MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting

Thursday, 25 June 2026

Order Of Business

Waikato Regional Council

Ordinary Council Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date:	**Thursday 25 June 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 (until 10.36, back at 10.42am) Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith Cr Keith Holmes Cr Chris Hughes (until 10.50am, back at 10.56am) Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams until 10.00am) Cr Gary McGuire Cr Jennifer Nickel Cr Garry Reymer Cr Noel Smith Cr Angela Strange
Staff Present:	Chris McLay – Chief Executive Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services (virtually via Teams) Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections (virtually via Teams) Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono, Waikato Regional Council Karen Bennett – Executive Manager, Chief Executives Office 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	37066612	https://youtu.be/Rcsds7xFPnM
Open Recording 2	37067238	https://youtu.be/xd6_pNfjglY

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 20 seconds.

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

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 43 seconds.

2.1 WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PRIZE IN WATER SCIENCE

The item was deferred to a subsequent Council meeting to enable the recipient to be present.

- TAITUARĀ EXCELLENCE AWARDS APPLICATION

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 5 seconds.

Waikato Regional Council was named the *Supreme Winner* at the Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards. The Council also received the *GHD Award for Excellence in Environmental Leadership* for its *Pathways to the Sea (Ngā Rerenga ki te Moana)* strategy.

The award recognised initiatives that delivered measurable environmental benefits and demonstrated leadership in sustainability and responsible environmental management. The *Pathways to the Sea* project focused on improving safe fish passage through flood infrastructure, particularly for native tuna. The initiative was underpinned by six years of research and strong partnership with iwi, achieving up to 100 per cent safe passage in trials. The approach had been embedded as business-as-usual and had potential for application nationwide.

It was further noted that this was the first time any council had received the Supreme Award on more than one occasion.

For further information, refer to: https://youtu.be/l4elKganCQU?si=MUlpaKhF09nCBOs4

3 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 11 minutes 45 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/70

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel
Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the apologies of Cr Liz Stolwyk for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 12 minutes 7 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/71

Moved: Cr Garry Reymer
Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. **That the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 25 June 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
2. **That item *2.1 – Water Science Prize* has been deferred to a subsequent meeting of Council.**
3. **That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
4. **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 12 minutes 31 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 – 28 MAY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 12 minutes 44 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/72

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge
Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record, noting that Cr Kataraina Hodge was in attendance at the meeting.

CARRIED

6.1 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 13 minutes 25 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/73

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the minutes of the Finance and Performance Committee meeting held on 13 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.2 MINUTES OF THE TE NEHENEHENUI CO-GOVERNANCE FORUM MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/74

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the minutes of the Te Nehenehenui Co-Governance Forum meeting held on 18 May 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/75

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 3 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION)

6.1 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 14 minutes 10 seconds.

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

RESOLUTION WRC26/76

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

1. **That on the recommendation of the Finance and Performance Committee, Council approves the forecast budget adjustments, resulting in:**
   (a) **A net increase in operating revenue of $1.148 million**
   (b) **A net decrease in operating costs of $4.301 million**

(c) An increase in reserve balances of $3.007 million, including $1.639 million of funding to be carried over to 2026/27

(d) A reduction in forecast borrowing of $902,000

(e) Proposed operating expenditure carryovers of $70,000 identified through the third quarter forecast

(f) Proposed capital expenditure carry overs of $3.331 million identified through the third quarter forecast

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 17 minutes 38 seconds.

Presented by the Deputy-Chair, Risk and Assurance Committee (Cr Chris Hughes).

RESOLUTION WRC26/77

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee, Council approves the refreshed strategic risks and updated risk appetite statements (Risk and Assurance Committee Open Agenda, 3 June 2026 at pages 53-75).

CARRIED

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - MAY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 19 minutes 54 seconds.

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

RESOLUTION WRC26/78

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge
Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

That the *Health and Safety Report - May 2026* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received

CARRIED

7.2 ADOPTION OF THE 2026/27 ANNUAL PLAN

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 27 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Corporate Planning (Jane Apperley) and the Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker).

10.00am – Cr Tipa Mahuta left the meeting.

RESOLUTION WRC26/79

Moved: Cr Warren Maher
Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. **That the report *Adoption of the 2026/27 Annual Plan* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That Council adopt, pursuant to section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002, the *2026/27 Annual Plan* (Council Agenda, 25 June 2026 at page 71), subject to any minor proofing and design changes.**

CARRIED

7.3 RATES SETTING REPORT - 2026/27

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 37 minutes 55 seconds.

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

RESOLUTION WRC26/80

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes
Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

1. **That the report *Rates Setting Report - 2026/27* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That Council adopts the rating resolutions detailed in the report (Council Agenda, 25 June 2026 at page 183).**

CARRIED

7.4 MAKING OPERATIVE - WAIKATO REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT CHANGE 1 - NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROOF

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 39 minutes 36 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Strategic and Spatial Planning (Miffy Foley).

RESOLUTION WRC26/81

Moved: Cr Angela Strange
Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

1. **That the report *Making operative - Waikato Regional Policy Statement Change 1 - National Policy Statement on Urban Development and Future Proof* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That pursuant to clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 the Council approves *Waikato Regional Policy Statement Change 1 - National Policy***

Statement on Urban Development and Future Proof **(Council Agenda, 25 June 2026 at page 215) to become operative on Wednesday 15 July 2026.**

CARRIED

7.5 REVIEW OF FUNDING FOR FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND DRAINAGE SERVICES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 42 minutes 56 seconds.

Presented by the Principal Economist (Blair Keenan).

RESOLUTION WRC26/82

Moved: Cr Robert Cookson
Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

1. **That the report *Review of Funding for Flood Management and Drainage Services* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That council approves the principles for the review of funding for flood management and drainage services as noted in this report (Council Agenda, 25 June 2026 at page 290).**

CARRIED

7.6 WAIKATO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2026/27-2029/30

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 4 minutes 7 seconds.

Presented by the Regional Economic Development Lead (Tariq Ashraf). Refer Document # 37060877 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

10.36am – Cr Robert Cookson left the meeting.

10.42am – Cr Robert Cookson returned to the meeting.

10.50am – Cr Chris Hughes left the meeting.

10.56am – Cr Chris Hughes entered the meeting.

RESOLUTION WRC26/83

Moved: Cr Keith Holmes
Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

1. **That the report *Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy 2026/27-2029/30* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That the *Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy* (Council Agenda, 25 June 2026 at page 363) be adopted, subject to any amendments identified during discussion at the Council meeting, noting that it is a living document regularly reviewed.**

CARRIED

10.56am – The meeting adjourned.

11.11am – The meeting reconvened.

7.7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND (LGNZ) REMITS AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 20 seconds.

Presented by the Chair of Council (Cr Warren Maher). The report was taken as read.

RESOLUTION WRC26/84

Moved: Cr Warren Maher
Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

1. **That the report *Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Remits and Annual General Meeting (AGM)* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.**
2. **That Council adopts the following position on each remit:**
   - **(a) Remit 1. Priorities for Dog Control Act reform (support)**
   - **(b) Remit 2. Improved regulation of vape retailers (support)**
   - **(c) Remit 3. Financial support for government reform implementation costs (support)**
   - **(d) Remit 4. Removal of Representation Review requirements during Simplifying Local Government reform (support)**
   - **(e) Remit 5. Devolution of place-naming authority to Territorial Authorities (oppose)**
   - **(f) Remit 6. Enhanced role for government in supporting subnational diplomacy (oppose)**
   - **(g) Remit 7. Bulk funding of transport activities (support)**
   - **(h) Remit 8. Improving Long Term Plan (LTP) audit requirements (support)**
   - **(i) Remit 9. A fairer approach to uneconomic transport infrastructure funding (support)**
3. **That the Council's priority order of remits be determined as (7, 4, 3, 8); or that the presiding delegate or their alternate may determine the priority order based on discussion at the meeting.**
4. **That Council opposes the proposed rule change to allow Young Elected Members (YEM) and Te Maruata to submit remits at future AGMs.**

CARRIED

7.8 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND (LGNZ) ACTIVITY UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 30 minutes.

Presented by the Chair of Council (Cr Warren Maher), who provided a verbal update.

RESOLUTION WRC26/85

Moved: Cr Warren Maher
Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

That the report *Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update* (Council, 25 June 2026) be received.

CARRIED

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at 41 minutes 41 seconds.

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

11.53am – The meeting closed.