their contacts through our social media channels.

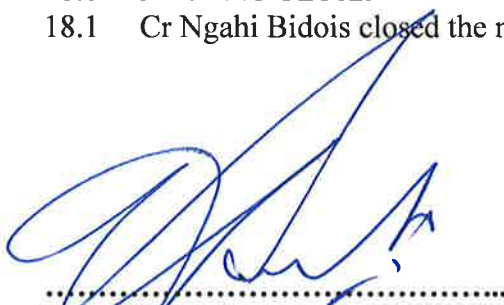
**17.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION**

**17.1 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Murray Ferris) that pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at 2.27 pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely to discuss concerns of members relationships, interaction and expectations of roles and responsibilities. [24/04/17.1] Cr Alan Simmonds wished to record his opposition to this motion.***

**17.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Murray Ferris) that Council moves out of Public Excluded at 2.58pm.***

**18.0 MEETING CLOSED**

18.1 Cr Ngahi Bidois closed the meeting 2.59pm with closing karakia by Cr Jay Taspell.



.....  
Mark Sceats  
Chairman



## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

- 2.0 APOLOGIES**
- 2.2** *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Mike Jarvie) that the apologies for the 207th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/04/2.2]*
- 2.4** *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Jay Tapsell) that Agenda item 12 regarding Lake Okataina is moved to forward to enable Te Arawa Lakes Trust representative, Ken Raureti, to speak to the meeting. [24/04/2.4]*
- 3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (1 FEBRUARY 2024)**
- 3.1** *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Jay Tapsell) that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [24/04/3.1]*
- 6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY**
- 6.3** *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [24/04/6.3] Cr Ngahi Bidois wished to record his opposition to this motion.*
- 7.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW**
- 7.4** **Czech nymphing**
- 7.5** *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mike Jarvie) that Council supports maintaining the status quo as recommended by staff. [24/04/7.5]*
- 7.9** *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Mark Sceats) that Council supports the use of GPS anchoring systems and to amend note 5.4 of the Eastern region regulations from;*  
*'Note 5.4 Anchored boats should be securely anchored with no more than two anchors.'*  
*to,*  
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- 7.15** *Agreed Jay Tapsell/Lindsay Lyons that Council did not identify any further proposals for incorporation to the 2024-25 Anglers Notice Regulations for Ministerial signoff. [24/04/7.15]*
- 10.0 2024-2025 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**
- 10.5** *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mike Jarvie) that Council supports managements approach to the cost saving measures and absorption of increased operational costs. [24/04/10.5]*
- 10.6** *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council approves the draft Operational Work Plan and the two accompanying contestable fund bids as presented. [24/04/10.6]*
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