

Investing in the Economy:

Council coordinated, continued investment in the Region's economy is essential. The potential to link Marlborough Region tourism promotions directly with any commercial activity with positive stories to tell, eliminates duplication of effort and therefore cost. This is a win-win for everyone. Extending a proven formula [Smart Business Marlborough] to include three identified areas with growth potential will strengthen relationships.

In today's digitally connected, globally linked world, "branding" matters, but the "*product*" has to be of the highest [ethical] standard possible. Sure Covid-19 has disrupted the way many activities can now be done, including for example forcing refocusing on to domestic tourism and managing labour shortages while still maintaining export sales of the Region's products.

That Marlborough appears to have successfully achieved these aims, even with effects from Covid pandemic, is I feel due in a large part to previous investment which ensured closer working relationships between our key sectors. Businesses come and go, their ownership models change, and investment priorities shift and range from local family centred to providing international shareholder returns, alongside this sits the Council structure providing continuity of purpose through the LTP and through that mandate from Ratepayers a voice for the benefit of the entire Region.

Technology:

Commenting on increased spending in a "technology" sector is slightly problematic when this category is undefined in the consultation document. If this investment is facilitating the continued roll out of internet and reliable cell phone service, improving conductivity, ensuring high speed fibre goes into all new subdivisions, then, Yes, this growth is of course essential for the Region's future prosperity.

Would proposed investment in technology also promote strategies that ensure;

- All new house builds will use PVs and/or solar technology?
- That EV recharging stations are incorporated into commercial builds and public spaces?
- Region's Public Libraries are funded to ensure full digital services are maintained and continue to be updated?
- Or is the technology strategy just trying to;
- Identify the challenges from new and possibly disruptive technologies?
- Promote national and/or international companies to use "technologies" utilising Marlborough's renewable resources [sunshine, coastline, wind] and/or
- Address some of the Region's challenges [repurposing broken vineyard posts, developing high value products from forestry waste]?

Technology can be defined as; the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry. Investment in this sector must ensure that results/outcomes benefit individual citizens without creating further degradation of the environment. Improvements in one industry sector, must not be at the expense of another, or the physical environment used by all.

Food:

Food in its widest possible definition, that of any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb in order to maintain life and growth, is an important part of Marlborough now and into the future. For example, honey and medicinal bi-products, garlic, bi-products from produced from grape marc, medicinal cannabis, mussel shell bi-products, or other value added activities, produced in our Region. Either niche or large scale commercial, all strengthen our tourist potential, create employment, and have the potential to be good for the environment by reducing land fill "waste", thereby strengthening the economy.

Use of new technology and the adoption of new innovative ways to value add to food production should be at the forefront of every food enterprise, along with waste reduction, maximising return to the economy and addressing climate induced modification of production methods.

An integrated basket of food products raises the Region's profile, nationally and internationally. We need, for many reasons to be more than just a "wine destination" relying on the international reputation of Sauvignon Blanc.

Screen:

The power of the “big screen” even when delivered to your phone, digital device or home entertainment centre, cannot be disputed. The “Lord of the Rings” effect was a real driver [pre-Covid] on international tourists choosing New Zealand as a destination. Marlborough has a wide range of locale as has already been shown in national and international movies made in our Region.

A business case has been made based on proven current efforts, for the expansion of Marlborough the place as the destination of choice for Screen production. Screen Marlborough would like to set up its own regional film office and involve Blenheim schools and NMIT to develop more talent for the industry. Basing this activity locally goes hand in hand with developing the other economic priorities identified in the LTP and proposed to be supported.

We have to have our place at the table with others in the national network of Regional film offices.

If we as a Region aim to be the best, most welcoming and cost effective locale for film projects, without the activity negatively impacting on what makes Marlborough special in the first place, then it’s a win-win for all.

Council lead economic development is supported as is the edition of the three new categories, screen, food and technology.