

Dear Ivy,

Thank you for your recent letter, to the Mayor, expressing your interest in our Transformation Programme, our library services, and your interest in engaging with Waitaki District Council. As the implementation of Transformation falls to myself, the Mayor has agreed that I should reply.

### **Transformation Process**

Our Transformation Programme is ambitious, as we are moving to a new target operating model that will change how every department and team works, fundamentally changing how we function as a Council. This isn't a change restricted to our library services, it is a change to our whole organisation. The new model is bringing teams together, across the Council – breaking down silos and freeing us up to work on what matters most to our district and communities.

We are joining up teams to act as one – aligned and unified by processes and practices that enable information and ideas to flow. This means that some functions such as customer service, that were once distributed across departments, are brought together to form a new team that can be utilised across Council's multiple service delivery areas as needs arise, including in the library. This will ensure we can support our customers and community consistently and raise the standard of service we offer.

We have a new Community Engagement & Experience Directorate that will serve as Council's main connection to the community through all of our public-facing facilities and services. Our library services will include a team of qualified librarians, who work as part of a multidisciplinary team to enhance the wellbeing of the Community in the areas of culture, health, recreation, education, and development, within this Directorate.

### **Qualified Library Staff**

We will still have three fully qualified librarians in full-time roles, as we do in our current structure, to ensure our Library service remains of the high quality our community expects. We have reorganised other roles that provide customer service or education into teams. The customer service oriented roles will still be part of the library offering, whilst also being part of our wider customer team, enabling us to expand the service offering at these important community hubs, building on what has been achieved so far and going beyond this to support our communities better at three locations in our district. This forms part of our wider ambition to improve our service to our community and deliver it in a consistent and an efficient way.

Our education resources, are currently distributed across the council including some in the library team and some in other teams. Bringing these together will enable a stronger, more resilient team and a coherent programme of community education and engagement across the range of our activities, with more of this being delivered through our libraries.

Through bringing resources together, Council can be more flexible and adaptive, moving resources to where they are needed, when they are needed. By doing this efficiently, and in concert with several other initiatives, we aim to reduce reliance on rates revenue.

### **Demand for services**

I'm sure you are aware of the challenges that Councils, such as Waitaki District Council, face. Like all councils, our communities' needs are growing and changing and we're also facing big increases in costs. Demand for multiple services, ageing infrastructure across a vast district, inflation, and meeting obligations from Central Government have increased our operating and capital costs significantly, and this is well above what our community can afford.

Our aim with transformation is to ensure we are more effective and efficient in how and what we deliver for our communities. It is not about cutting things back and aims to ensure we can seek to avoid cuts in the face of a very challenging financial outlook for all councils. If we do not find different, more effective and more efficient ways of delivering services, by transforming, there is a strong possibility we would need to look at cutting services and service levels as some other councils have already started to do.

We want to make our libraries even better. We see our libraries as anchor-points, where we can bring our Council's services together, along with our partners and others in the community who share in our commitment to deliver more for our communities.

I would be pleased to discuss with you our plans to transform our organisation and how they will benefit our libraries service and the offering & support to our community. I would also be keen to receive your feedback on our plans as well as any thought you may have of how we can make improvements, whilst also driving down operating costs, as we need to live within the means of our community, and their household budgets are already stretched.

I look forward to discussing our Transformation Programme with you. Perhaps you would like to suggest a few dates and times, later this month, where we could teleconference?

Thank you, Alex.