

Kia ora, to whom it may concern

The Methven Community Board would like to acknowledge and agree to the initiative to create a strategy for economic development. We support the objective of the strategy in developing the district of Ashburton so it can be a prosperous place for people to live and work. Whilst we represent Methven, we recognise that growing the district and thus community together helps everyone move forward. This philosophy has underpinned our submission.

The following submission has been prepared by the Methven Community Board (MCB): Chair, Kelvin Holmes and members Ritchie Owen, Robin Jenkinson, Allan Lock, and Megan Fitzgerald.

Whilst we agree with the overall objectives of the draft strategy, we feel some of the specific goals may not be the most effective targets to achieve district wide development. Therefore, we make the following recommendations.

Goal One

A lack of community input

Currently under the draft strategy there is no requirement for community input to be considered. If the ultimate goal is an engaged and invested community, there needs to be community ownership over input. The most important part of this is that the community has its say in the economic development of the area so that it is in keeping with the unique character of the community and environment.

Recommendation: MCB would like consultation to our community be built into goal one. This includes a commitment from ADC to ensuring economic development is in line with the objectives of the town including future look, sustainable goals, and a thriving environment.

Moving Sub-Goal 1.2 to be part of Goal Three

We believe that the statement of subgoal 1.2 *“Create an annual calendar of events throughout the district to connect and engage with our community”*, more closely aligns to the purpose of Goal Three.

Recommendation: Sub-Goal 1.2 is put into the goal 3.

Missing from Goal One

Ensuring there is adequate accommodation for people to live and visit our district is vital. We believe before people can become engaged in our community, they need to have adequate housing. ADC needs to actively assist in the policy and development of housing solutions for staff and families within our communities.

Recommendation: ADC stipulates as part of goal one a commitment to supporting policy that enables the growth of accommodation and housing in line with community goals. We are not supporting unchecked housing development, we are supporting development that is sustainable given the objectives of the district.

Goal Two

Providing a supportive policy environment for business growth

Goal two has a large focus on developing the capability of staff in the private sector. We feel what is missing is a commitment from ADC to help create and manage policy in a way that helps business thrive rather than creating more red tape.

Recommendation: In Goal two, a sub-goal committing to a review of current business policy should be undertaken to identify constraints or opportunities for easing the regulatory burden that businesses already operating in our district face.

Goal Three

3.1 should support the development of all CBD's

The current wording for 3.1 makes the strategy feel very Ashburton town centric as opposed to Ashburton district. All town centres are important hubs for the community and developing them in line with the community visions helps attract new businesses to them (which aligns with the objectives of goal two).

Recommendation: The wording for Goal 3.1 is changed to "Support the development of districts CBD's into must-visit destinations."

Policy that supports domestic and international tourism development

ADC should create policy that encourages and supports tourism growth, both domestic and international into our district. We believe Methven should be recognised as a destination for destination for tourism in our region and a hub for such activities to grow from.

Recommendation: Similar to the recommendation made in goal two, ADC should review the current policy environment and make changes to enable community lead growth of the tourism market. This includes building on tourism assets the district already has.

Funding

General Comment: MCB has an understanding that the recent funding allocation of \$195k was earmarked for tourism. There is no use of the term 'tourism' within this strategy. We have concerns that the funding will be absorbed into non-district promotional. We would also question if this funding is enough given the size of the strategy presented.

Comments on the general process

Economic development happens at the interface of the public and private sector. Therefore, a strategy should reflect collaboration and alignment of shared objectives. This process of making submissions on an already prepared strategy undervalues and does not create buy in for the partners of economic development.

When this strategy was being developed, key stakeholders should have been consulted with from the start. Local groups such as ourselves, the tourism advisory board, and some local businesses should have had a say in guiding the direction of the strategy. As a result we believe you would a strategy that met the needs of the community in the most resource efficient way. Compared to developing objectives and spending money on things the community may not necessarily want.

Thank you for taking the time to read our submission. We would like to speak to it in person.