



MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting

Thursday, 30 July 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	5
2	Preliminary Items	5
2.1	Waikato Regional Council prize in water science.....	5
3	Apologies	5
4	Confirmation of Agenda	5
5	Disclosures of Interest	6
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	6
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 25 June 2026	6
6.1	Minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026	6
6.2	Minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 8 June 2026.....	6
6.3	Minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2026.....	7
6.4	Minutes of the Te Arawa River Iwi Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026	7
6.5	Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 June 2026	7
6.6	Minutes of the Extraordinary Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 June 2026	7
6.7	Minutes of the Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting held on 19 June 2026.....	8
6.8	Minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 22 June 2026	8
7	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt (Recommendations for Consideration)	8
6.5	Recommendation from Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 June 2026.....	8
6.8	Recommendation from Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 22 June 2026	9
8	General Items	9
7.1	Waikato Regional Theatre Project - Final update report	9
7.2	Health and Safety Report - June 2026.....	10
7.3	Simplifying Local Government Head Start pathway - update.....	10
7.4	Local Government New Zealand SuperLocal conference 2026 – Council attendance.....	10
7.5	Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update	11
9	Public Excluded Items	11

8.1	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	12
8.2	Chief Executive KPIs for FY27 (2026/27)	12
10	Karakia Whakamutunga	12
APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN		13

Waikato Regional Council

Ordinary Council Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Thursday 30 July 2026, 9.30am
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 (from 9.33am)
Cr Keith Holmes
Cr Chris Hughes
Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams)
Cr Gary McGuire
Cr Jennifer Nickel
Cr Garry Reymer (from 9.40am)
Cr Noel Smith
Cr Liz Stolwyk
Cr Angela Strange

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services
Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information
Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use
Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono Waikato Regional Council
Karen Bennett – Executive Manager, Chief Executives Office
Stuart Brown – Executive Manager, People and Capability
Jordan Metz – Democracy Advisor
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	38024014	https://youtu.be/yIFwEaThdeE
Open Recording 2	38022394	https://youtu.be/NzxCqElgmrg
Public Excluded Recording	38022395	–
Open Recording 3	37988583	https://youtu.be/RBwl7nCVcaM

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in the open recording 1, at 23 seconds.

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

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

2.1 WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PRIZE IN WATER SCIENCE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 42 seconds.

The Chair, Cr Warren Maher, outlined the history and purpose of the Waikato Regional Council Prize in Water Science, noting that the award had been presented annually since 1989 to recognise exceptional academic achievement in a water-related discipline at the University of Waikato. Council acknowledged Alexandria White as the 2026 recipient, recognising her completion of a Bachelor of Science with a focus on ecology, biodiversity, and freshwater ecosystems.

9.33am – Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith entered the meeting.

3 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 4 minutes.

RESOLUTION WRC26/86

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the apologies of Cr Kataraina Hodge for absence and Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 4 minutes 27 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/87

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

- 1. That the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 30 July 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 4 minutes 46 seconds.

The following disclosures of interest were made:

Cr Keith Holmes declared that he was a peat farmer and had previously been involved in the peat trials.

Cr Robert Cookson disclosed that he was standing as the New Zealand First candidate for the Waikato electorate in the 2026 General Election.

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 5 minutes 24 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/88

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 25 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.1 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 5 minutes 52 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/89

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.2 MINUTES OF THE RTC PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/90

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 8 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/91

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.4 MINUTES OF THE TE ARAWA RIVER IWI TRUST AND WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL CO-GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/92

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Te Arawa River Iwi Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.5 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/93

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.6 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/94

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Extraordinary Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.7 MINUTES OF THE FUTURE PROOF IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/95

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting held on 19 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.8 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/96

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 22 June 2026 be received.

CARRIED

7 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION)

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FROM STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 6 minutes 41 seconds.

Presented by the Committee Chair, Strategy and Policy (Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith).

RESOLUTION WRC26/97

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

That Council approves the Strategy and Policy Committee recommendation that the Chief Executive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) relating to the development of a Water Security Plan by 30 June 2026 be considered achieved. The (KPI) states:

"Develop a water security plan for approval by the appropriate committee by 30 June 2026. The plan will include a preferred pathway and programme using an adaptive planning approach, a monitoring framework to support implementation, identify specific actions, roles, and responsibilities and address information gaps and provide management options."

CARRIED

6.8 RECOMMENDATION FROM WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 8 minutes 22 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay), Director, Resource Use (Brent Sinclair), Group Controller, Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (Julian Snowball) and the Waikato Regional Council Committee Member (Cr Gary McGuire).

9.40am – Cr Garry Reymer entered the meeting.

RESOLUTION WRC26/98

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That Council notes the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee's recommendations for inclusion in the Waikato Regional Council Long Term Plan 2027–2037 process, being:

- (a) an operational cost pressures increase of \$147,000 per annum; and**
- (b) a Civil Defence Emergency Management targeted rate budget increase of:**
 - (i) \$1,944,995 for Year 1 of the Long Term Plan 2027–2037; and**
 - (ii) \$2,184,237 from Year 2 of the Long Term Plan 2027–2037 onward.**

CARRIED

8 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 WAIKATO REGIONAL THEATRE PROJECT - FINAL UPDATE REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 46 minutes 57 seconds.

The Funding Advisor (Therese Balvert) requested the report be taken as read and introduced the Chair, Waikato Regional Property Trust (Ross Hargood) who requested the report be taken as read. Refer Document # 38012148 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

RESOLUTION WRC26/99

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the report *Waikato Regional Theatre Project - Final update report* (Council, 30 July 2026) and associated presentation from Waikato Regional Property Trust be received.

CARRIED

7.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - JUNE 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 3 minutes and 25 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown).

RESOLUTION WRC26/100

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Health and Safety Report - June 2026* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received

CARRIED

7.3 SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEAD START PATHWAY - UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 10 minutes and 33 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay) and Executive Manager, Chief Executives Office (Karren Bennett).

During discussion, it was noted that the Single Unitary Regional Proposal paper previously circulated to Councillors would be released publicly.

RESOLUTION WRC26/101

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

That the report *Simplifying Local Government Head Start pathway - update* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received.

CARRIED

11.19am – The meeting adjourned.

11.33am – The meeting reconvened.

7.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND SUPERLOCAL CONFERENCE 2026 – COUNCIL ATTENDANCE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Pou Tuhono (Mali Ahipene).

RESOLUTION WRC26/102**Moved:** Cr Noel Smith**Seconded:** Cr Chris Hughes

1. That the report *Local Government New Zealand SuperLocal conference 2026 – Council attendance* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received.
2. That the following councillors are approved to attend the 2026 Local Government New Zealand Conference to be held at the Energy Events Centre, Rotorua from Wednesday 14 to Thursday 15 October 2026:
 - (a) Cr Warren Maher
 - (b) Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 - (c) Cr Tipa Mahuta
 - (d) Cr Keith Holmes
 - (e) Cr Mich'eal Downard

CARRIED**7.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND (LGNZ) ACTIVITY UPDATE**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 10 minutes 50 seconds.

Presented by the Chair of Council (Cr Warren Maher).

RESOLUTION WRC26/103**Moved:** Cr Tipa Mahuta**Seconded:** Cr Warren Maher

That the report *Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received.

CARRIED**9 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 16 minutes 18 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**RESOLUTION WRC26/104****Moved:** Cr Liz Stolwyk**Seconded:** Cr Mich'eal Downard

1. 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
8.1 - Sustainable Peatlands Programme	s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities	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
8.2 - Chief Executive KPIs for FY27 (2026/27)	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

2. That the Independent Consultant to the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee (Paul Loof) remains in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of their knowledge of the items to be discussed. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to those matters because of its specialised nature and the benefit to be gained from expert advice.

CARRIED

11.50am – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

1.22pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

10 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at 35 seconds.

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

1.24pm – The meeting closed.

APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN**8.1 SUSTAINABLE PEATLANDS PROGRAMME**

RESOLUTION WRC26/105

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

1. That the report *Sustainable Peatlands Programme* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received.
2. [Redacted: s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.]
3. [Redacted: s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.]
4. That only the receipt of the report be reported into the open session of this meeting.

CARRIED

8.2 CHIEF EXECUTIVE KPIS FOR FY27 (2026/27)

RESOLUTION WRC26/106

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

1. That the report *Chief Executive KPIs for FY27 (2026/27)* (Council, 30 July 2026) be received.
2. [Redacted: s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons and s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).]
3. That only the receipt of the report be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED