



# **MINUTES**

**Ordinary Council Meeting**

**Thursday, 26 March 2026**

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**Waikato Regional Council  
Ordinary Council Meeting**

**OPEN MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday 26 March 2026, 9.31am  
**Location:** Council Chambers  
 Waikato Regional Council  
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

**Members Present:** Cr Warren Maher – Chair  
 Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair  
 Cr Robert Cookson  
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith  
 Cr Kataraina Hodge  
 Cr Keith Holmes (from 9.37am)  
 Cr Chris Hughes  
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (from 9.33am)  
 Cr Gary McGuire  
 Cr Jennifer Nickel  
 Cr Garry Reymer  
 Cr Noel Smith  
 Cr Liz Stolwyk  
 Cr Angela Strange

**Staff Present:** Chris McLay – Chief Executive  
 Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services  
 Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections  
 Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information  
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management  
 Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use  
 Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono  
 Stuart Brown – Executive Manager, People and Capability  
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor  
 Dave Doggart – Team Lead, Democracy

***The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.***

***An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.***

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Open Recording 1	Doc # 35330063	<a href="https://youtu.be/sZq7CXfpTWA">https://youtu.be/sZq7CXfpTWA</a>
Public Excluded Recording 1	Doc # 35329843	–
Public Excluded Recording 2	Doc # 35338552	–
Open Recording 2	Doc # 35329427	<a href="https://youtu.be/y4fub0suewA">https://youtu.be/y4fub0suewA</a>

**1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 16 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) opened the meeting with a karakia.

**2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

Nil

**3 APOLOGIES**

ITEM COMMENCED IN OPEN RECORDING 1, AT 53 SECONDS

**RESOLUTION WRC26/16**

**MOVED: CR MICH'EAL DOWNARD**

**SECONDED: CR ROBERT COOKSON**

**THAT THE APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM CR KEITH HOLMES AND CR TIPMA MAHUTA FOR LATENESS BE ACCEPTED.**

**CARRIED**

**4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 12 seconds.

9.33am – Cr Tipma Mahuta entered the meeting.

9.37am – Cr Keith Holmes entered the meeting.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/17**

**Moved: Cr Gary McGuire**

**Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge**

- 1. That the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 26 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.**

**CARRIED**

**5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 5 seconds.

No interests were disclosed pertaining to items on the agenda or interests not already recorded on a relevant register.

**6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT**

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2026**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 21 seconds.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/18**

**Moved: Cr Chris Hughes**

**Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk**

**That the open and public excluded minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 25 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.1 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2026**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 47 seconds.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/19**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**

**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 10 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.2 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2026**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/20**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**

**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.3 MINUTES OF THE WRC TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2026**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/21**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**  
**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.4 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/22**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**  
**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the open and public excluded minutes of the Finance and Performance Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.5 MINUTES OF THE FUTURE PROOF IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2026**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/23**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**  
**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the minutes of the Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting held on 20 February 2026 be received.**

**CARRIED**

**6.6 MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/24**

**Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard**  
**Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**

**That the open minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**CARRIED**

**6.4 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026 (RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE)**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 4 minutes 14 seconds.

Presented by the Chair, Finance and Performance Committee (Cr Chris Hughes).

**RESOLUTION WRC26/25**

**Moved:** Cr Chris Hughes

**Seconded:** Cr Garry Reymer

**That on the recommendation of the Finance and Performance Committee, Council approves the forecast budget adjustments, resulting in:**

- (a) A net decrease in operating revenue of \$663,000.**
- (b) A net decrease in operating costs of \$4.311 million.**
- (c) A decrease in reserve balances of \$1.173 million.**
- (d) A reduction in forecast borrowing of \$3.825 million.**

**CARRIED**

**7 GENERAL ITEMS**

**7.2 STATEMENTS OF INTENT AND HALF YEARLY REPORTS FOR COUNCIL CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 7 minutes.

Presented by the Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker) who requested the report be taken as read. An error was noted on page 154 of the open Council agenda, within the attachment titled Regional Software Holdings Ltd — 2026–2027 Draft Statement of Intent. The graph at the bottom of the page should correctly refer to “Waikato Regional Council”.

**Actions:**

- a. That Co-Lab consider a 10-year vision aligned with Long Term Plans, and confirm how resilience is being incorporated.
- b. That updates on the HPAI biosecurity work be provided to members when available.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/26**

**Moved:** Cr Noel Smith

**Seconded:** Cr Mich'eal Downard

**That the *Statements of Intent and Half Yearly Reports for Council Controlled Organisations (Council, 26 March 2026)* be received.**

**CARRIED**

**7.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2026**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 20 minutes 55 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown) who requested the report be taken as read.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/27**

**Moved:** Cr Warren Maher

**Seconded:** Cr Robert Cookson

**That the *Health and Safety Report - February 2026* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.**

**CARRIED**

**7.3 WAIKATO TRIENNIAL AGREEMENT 2025-2028**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 37 minutes 42 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay).

**RESOLUTION WRC26/28**

**Moved:** Cr Noel Smith

**Seconded:** Cr Tipa Mahuta

- 1. That the report *Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.**
- 2. That Council adopts the *Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028* as set out in Attachment 1 (Council Agenda, 26 March 2026 at page 219).**
- 3. That Council authorises the Chair (Cr Warren Maher) to finalise and sign the Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028 on behalf of the Council, incorporating any minor editorial amendments if required.**

**CARRIED**

**7.4 SUBMISSION TO AUCKLAND COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2026/2027**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 42 minutes 20 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Corporate Planning (Jane Apperley).

During discussion, the members requested that the submission be sent to Auckland Council Governors, staff advised this should occur at a governance level. Members also requested the submission include a request for in principle support for Te Huia funding (a 50/50 split of the 50% local share) and whether a reduced funding request could support relationship building.

**Actions:**

- a. For future submissions, members requested engagement and alignment with territorial authorities on aligned submissions, including Regional Land Transport Plan updates.
- b. Members requested Te Huia information to be tabled at the next WRC Transport Committee meeting including service viability, costs and fuel impacts.

**RESOLUTION WRC26/29**

**Moved:** Cr Jennifer Nickel  
**Seconded:** Cr Kataraina Hodge

1. That the report *Submission to Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2026/2027* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.
2. That Council delegates the Chair (Cr Warren Maher) and the Chief Executive (Chris McLay) approval for lodgement of the *Submission to Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2026/2027* (Council Agenda, 26 March 2026 at page 232), subject to amendments identified in discussions had at the Council meeting.

**CARRIED**

**8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 58 minutes 12 seconds.

**RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLUTION WRC26/30**

**Moved:** Cr Kataraina Hodge  
**Seconded:** Cr Tipa Mahuta

That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public
8.3 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons  s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
8.4 - Bus Contract Renewal	s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7

<b>CARRIED</b>
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10.29am – The meeting moved into public excluded session and was adjourned.

11.57am – The meeting moved back to open session.

**8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 5 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) closed the meeting with a karakia.

11.59am – The meeting closed.

**APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN****8.3 PUBLIC EXCLUDED MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026**

RESOLUTION WRC26/31

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

1. That the public excluded minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.
2. That as discussed by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee, KPI #8. Biodiversity Strategy be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee (6 May 2026) with engagement commencing by the end of May 2026.
3. That as recommended by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee, KPI #1. Infor Enterprise Solution be amended noting that there was no meeting of the Risk and Assurance Committee in December 2025, and will be tabled at the next meeting of that committee being March 2026.
4. That as recommended by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee that a new KPI be adopted as follows:

Provide information to Council that will give councillor's confidence to make Long-Term Plan decisions by 30 June 2027, that deliver Waikato Regional Council outcomes for the community in an effective and efficient manner, and targets a reduction in current expenditure of at least \$4M, by:

- Providing an overview of activities, costs and value gained to all council standing committees within their Terms of Reference.
  - Presenting an opportunity for deep dives into Corporate, Integrated Catchment Management and Regional Transport Committee expenditure to the Finance and Performance Committee in 2026.
  - Having in place an enterprise working model that allows Council to understand all council expenditure.
5. That the decisions made by the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee under delegated authority (at their meeting held on 24 February 2026) be noted.
  6. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

**8.4 BUS CONTRACT RENEWAL**

RESOLUTION WRC26/32

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

1. That the report *Bus Contract Renewal* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.
2. [Redacted s7(2)(i)]
3. That only the receipt of the report be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED