

4.18. Levels of Service Increases

Fixed Term Increase in Building Control Staff

(Report prepared by B Robertson/G Ferguson)

R450-002-B01

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council an update on existing and future Building Control service demand as a result of emergency response activity and commencement of the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 in 2024.

Executive Summary

2. Increased and ongoing demand on Building Control emergency recovery activities from the 2021 & 2022 flood events requires additional resource.
3. The commencement of the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 will place additional demand of Building Control to implement these regulations.
4. Two fixed term positions are proposed to fill these resource areas for a period of two years.
5. It is proposed to fund these positions from the Forestry and Land Development Reserve, as temporary positions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the funding of two (2-year) fixed term positions from Forestry and Land Development Reserve to a value of up to \$250,000/year to support Building Control emergency response and regulatory delivery.

Emergency Response

6. In recent years Marlborough has unfortunately been subjected to a number of emergency events from earthquake to two recent back-to-back flooding events. Each event has triggered responses from a number of areas of Council including the Building Control team requiring Rapid Building Assessments, placarding of buildings plus follow up advice and remedial works.
7. There remains in Marlborough 121 placarded buildings from the most recent events.
8. Building Control's response includes immediate response and long-term recovery actions in an emergency. With resolution of building risk at times taking a significant period. This is particularly evident where risk to building is due to geotechnical instability as is the case for most of the recent placarded buildings post the 2022 event.
9. During the response phase of an emergency, the majority of the Building Control officers are diverted from BAU to emergency response. In the recovery phase a portion of staff resource continues to be diverted from BAU to emergency recovery demands.
10. The impacts of emergency response and recovery demands, include reduced levels of service for Building Control statutory activities including timeframe compliance.
11. Staff wellness, from the stress of workload pressures and customer impacts are also observed.
12. In addition to responding to an emergency, the preparedness of our emergency response is critical. Including the testing, training and refinement of the Building Control Group's emergency response procedures and capability. Council's emergency response to past events is commendable and has proven the importance of being prepared.

13. To support recovery and maintain/review the Building Control Group's emergency activities additional resource is required in the medium term (2 years).

Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022

14. In May 2022 the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 (the Regs) received an Order of Council. The commencement of the Regs is May 2024.
15. The Regs require classification, dam safety assurance programmes and annual dam compliance certificates for defined dams.
16. As a regional authority, Council must administer and monitor the dam safety regulations. This involves:
 - a) establishing and maintaining a register of dams in its district;
 - b) considering and either approving or refusing dam classifications (based on whether they have been certified by a recognised engineer as defined in the regulations);
 - c) approving or refusing dam safety assurance programmes;
 - d) receiving the annual dam safety assurance programme compliance certificates;
 - e) adopt and implement a policy on dangerous dams, flood-prone dams, and earthquake-prone dams;
 - f) take action, if necessary, if any dam, large or small, poses an immediate danger to the safety of persons, property, or the environment.
17. To administer and put in place processes and procedures for this programme of work, additional resource is required in preparation and implementation at least in the medium term (2 years). During this period an assessment of continuing demand may require a permanent increase in resource. At this time a fixed term increase is sought.

Assessment/Analysis

18. Over recent years the Building Group has responded to an increased number of weather and earthquake emergency events. The initial responses and the ongoing recovery have put additional pressure on existing staff resources.
19. It is critical the Building Control team is resourced to continue its emergency recovery and preparedness activities. This cannot be achieved without additional resource or negative impacts on Council statutory duties and staff.
20. The Dam Safety Programme under the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 is to take effect 13th May 2024. To deliver this work programme additional resource is required. This is sought initially on a fixed term basis with a future review on resource demand and a fees structure to support cost recovery which will be brought to Council.
21. It is proposed to fund these two positions from Council Reserves, as these are fixed term positions. This would be a cost of not more than \$250,000/year for two years from Council Reserve funds.

Options

Option A – Approve Two fixed term Building Control Officers funding from the Forestry and Land Development Reserves

Advantages.

22. Enable the Building Control Group to meet emergency recovery demand for the Marlborough Community.
23. Enable the Building Control Group to deliver the new Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 Statutory functions.

- 24. Support delivery of Building Control functions within statutory timeframes.
- 25. Be cost neutral on rates and customer services.

Disadvantages

- 26. Reduces Council's Reserve funds.

Option B –Status Quo

Advantages.

- 27. No reduction in Council Reserve funds.

Disadvantages

- 28. Negative impacts on service delivery of emergency recovery and preparedness from the Building Control Group.
- 29. Increased stress and workload to deliver emergency recovery activities.
- 30. Reduced delivery of statutory timeframes.
- 31. Reduced delivery of statutory functions under the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022.

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Summary of decision-making considerations			
Fit with purpose of local government			
The proposal enables Council to provide good-quality and cost-effective service to customers and ratepayers.			
Fit with Council policies and strategies			
	<i>Contributes</i>	<i>Detracts</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
LTP / Annual Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment & RMA Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Arts & Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3 Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Land transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks and reserves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
This proposal contributes to the financial strategy relating to the cost recovery of Building Control functions.			
Nature of the decision to be made			
Financial considerations			
Refer body of paper.			
Significance			
The decision is considered of low significance under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.			
Engagement			
Risks: Legal / Health & Safety etc			
Failure to resource the Building Control Group through lack of funding is a risk to delivery of statutory requirements and enabling economic and social recovery after an emergency.			
Climate Change Implications			
There are no known climate change implications to this decision.			