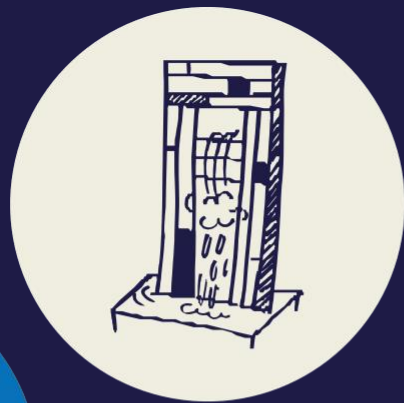


HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL – STAFF SUBMISSION

WEL Energy Trust 2023–24 Draft Annual Plan

WEL Energy Trust



21 March 2023



**Hamilton
City Council**
Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa

Improving the Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Hamilton City Council is focused on improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians through delivering to our five priorities of shaping:

- **A city that's easy to live in**
- **A city where our people thrive**
- **A central city where our people love to be**
- **A fun city with lots to do**
- **A green city**

The topic of this submission is aligned to the priority '**A city where our people thrive**'.

The five priorities set the direction for the city where Hamilton City Council can influence, collate, partner, and deliver in actions that will improve/drive the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our community. We see the WEL Energy Trust as a key partner to achieving this vision.

Council Approval and Reference

This staff submission was approved by Hamilton City Council's Chief Executive on 21 March 2023.

Hamilton City Council Reference D-4637977 - Submission # 728.

It should be noted that the following submission is from staff at Hamilton City Council and does not therefore necessarily represent the views of the Council itself.

Key Messages

1. We support the overall direction and intent of the WEL Energy Trust's 2023-24 Draft Annual Plan.
2. We encourage increased contribution to our priority areas and projects that is representative of being the WEL Energy Trust's largest Capital Beneficiary.
3. As the Trust's largest Capital Beneficiary, we advocate for additional funding towards community grants and projects, and we note the opportunity to achieve this presented by the sale of Ultrafast Fibre Holdings.
4. We consider the WEL Energy Trust to be a key partner to supporting a city-wide solutions-focused approach to investment.
5. We consider there to be close alignment and opportunity to collaborate with the WEL Energy Trust to support implementation of Hamilton City Council's Climate Strategy – Our Climate Future: Te Pae Tawhiti o Kirikiriroa.

Introduction

6. Hamilton City Council staff welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the WEL Energy Trust's 2023-24 Draft Annual Plan.
7. We support the overall direction and intent of the Draft Annual Plan.
8. As the largest Capital Beneficiary of the WEL Energy Trust, Hamilton City Council:
 - Looks forward to creating a strategic approach to city-wide investment that contributes to the long-term wellbeing of our community in Hamilton and the Waikato Region.
 - Advocates for additional funding towards community grants and projects, and we note the opportunity to achieve this presented by the sale of Ultrafast Fibre Holdings.
9. Hamilton City Council has formed a City Investment Programme where internal and external city leaders help guide key projects/programmes and initiatives and funding solutions that deliver the greatest benefits to our community. We see the Trust as a key partner to support this approach.

Support for Community Investment Alignment

10. We acknowledge the Trust's long-standing commitment to community grants and its social impact investment approach to deliver on regional priority projects.
11. We note the increase of funding to support core granting activities as set out in the Draft Annual Plan 'Outcome Area - Effective Community Investment - Action Priorities', and the funding awarded to Hamilton City Council last year of \$200,000 to support a key priority project i.e., the Sports Parks Flooding development project.
12. Hamilton City Council also acknowledges the value of the discount programme to all electricity consumers as another avenue to support the community and acknowledges the proposed increase in this Draft Annual Plan.
13. We believe there is greater opportunity to align with Hamilton City Council's Annual and Long-Term Plans, which is supported in the Trust's Deed i.e., "Clause 9.5 REGIONAL OR COMMUNITY PROJECTS OR GRANTS: The TRUSTEES in making decisions on projects or grants in accordance with clauses 9.3 (d) and 9.3 (e), will take into account the recommendations of the relevant TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES..."

14. Section 4 of the Trust's 2023-24 Draft Annual Plan (page 10) seeks feedback from Capital Beneficiaries on three key questions:
 - *Question 1: How can we engage on long-term capital growth expectations for the core investment in WEL Networks Ltd in terms of inter-generational benefit?*
 - *Question 2: How can we better contribute to Capital Beneficiary priority areas?*
 - *Question 3: How can we ensure we are engaging in inter-generational 'impactful' investing/granting that aligns with Capital Beneficiary strategy?*
15. We invite increased collaboration and contribution to our priority areas. We strongly encourage continued funding through the annual contestable fund at a level that is representative of Hamilton City Council's status as the largest Capital Beneficiary (63 percent) of the Trust to support the priorities of Hamilton City Council and the community.
16. As noted previously, we would advocate for an increase in funding for community grants and projects that benefit the priorities of Hamilton, the region, and the community, whether from the sale of Ultrafast Fibre Holdings or other means.
17. Hamilton City Council's [five priorities](#) set the direction for where Council can invest, influence, collaborate, and partner to deliver actions that will improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our community i.e., the four wellbeings as mandated by the Local Government Act.

Maximise Our Partnership for City-Wide Intergenerational Benefits

18. Like other fast-growing cities, Hamilton faces challenges meeting the needs of our residents for quality social infrastructure and services that make our city truly liveable. We are mindful of the impact these challenges have on our ratepayers and the implications for equity, access and affordability for our communities. However, with these challenges come opportunities to partner and co-develop great community outcomes and wide-reaching benefits both for Hamilton and the Waikato.
19. Working in partnership with WEL Energy Trust to improve the wellbeing of Hamiltonians and people across the region is such an opportunity and Hamilton City Council looks forward to expanding our relationship to deliver intergenerational social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing for the community, together.
20. Hamilton City Council has realigned our approach to strategic investment opportunities, including the approach to funding requirements for key projects/programmes and initiatives, of which we lead the delivery of where we are a partner, and the project is Community-led.
21. A City Investment Leadership Forum made up of city and regional investment leaders and Hamilton City Council representatives will seek solutions together, supporting intergenerational impactful investing with the needs and benefits of our community at the forefront of our decision-making.
22. We also support and note Section 3 (page 8) "*Working with WEL Networks Ltd to benefit electricity consumers and the wider community*", "*How can we support energy efficiency initiatives*" and "*How can we support De-carbonisation initiative and programmes*". We see a clear alignment and opportunity to collaborate and support implementation of Hamilton City Council's Climate Strategy – Our Climate Future: Te Pae Tawhiti o Kirikiriroa.

Further Information and Hearing

23. Should the WEL Energy Trust require clarification of the submission from Hamilton City Council staff, or additional information, please contact **Lisa Topcsov** (External Funding Manager) on **07 929 2715** or **027 808 2971**, email lisa.topcsov@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.
24. Hamilton City Council representatives **do wish to speak** in support of this submission at the WEL Energy Trust's hearing that is scheduled for 28 March 2023.

Yours faithfully



Lance Vervoort
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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