



AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, 27 August 2026

Time: 9.30am

Location: Council Chambers
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

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

Kaunihera | Council

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere | Terms of Reference

1. **Mana ā-Ture | Status**
Council is the governing body of Waikato Regional Council, a statutory corporation created by *section 41 of the [Local Government Act 2002](#)*.
2. **Ngā Kawenga | Responsibilities**
Council is responsible for meeting its legal obligations set out in statute and the common law.
3. **Ngā Apatono | Powers**
Council holds all powers provided by law necessary to perform its responsibilities, whether delegated or not, except for the following powers which cannot be delegated under the Local Government Act 2002:
 - a. To make a rate
 - b. To make a bylaw
 - c. To borrow money, or purchase or dispose of assets, other than in accordance with the long-term plan
 - d. To adopt a long-term plan, annual plan, or annual report
 - e. To appoint a Chief Executive
 - f. To adopt policies required to be adopted and consulted on under this Act in association with the long-term plan or developed for the purpose of the local governance statement
 - g. to adopt a remuneration and employment policy
4. **Ngā Tūranga | Membership**
All councillors are members of Council.
5. **Tokamatua | Quorum**
Half the members including vacancies (seven). Refer to clause 23 of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002](#).
6. **Ngā Tikanga Pōti | Voting**
 - a. Decisions are made by majority vote of members present and voting.
 - b. In the case of a tie, the Chair has a deliberative and casting vote.

Refer **clause 24** of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act](#) and [Standing Orders](#).
7. **Hautūtanga Āhuarangi | Climate Leadership**
Climate leadership is a priority. All discretionary committees of Council are tasked with the following responsibilities:
 - a. Set mitigation and adaptation objectives to decarbonise committee activities and ensure business resilience.
 - b. Ensure climate change evidence and guidance informs committee work programmes, and that decisions include explicit consideration of climate change impacts.
 - c. Use environmental, social, cultural, and economic research and capabilities to assess and mitigate climate risks, including transition risks.
 - d. Monitor and report annually on progress toward emissions mitigation and climate adaptation objectives.
 - e. Promote consistent and effective leadership, advocacy, communication, and engagement on climate change issues.
8. **Ngā Hui i te Tau | Frequency of Meetings**
Monthly or as required.

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Preliminary Items	4
	Nil	
3	Apologies	4
4	Confirmation of Agenda	4
5	Disclosures of Interest	4
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	5
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 30 July 2026.....	5
6.1	Minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 30 July 2026	19
6.2	Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 4 August 2026	21
6.3	Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 5 August 2026	32
6.4	Minutes of the Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 11 August 2026.....	42
7	General Items	49
7.1	Hauraki Gulf Forum - Minutes for Receipt	49
7.2	Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update	58
7.3	Health and Safety Report - July 2026	82
7.4	Waikato Resilience Framework.....	90
7.5	Public Consultation on Regional Public Transport Plan Fare Policy Variation	142
7.6	Te Matatini Event	164
8	Public Excluded Items	176
9	Karakia Whakamutunga	178

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Whakataka te hau ki te uru	Cease o winds from the west
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga	Cease o winds from the south
Kia mākinakina ki uta	Bring calm breezes over the land
Kia mātaratara ki tai	Bring calm breezes over the sea
E hī ake ana te atakura	And let the red-tipped dawn come
He tio	With a touch of frost
He Huka	A sharpened air
He hau hū	And promise of a glorious day
Tīhei mauri ora!	Behold we live

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Nil

3 APOLOGIES

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of the need to be aware of maintaining a clear separation between personal interests and duties and their role as an elected member.

If any member has an interest that creates an actual, or could be perceived to create, a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda, it is recommended that this be disclosed.

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Ordinary Council Meeting – 30 July 2026



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
6	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
7	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
8	Public Excluded Items	11
8.1	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	12

8.2 Chief Executive KPIs for FY27 (2026/27) 12

9 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

6 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

7 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**8 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.

9 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

6.1 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO RAUPATU RIVER TRUST AND WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL CO-GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2026

Rā | Date: 3 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 30 July 2026 be received.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.1. RECORD OF MEETING ACTIONS			
<u>Action:</u> Waikato Regional Council to explore the establishment of a mana whenua forum, including consideration of similar forums established by other councils and options for recognising and incorporating mana whenua views into Council decision-making processes			✓
6.6. TE MATATINI 2027			
<u>Action:</u> That Council staff work with Waikato-Tainui to finalise public transport arrangements for Te Matatini and provide Waikato-Tainui with an opportunity to provide input to the meeting of the WRC Transport Committee on 4 August 2026.			✓
6.7. DRAFT STRATEGIC WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2028			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/25 That the Committee approve the <i>Draft Strategic Work Programme 2025-2028 (Doc # 35977885)</i> , as included on pages 81-94 of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Agenda, 23 July 2026.	✓		

Additional Context

- Item 6.7 records the Co-Governance Committee's approval of the Draft Strategic Work Programme 2025-2028. The programme provides a framework for partnership priorities and coordination and does not require a Council decision, create binding obligations, or commit Council to additional funding or policy changes. Any future matters requiring Council consideration would be brought through the appropriate decision-making process.
- The activities identified within the programme are either existing work programme activities or matters able to be progressed under existing delegations. Any future proposals requiring Council decisions, additional resourcing, or amendments to agreements would be considered through the appropriate Council decision-making process.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

6.2 MINUTES OF THE WRC TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2026

Rā | Date: 17 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jess Hood, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the open minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 4 August 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
7.1. DIRECTOR'S REPORT			

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
<u>Action:</u> Members requested that options for public transport to Hamilton Airport be included in future Director's Reports.			✓
7.6. PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS REPORT			
<u>Action:</u> Members requested that a report on how organisations such as Auckland Transport encouraged large employers to incentivise staff use of public transport be added to the next committee agenda.			✓

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 4 August 2026



MINUTES

WRC Transport Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 4 August 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Preliminary Items	5
5.1	Public Participation	5
6	Public Excluded Items	5
8.1	Te Matatini Event Transport Plan	5
8.2	Public Transport Branding Refresh Outcome	5
7	General Items	6
7.1	Director's Report	6
7.2	Fares Policy Project Update	6
7.3	Regional Land Transport Plan Update	7
7.4	Community Transport Accountability Report	7
7.5	RTC Submission on the Bay of Plenty Draft Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP)	7
7.6	Public Transport Operations Report	8
7.5	RTC Submission on the Bay of Plenty Draft Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP)	8
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	8
	APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN	9

Waikato Regional Council
WRC Transport Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 4 August 2026, 9.30am

Location: Council Chambers
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Angela Strange – Committee Chair
Cr Chris Hughes – Committee Deputy-Chair
Cr Robert Cookson (virtually via Teams from 9.34am until 10.15am, back at 10.21am until 11.50am, back at 11.56am)
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith (from 10.11am)
Cr Keith Holmes
Cr Warren Maher (from 11.10am)
Cr Gary McGuire (until 11.34am, back at 11.55am)
Cr Jennifer Nickel
Cr Garry Reymer
Cr Noel Smith
Cr Liz Stolwyk (until 10.23am, back at 10.30am)

Staff Present: Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections
Jess Hood – Democracy Advisor

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	38115154	https://youtu.be/XsTcSFei32E
Public Excluded Recording	38113557	
Open Recording #2	38114270	https://youtu.be/n7OslbHruCQ

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Democracy Advisor (Jess Hood) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 4 seconds.

APOLOGY**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/21**

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the apologies received from Cr Warren Maher and Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 28 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/22

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

1. That the agenda of the WRC Transport Committee Meeting of 4 August 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

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 44 seconds.

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

5 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

5.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 56 seconds.

No members of the public were present for public participation.

6 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 50 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/23

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

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 - Te Matatini Event Transport Plan	s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information 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
8.2 - Public Transport Branding Refresh Outcome	s7(2)(j) of the Act - To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	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 Aleita Waitoa and Porsha Wharakura of Waikato-Tainui remain in this meeting after the public have been excluded because of their knowledge pertaining to item 8.1. Te Matatini Event Transport Plan; likewise Heath Lowe of Special Group remain in this meeting after the public have been excluded because of his knowledge pertaining to item 8.2. Public Transport Branding Refresh Outcome. 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

9.34am – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

10.41am – The meeting moved back to open session.

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne) and Manager, Public Transport Operations (Trudi Knight).

Action: Members requested that options for public transport to Hamilton Airport be included in future Director's Reports.

11.10am – Cr Warren Maher entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/27

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the *Director's Report* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7.2 FARES POLICY PROJECT UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 29 minutes 50 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader Transport Planning (Katherine Simpson).

11.34am – Cr Gary McGuire left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/28

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the report *Fares Policy Project Update* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED**7.3 REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN UPDATE**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 56 minutes 30 seconds.

The report was taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/29

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the report *Regional Land Transport Plan Update* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED**7.4 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 56 minutes 55 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Portfolio Delivery (Tofeeq Ahmed).

11.50am – Cr Robert Cookson left the meeting.

11.56am – Cr Robert Cookson entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/30

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the *Community Transport Accountability Report* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED**7.5 RTC SUBMISSION ON THE BAY OF PLENTY DRAFT REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN (RPTP)**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 10 minutes 40 seconds.

The report was taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/31

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the report *RTC Submission on the Bay of Plenty Draft Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP)* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 11 minutes 11 seconds.

Presented by the Network Monitoring Analyst (Melissa Smith) and Team Leader, Contracts and Insights (Vincent Kuo) .

Action: Members requested that a report on how organisations such as Auckland Transport encouraged large employers to incentivise staff use of public transport be added to the next committee agenda.

11.55am – Cr Gary McGuire entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/32

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Public Transport Operations Report* (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7.5 RTC SUBMISSION ON THE BAY OF PLENTY DRAFT REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN (RPTP)

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 29 minutes 10 seconds.

There was additional discussion on this item. No additional actions or resolutions were recorded.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 31 minutes 6 seconds.

The Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.12pm – The meeting closed.

APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN

8.1 TE MATATINI EVENT TRANSPORT PLAN

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/24

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

1. That the report Te Matatini Event Transport Plan (WRC Transport Committee, 4 August 2026) be received.
2. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2026

Rā | Date: 7 August 2026
Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor
Kaituku | Authoriser: Tracey May, Director, Science, Policy and Information

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
That the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 5 August 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
- 2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
- 3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.1. SUBMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING AMENDMENT BILL			

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/54 That the Strategy and Policy Committee delegates to the Committee Chair (Cr Dunbar-Smith) and the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) approval for lodgement of the proposed Waikato Regional Council submission on the Environmental Reporting Amendment Bill subject to amendments identified in discussion had at the committee meeting.	✓		
6.4. SUBMISSIONS SUMMARY REPORT – AUGUST 2026			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/58 That the Committee notes the inclusion of Waikato Regional Council's submission to Waipā District Council Private Plan Change 31 – Te Awamutu T4 Growth Cell, that was lodged under delegated authority (Strategy and Policy Agenda, 5 August 2026 at page 46), and retrospectively receives the submission.	✓		

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 5 August 2026



MINUTES

Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 5 August 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga.....	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt.....	4
6	General Items.....	5
6.1	Submission on the Environmental Reporting Amendment Bill	5
6.2	Waikato Regional Energy Strategy - update on next steps	5
6.3	Resource Management System Reform - Environment Select Committee report back on Bills.....	6
6.4	Submissions Summary Report - August 2026	6
7	Public Excluded Items.....	6
7.1	Update on Environment Court Proceedings for Proposed Plan Change 1 and Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan Appeals.....	7
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	8

Waikato Regional Council

Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting

OPEN AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 5 August 2026, 9.30am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith – Committee Chair
 Cr Liz Stolwyk – Committee Deputy-Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson (from 9.33am until 10.30am. Back at 10.37am)
 Cr Mich'eal Downard (virtually via Teams, until 11.40am)
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Chris Hughes
 Cr Warren Maher (from 9.44am)
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams, from 9.35am)
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer
 Cr Noel Smith

Staff Present: Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information
 Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor

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	38119020	https://youtu.be/uwqkN9NSXdY
Open Recording 2	38116631	https://youtu.be/jwqrhfnOChA
Public Excluded Recording	38117331	–
Open Recording 3	38118830	https://youtu.be/8P7hTsQYLBV

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 6 seconds.

The Committee Chair (Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/52

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the apologies of Cr Angela Strange for absence, and Cr Warren Maher and Cr Jennifer Nickel for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 25 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/53

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer

- 1. That the agenda of the Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting of 5 August 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.**

CARRIED

9.33am – Cr Robert Cookson entered the meeting.

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 50 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 59 seconds.

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 SUBMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING AMENDMENT BILL**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 3 minutes 10 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Policy and Implementation (Naomi Crawford). Refer Document # 38105652 (at pages 2-4) for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

9.35am – Cr Tipa Mahuta entered the meeting.

9.44am – Cr Warren Maher entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/54

Moved: Cr Garry Reymer

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

1. That the report *Submission on the Environmental Reporting Amendment Bill* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 5 August 2026) be received.
2. That the Strategy and Policy Committee delegates to the Committee Chair (Cr Dunbar-Smith) and the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) approval for lodgement of the proposed Waikato Regional Council submission on the Environmental Reporting Amendment Bill subject to amendments identified in discussion had at the committee meeting.

CARRIED

6.2 WAIKATO REGIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY - UPDATE ON NEXT STEPS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 24 minutes.

Presented by the Principal Strategic Advisor (Blair Dickie) and the Senior Policy Advisor (Michelle White). Refer Document # 38105652 (at pages 5-6) for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/55

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the motion under debate be now put.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/56

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Waikato Regional Energy Strategy - update on next steps* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 5 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.3 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REFORM - ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT BACK ON BILLS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 47 minutes 6 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May), Team Leader, Policy Implementation (Naomi Crawford) and the Team Leader, Strategic and Spatial Planning (Miffy Foley). Refer Document # 38105652 (at pages 7-21) for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

10.30am – Cr Robert Cookson left the meeting.

10.37am – Cr Robert Cookson entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/57

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That the Resource Management System Reform - Environment Select Committee report back on Bills (Strategy and Policy Committee, 5 August 2026) be received.

CARRIED

11.11am – The meeting adjourned.

11.20am – The meeting reconvened.

6.4 SUBMISSIONS SUMMARY REPORT - AUGUST 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

Presented by the Team Leader, Policy Implementation (Naomi Crawford).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/58

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

- 1. That the *Submissions Summary Report - August 2026* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 5 August 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the Committee notes the inclusion of Waikato Regional Council's submission to Waipā District Council Private Plan Change 31 – Te Awamutu T4 Growth Cell, that was lodged under delegated authority (Strategy and Policy Agenda, 5 August 2026 at page 46), and retrospectively receives the submission.**

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 12 minutes 40 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/59**Moved:** Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith**Seconded:** Cr Warren Maher

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
7.1 - Update on Environment Court Proceedings for Proposed Plan Change 1 and Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan Appeals	s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege	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

CARRIED

11.34am – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

7.1 UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENT COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 1 AND PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL COASTAL PLAN APPEALS

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at start.

The report was presented by Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) and Manager, Resource Management Policy (Bruce McAuliffe).

11.40am – Cr Mich'eal Downard left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/60**Moved:** Cr Tipa Mahuta**Seconded:** Cr Noel Smith

1. That the report *Update on Environment Court Proceedings for Proposed Plan Change 1 and Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan Appeals* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 5 August 2026) be received.
2. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at 15 minutes 50 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/61**Moved: Cr Warren Maher****Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge****That the meeting return to the open session.****CARRIED**

11.50am – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 3, at start.

The Committee Chair (Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith) closed the meeting with a karakia.

11.51am – The meeting closed.

6.4 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY RTC PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 AUGUST 2026

Rā | Date: 19 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 11 August 2026 be received.
2. That the recommendation RTCPTS26/18 (Regional Public Transport Plan: Fare Policy Review) be noted, as it has been tabled as a standalone item later in the meeting.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
5.1. RPTP FARE POLICY REVIEW: DECISION PAPER TO PROCEED WITH CONSULTATION			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/18 2. That the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee recommends that Council endorses the proposed preferred package and consultation approach for the Regional Public Transport Plan Fares Policy Review and proceeds with public consultation, noting the discussion had at the meeting. 3. That the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee will conduct hearings for the Fares Policy Review consultation process (as/if required), hearing submitters who wish to be heard, considering feedback received through consultation, and making recommendations to Waikato Regional Council for its final decision.		✓	

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 11 August 2026



MINUTES

Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting

Tuesday, 11 August 2026

Order Of Business

1 Karakia Timatanga.....4

2 Apologies4

3 Confirmation of Agenda4

4 Disclosures of Interest4

5 General Items.....4

 5.1 RTPF Fare Policy Review: Decision Paper to Proceed with Consultation 4

6 Karakia Whakamutunga5

Waikato Regional Council
Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 11 August 2026, 1.00pm
Location: Council Chambers
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Liz Stolwyk – Committee Chair – Waikato Regional Council
Cr Angela Strange – Committee Deputy-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
Cr Ray Broad – Hauraki District Council (virtually via Teams)
Cr Duncan Campbell – Taupō District Council (virtually via Teams)
Cr Mike Keir – Waikato District Council (virtually via Teams)
Cr Mesh Macdonald – Hamilton City Council
Cr Sue Moroney – Hamilton City Council
Cr Janette Osborne – Waitomo District Council (virtually via Teams)
Cr Mike Pettit – Waipā District Council (virtually via Teams)
Cr Martin Rodley – Thames-Coromandel District Council (virtually via Teams)
Mayor Ash Tanner – Matamata-Piako District Council

In Attendance: Cr Warren Maher – Waikato Regional Council
Cr Keith Holmes – Waikato Regional Council (virtually via Teams)

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections
Lorraine Cheyne – Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery
Katherine Simpson – Team Leader, Transport Planning
Jordan Metz – Democracy Advisor

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
Meeting Recording	38199795	https://youtu.be/pvCUfMpc2Wc

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Due to technical difficulties, the first four items were not recorded.

The Democracy Advisor (Jordan Metz) opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

APOLOGY

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/16

Moved: Cr Sue Moroney

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the apologies of Cr Elvisa Van Der Leden and Cr Jo Butcher for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/17

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Mesh Macdonald

- 1. That the agenda of the Extraordinary RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting of 11 August 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

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

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

5 GENERAL ITEMS

5.1 RTP FARE POLICY REVIEW: DECISION PAPER TO PROCEED WITH CONSULTATION

Item commenced in recording, at start.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne) and Team Leader, Transport Planning (Katherine Simpson).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/18

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Martin Rodley

- 1. That the report *RPTP Fare Policy Review: Decision Paper to Proceed with Consultation* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 11 August 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee recommends that Council endorses the proposed preferred package and consultation approach for the Regional Public Transport Plan Fares Policy Review and proceeds with public consultation, noting the discussion had at the meeting.**
- 3. That the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee will conduct hearings for the Fares Policy Review consultation process (as/if required), hearing submitters who wish to be heard, considering feedback received through consultation, and making recommendations to Waikato Regional Council for its final decision.**

CARRIED

6 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording, at 1 hour and 41 seconds.

The Democracy Advisor (Jordan Metz) closed the meeting with a Karakia.

2.08pm – The meeting closed.

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 HAURAKI GULF FORUM - MINUTES FOR RECEIPT

Rā | Date: 31 July 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Daggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Daggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To present the minutes of the Hauraki Gulf Forum (29 June 2026) for receipt.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The most recent meeting of the Hauraki Gulf Forum was held on Monday, 29 June 2026, at the Thames Sailing Club. Those minutes are attached.
3. Agendas and minutes for the forum can be viewed on the Auckland Council website at the following address: <https://aucklandcouncil.resolve.red/portal/>

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Hauraki Gulf Forum meeting held on 23 March 2026 be received.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

4. [Auckland Council, Hauraki Gulf Forum webpage](#)

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Hauraki Gulf Forum Minutes - 29 June 2026 (Doc # 38049649) [↓](#)



Hauraki Gulf Forum

Tikapa Moana

Te Moananui-ā-Toi

Date: Monday, 29 June 2026
Time: 1:00pm
Meeting Room:
Venue: Thames Sailing Club
 701 Tararu Road
 Thames

Hauraki Gulf Forum OPEN MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 1:18pm.

PRESENT | TE HUNGA KUA TAE MAI

Co-Chair	Councillor Warren Maher	Waikato Regional Council
Co-Chair	Ms Nicola Rata-MacDonald, MNZM	Tangata Whenua
Members	Ms Charmaine Bailie	Tangata Whenua
	Councillor Stephen Crooymans	Hauraki District Council
	Mr Joe Davis	Tangata Whenua
		Via electronic link, From 1:52pm, Item 5.2, Until 1:54pm, Item 5.2
	Councillor Christine Fletcher, QSO	Auckland Council
		Via electronic link, From 3:16pm, Item 6.5
	Mr John Galilee (Alt)	Department of Conservation
		From 2:05pm, Item 6.2
	Councillor Richard Hills	Auckland Council
		Via electronic link, Until 1:45pm, Item 5.2
	Mr Jacob Hore	Ministry for Primary Industries
	Councillor Dayne Horne	Matamata-Piako District Council
	Mr Tom Irvine	Tangata Whenua
	Mr Martin Mariassouce	Te Puni Kōkiri
	Mr Dean Ogilvie	Tangata Whenua
	Mr Chris Ollivier	Auckland Council-Aotea/Great Barrier Local Board
	Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin	Auckland Council
	Ms Bianca Ranson	Auckland Council-Waiheke Local Board
		Via electronic link
	Mr Alex Rogers	Department of Conservation
		Via electronic link, Until 2:05pm, Item 6.2
	Councillor Victoria Short	Auckland Council
		Via electronic link, From 1:48pm, Item 5.2, Until 3:15pm, Item 6.5
	Councillor Robyn Sinclair	Thames-Coromandel District Council

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



ABSENT | TE HUNGA KĀORE I TAE MAI

Members	Mr Terrence Hohneck	Tangata Whenua
	Councillor Mike Lee	Auckland Council
	Councillor Peter Thomson	Waikato District Council

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



Co-Chair Councillor Warren Maher welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1 Ngā Tamōtanga | Apologies
Apologies**

Resolution number HGF/2026/21

MOVED by Councillor Robyn Sinclair, seconded by Councillor Dayne Horne:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

a. accept apologies from:

Absence

Member Terence Hohneck

Lateness

**Councillor Christine Fletcher
Councillor Victoria Short**

Early Departure

**Councillor Christine Fletcher
Councillor Richard Hills
Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin
Member Alex Rogers**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Notes:

An apology was subsequently received from Councillor Peter Thomson for absence.

An apology was subsequently received from Member Joe Davis for absence due to connection issues.

An apology was subsequently received from Councillor Victoria Short for early departure.

Subsequently, Councillor Christine Fletcher and Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin did not depart early.

**2 Te Whakapuaki i te Whai Pānga | Declaration of Interest
Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



3 Te Whakaū i ngā Āmiki | Confirmation of Minutes
Confirmation of Minutes

Resolution number HGF/2026/22

MOVED by Co-Chair Councillor Warren Maher, seconded by Councillor Dayne Horne:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. confirm the ordinary minutes of its meeting, held on **Monday, 23 March 2026**, and the minutes of its extraordinary meeting, held on **Thursday, 16 April 2026**, as true and correct.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

4 Ngā mea kāore i runga i te rārangi take | Items not on the Agenda
Items not on the Agenda

There were no items in this section.

5 Te Matapaki Tūmatanui | Public Forum
Public Forum

5.1 Public Forum: Sea Cleaners

Captain Hayden Smith, Sea Cleaners, spoke in support of the item.

Resolution number HGF/2026/24

MOVED by Member Charmaine Bailie, seconded by Councillor Robyn Sinclair:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the public forum address from Sea Cleaners regarding their work to prevent rubbish from entering our oceans and remove waste already in the marine environment and thank Captain Hayden Smith for attending the meeting.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Minutes

With the agreement of the meeting, a subsequent motion was added.

Resolution number HGF/2026/31

MOVED by Councillor Stephen Crooymans, seconded by Member Chris Ollivier:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. provide a letter of support to SeaCleaners.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

5.2 Public Forum: EcoQuest

A presentation was given by Dr Thomas Everth, lecturer at EcoQuest, in support of the item. A copy has been placed on the official minutes and is available with the meeting material.

Councillor Richard Hills retired from the meeting at 1:45pm.

Councillor Victoria Short joined the meeting at 1:48pm.

Member Joe Davis joined the meeting at 1:52pm.

Note: Member Joe Davis experienced an electronic connection issue. Therefore:

Member Joe Davis retired from the meeting at 1:54pm.

Resolution number HGF/2026/25

MOVED by Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin, seconded by Member Dean Ogilvie:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the public forum address from EcoQuest regarding the long-term dynamics of the Pūkoro-koro wetland in response to climate change and thank Dr Thomas Everth for attending the meeting.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

6 He Pūrongo | Reports

6.1 Co-Chairs' report

Resolution number HGF/2026/26

MOVED by Member Alex Rogers, seconded by Member Charmaine Bailie:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the Co-Chairs' report**
- b. acknowledge the positions of the Forum outlined in the Co-Chairs' report.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



6.2 Constituent Party reports

Member Alex Rogers retired from the meeting at 2:05pm and John Galilee replaced him as the Department of Conservation's alternate.

Resolution number HGF/2026/27

MOVED by Co-Chair Nicola Rata-MacDonald, seconded by Member Dean Ogilvie:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **thank Department of Conservation and Fisheries New Zealand for the written report.**
- b. **thank Auckland Council for the written report.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

6.3 Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Act 2025 implementation, monitoring and reporting

A presentation was given by Kirsty Prior, Department of Conservation, in support of the item. A copy has been placed on the official minutes and is available with the meeting material.

Resolution number HGF/2026/28

MOVED by Co-Chair Councillor Warren Maher, seconded by Member Chris Ollivier:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **receive the presentation from Department of Conservation regarding progress implementing the monitoring and reporting against the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Act 2025 and thank Kirsty Prior for attending the meeting.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



6.4 Executive Officer's report

Resolution number HGF/2026/29

MOVED by Member Tom Irvine, seconded by Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the Executive Officer's report
- b. acknowledge the engagements and external relations over the last quarter
- c. acknowledge the Decision-Making document (Triage of Support Types)
- d. acknowledge the work happening to improve availability to resources on the Forum's website
- e. approve the request to purchase the original artwork for the Forum's legacy of posters
- f. approve the request for funding from the Northern Seabird Trust
- g. agree to an online workshop to prepare for the 2027-29 Workplan.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

6.5 State of our Gulf Report 2026

Councillor Victoria Short retired from the meeting at 3:15pm.

Councillor Christine Fletcher joined the meeting at 3:16pm.

Note:

Changes were made to the original motion, amending clauses b. and e., with the agreement of the meeting.

Resolution number HGF/2026/30

MOVED by Councillor Stephen Crooymans, seconded by Member Chris Ollivier:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the State of our Gulf Report 2026
- b. approve the State of our Gulf Report 2026 subject to the Co-Chairs' review of the items noted in today's discussion
- c. thank authors Pattle Delamore Partners for their hard work
- d. acknowledge the contributions from all members of the Forum
- e. agree that the confidential attachment will be released once sent to the Minister of Conservation.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
29 June 2026



Kua Kati te Hui | Meeting Closed

Member Dean Ogilvie closed the meeting with a karakia whakamutanga.

3:22pm

The Co-Chairs thanked members for their attendance and attention to business and declared the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT
RECORD AT A MEETING OF THE HAURAKI GULF
FORUM MEETING HELD ON

DATE:.....

CO-CHAIR:.....

CO-CHAIR:.....

Minutes

7.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND (LGNZ) ACTIVITY UPDATE

Rā | Date: 5 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide the Council with an update of the activities of LGNZ in the last month.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Chair of Council (Cr Warren Maher) will provide a verbal update on the LGNZ activities since the last meeting of Council.
3. Representatives from LGNZ will be in attendance to table the four monthly report and answer any questions that members may have.
4. The LGNZ Annual General Meeting was held virtually on Friday, 31 July 2026. A number of remits were put forward for consideration, and all of those were adopted, with an order of priority (from most to least) as follows:
 - (a) Financial support for government reform implementation costs
 - (b) Improving LTP audit requirements
 - (c) Removal of representation review requirements during Simplifying Local Government reform
 - (d) Bulk funding of transport activities
 - (e) Priorities for Dog Control Act reform
 - (f) A fairer approach to uneconomic transport infrastructure funding
 - (g) Improved regulation of vape retailers
 - (h) Enhanced role for government in supporting subnational diplomacy
 - (i) Devolution of place naming to territorial authorities
5. Successful remits reflect the priorities identified by members and mark the start of LGNZ's advocacy process. They provide a member-endorsed mandate for LGNZ to progress the issue, within the policy priorities of the government of the day.
6. Elected members should be automatically subscribed to and receiving LGNZ newsletters and correspondence. If that is not the case, please let the report author know in the first instance.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the report *Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update* (Council, 27 August 2026) be received.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

7. At the meeting of Council held on 23 April 2026, Council resolved to retain its LGNZ membership. During the discussion an action was recorded that a monthly report be tabled to keep the Council apprised of LGNZ activities.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils / April-July 2026 (Doc # 38373126) [↓](#)



LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils

// April-July 2026





From the Chief Executive

Since April, Head Start has been the headline for councils and for us. Our Head Start support has included a comprehensive series of zooms, guidance, legal advice, and think pieces, with sessions attracting more than 100 attendees. We've appreciated feedback from members that delivering this kind of support collectively has saved you money and time.

One thing I have been very conscious of during these four months is building a strong working relationship with the new Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport, which is doing the heavy lifting on Head Start. Chief Executive Jeremy Lightfoot has been a presence at our sector meetings and I have been meeting him regularly. LGNZ President Rehette Stoltz, Vice President Dan Gordon and I were interviewed by an independent panel providing guidance to the new Ministry ahead of it officially standing. MCERT combines many local government functions under the same roof, including the local government branch of DIA. We will be making sure MCERT officials understand your key issues and work wherever possible to inform their guidance.

I am conscious that councils have put a lot of energy into this process, potentially putting strain on goodwill and relationships given tight timeframes. Local government leaders are under considerable pressure and we have been talking to many people experiencing significant stress. LGNZ is here to support members: National Council has been clear that our role is as an honest broker rather than taking sides. We are gearing up to support councils through the next phase. A critical step will be engaging in a way that demonstrates the sector has communities at the heart of decisions.

For LGNZ, a major advocacy milestone during this period has been growing political traction for the Ratepayers Assistance Scheme. National's Home Energy Fund and Labour's SolarSaver policies both draw on the RAS, and the scheme has also attracted support from the Greens. This is a significant win for us and reflects perseverance and patient advocacy by LGNZ, Mayors, Chairs and others across the sector. While solar funding is one part of the proposed scheme, we continue to advocate for the full RAS package to be realised.

Our advocacy reference groups are now active and contributing directly to our work, as you can see in the dedicated section in this report. We are separating this reporting so you can more clearly see our effort – and progress – against each priority.

During this period, we also launched registrations for LGNZ's new micro-credentials in partnership with Victoria University. These micro-credentials are the first university-accredited pathway designed specifically for local government elected members in New Zealand. Registrations for the first two micro-credentials, which start in September, are already beyond our expectations.

LGNZ has completed membership renewal for this financial year, retaining 100% of member councils. Thank you to everyone who has given robust consideration to membership and understood the benefits and value we provide.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 3



In closing, I want to again acknowledge the pressure on Mayors, Chairs, elected members and council staff as you respond to the scale and pace of reform. Please reach out to the team and to National Council when you need support.

Scott Necklen
Chief Executive

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 4

LGNZ strategy 2026



Elevator pitch >

Local Government New Zealand is the national peak body for councils and local democracy. We bring local voices into national policy, influence decisions early, and work with government to deliver practical solutions. Our legitimacy comes from a strong membership base.

Long-term goals >

Our long-term goals have been reset in 2026 by National Council. They drive LGNZ's work and are integrated into everything we do.

O1.

LGNZ effectively influences central government.

O2.

New Zealanders value councils. Local decisions matter and councils are financially sustainable.

O3.

Strong Te Tiriti partnerships deliver positive outcomes for people, place and the economy.

O4.

More people participate in local government

We deliver long-term goals through influence, connection and support



INFLUENCE/

- > Shape policy early, before it is developed, through relationships with officials, Ministers, all political parties.
- > Work with all political parties, key stakeholders and local government to advance our advocacy priorities (listed below) in the short and long term.
- > Improve policy through the legislative process.
- > Spearhead solutions to local government's intractable problems.
- > Use media to set the agenda and raise local government's voice.
- > Give members the right tools to boost local government's influence
- > Integrate a te ao Māori lens throughout our advocacy.



CONNECTION/

- > Bring members together at our sector, All-of-local-government and conference events to hear from key speakers and Ministers, share ideas and connect.
- > Use events as an opportunity for members to influence key decision makers and officials.
- > Make sure members are in the loop on everything LGNZ does, with input into decisions and submissions.
- > Support Te Maruata, Young Elected Members and the Community Boards Executive Committee to connect and equip elected members and progress their kaupapa.
- > Connect women in local government online and in-person pre-conference.



SUPPORT/

- > Build elected members' capability and knowledge through our Ākōna professional development.
- > Launch a formal qualification for elected members in partnership with Victoria University.
- > Advocate to protect elected members' safety and security.
- > Deliver initiatives like Street Lights Profiles and the Road Efficiency Group that support best practice and generate efficiency and financial savings for councils.
- > Develop and update key guides and templates for councils.
- > Provide confidential support to councils in difficulty.
- > Develop and deliver value-add services, including shared services, that meet councils' needs.

Our advocacy priorities >

Members generated these priorities and then ranked them at our February All-of-local-government meeting:

O1.

Financially sustainable and cost-effective local government

O2.

Meeting current and future infrastructure needs

O3.

Resilient communities, economies, and environments

O4.

A responsive and accountable local government system

Each priority will be driven by a reference group.

Regional, Metro and Rural & Provincial sectors will each have the opportunity to create sector goals under each priority.



Our advocacy priorities

Members have set four priorities for LGNZ's advocacy work this triennium. This new section reports against each of those priorities. We have separated this reporting so progress against each priority is clear.

During this four-month period, our advocacy reference groups were stood up and are now providing advice and expertise across the four priorities. While National Council remains the decision-maker on major advocacy work, the reference groups act as advisors and experts on specific policy issues and ensure LGNZ's work is member-led. Members are drawn from Metro, Rural, Provincial and Regional sectors, and as well as Mayors and Chairs there are elected members, chief executives and technical experts. The members of each group are listed in Appendix 1.

LGNZ's long-term goals are set out on the previous page. Everything we do, including on the advocacy priorities, works towards them.

A responsive and accountable local government system

The Local government system reference group is chaired by Mayor Fran Wilde. Its early meetings focused on feedback on the proposed annual work programme and views on key current issues, particularly Simplifying Local Government. The group has also provided feedback on two members' Bills, the Better Regional Boundaries Bill and the Local Government (Management of Local Authorities) Amendment Bill.

Simplifying Local Government and Head Start

Simplifying Local Government has been one of the dominant issues for LGNZ and members during this reporting period. Following the Government's announcement of the Head Start pathway, LGNZ moved quickly to support member councils, while making clear that this is the Government's reform and that LGNZ's role is to help members navigate the process, identify risks and advocate for better outcomes.

In the early phase of Head Start, LGNZ produced a brief explainer for members, issued a media release, hosted a zoom with DIA, ran sessions at sector meetings, held a dedicated zoom series on issues such as unitary councils, regional council functions and lessons from Auckland amalgamation, procured legal advice from Simpson Grierson, and developed advice for members on structural options.

As the process progressed, LGNZ continued to press Ministers for more clarity, particularly for councils not part of the voluntary Head Start pathway. LGNZ wrote to Ministers Bishop and Watts setting out member concerns about the backstop process, unnecessary representation reviews and the proposed removal of voting rights for unelected members on committees. LGNZ's position is that any structural change needs to be locally led, transparent and give communities a genuine say.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 5



LGNZ is now considering what support and advocacy it can provide to members in the next phase of Head Start and the wider Simplifying Local Government process. This follows a period of intensive member support and strong attendance at LGNZ's Head Start sessions, which were comprehensive and drew in an engaged audience from across the membership.

System Improvements Bill

The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill is awaiting Committee of the Whole House. On 2 June, the Government announced a planned amendment to remove voting rights from non-elected members on council committees. At the time of the advocacy priorities paper, the amendment paper had not yet been publicly released.

LGNZ has written to Ministers setting out concerns about both the proposed change and the process being used. Because the Bill has already been through select committee, there will be no opportunity for councils to submit on the proposed amendment. LGNZ has called for any change of this nature to go through a select committee process.

Te Maruata has also raised concerns about the proposed removal of voting rights for unelected members, particularly given the implications for Māori participation and representation in local government decision-making.

Electoral reform

Mayor Nick Smith was interviewed by RNZ about Auckland Council considering general-election style polling booths for local elections, drawing on his role as chair of LGNZ's Electoral Reform Working Group.

Financially sustainable and cost-effective local government

The Funding and cost-efficiency reference group is chaired by Mayor Mahé Drysdale. The group first met on 26 June, with its first meeting focused on the proposed annual work plan and terms of reference. Members were particularly interested in improving council efficiency through benchmarking and information sharing. Key upcoming issues discussed included rates capping, council profiles, the new incentives-for-housing-growth fund and relevant remits.

Ratepayers Assistance Scheme

The Ratepayers Assistance Scheme has gained significant political momentum. In late June, the National Party announced its intention, if re-elected, to establish a Home Energy Fund. While the announcement focused on electrification loans and did not mention rates postponement or deferred development contributions, the advocacy priorities paper notes that it was relatively clear the RAS is the vehicle being contemplated. National's accompanying release referenced a \$7 million equity investment, representing 20 per cent of equity, with the remaining 80 per cent provided by councils and LGFA.

In early July, the Labour Party announced its SolarSaver policy, which also includes RAS as part of a wider policy to support solar installation and references the same \$7 million equity



requirement. LGNZ welcomed both National's Home Energy Fund and Labour's SolarSaver policies through media releases and connected them back to LGNZ's long-running advocacy for the RAS.

The RAS has been covered in The Press, The Post, Waikato Times, Sunday Star Times and RNZ Checkpoint, alongside wider concerns about councils needing more funding tools if they are expected to keep rates affordable and fund growing responsibilities. The scheme has also attracted support from the Greens.

The growing cross-party support is a very positive development, but further work is needed to secure central government decisions to move forward with the RAS as proposed. LGNZ continues to advocate for all three proposed RAS products to be made available: rates postponement, deferred development contributions and IMPACT loans. Advice on the business case has been submitted by DIA, MHUD, MBIE, Treasury and Inland Revenue to the Ministers of Local Government, Finance, Energy and Housing.

LGNZ is also pushing for members of the RAS Steering Group and Strategic Advisory Group to meet Ministers to make the case for the full scheme. Hon Dr Nick Smith, Cameron Bagrie and Stuart Henderson have indicated they are available for that conversation.

Rates capping

There have been no significant developments on rates capping during this period, though we expect draft legislation is being developed. Based on public statements by Ministers, LGNZ expects legislation to be introduced into the House before 24 September.

The lack of final detail on the proposed cap is affecting councils as they make Long-term Plan assumptions.

Going for Housing Growth funding tools

If legislation for development levies is introduced this term, it is unlikely to pass before the election and may be carried over to the next term. Development levies are proposed to be able to be adopted from 1 July 2027.

LGNZ is still engaging with the Government and has offered to support final policy design on the Incentives for Housing Growth initiative announced in Budget 2026. This initiative would provide up to \$100 million a year for four years to councils based on consenting volumes. However, a 50% GST share on new builds would have given councils \$1.2 billion last year, while the new fund would have provided \$88 million.

City and regional deals

The second city and regional deal – for the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region – was agreed between the Government, Tauranga City Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council. Like the Auckland City Deal, that deal does not provide any direct funding from central government or access to funding tools.



The final deal in the first round will shortly be concluded with the signing of the Otago Lakes regional deal. It is unclear whether another round of city deals will open before the end of this parliamentary term.

Accommodation levies

LGNZ has continued making the case for an accommodation levy and a national register for short-term rental accommodation through meetings with key political staffers working on pre-election policies for Labour and National.

Meeting current and future infrastructure needs

The Infrastructure reference group is chaired by Mayor Andy Watson and first met on 19 June. Its first meeting focused on feedback on the proposed annual work programme and preparation for upcoming submission opportunities, including the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.

Transport

LGNZ had expected a draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport to be released for consultation, but Minister Bishop announced on 13 August that it had been delayed and would not now happen till 2027. In the meantime, LGNZ is looking at issues such as how low-volume rural transport infrastructure can be maintained affordably and how councils can provide transport infrastructure under new, more permissive planning settings.

Water

LGNZ is continuing to monitor implementation of Local Water Done Well reforms. As of 1 July, every mainland council has an approved water services delivery plan. LGNZ is now considering issues around the economic regulation of water entities and how water entities will align with new local government entities emerging from Simplifying Local Government reforms, noting that new council boundaries may not necessarily align with water entity boundaries.

Taumata Arowai has released its 2024/25 Network Environmental Performance Report. The report shows varying levels of asset management and data quality, high levels of leaks and overflows in parts of the network, and issues with consenting and environmental monitoring.

Resilient communities, economies and environments

The Resilience reference group is chaired by Chair Deon Swiggs and first met on 22 June. Its first meeting focused on feedback on the proposed annual work plan, resource management reform, emergency management reform and anticipated changes to the Climate Change Response Act.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 8



Resource management reform

On 20 July, the Environment Select Committee reported back on the replacement legislation for the Resource Management Act. The committee largely retained the overall structure originally proposed but made a number of changes. These included extending the implementation period from 30 to 39 months, requiring spatial planning committees to include at least one member with knowledge, skills and experience in te ao Māori and Māori development, expanding ministerial powers regarding breaches of environmental limits and resolving conflicts between goals, clarifying requirements around permitted activity registration, and enabling councils to consider effects from external layouts of buildings where they extend beyond the boundary.

Some of these changes positively respond to issues LGNZ raised in its submission. The extension to implementation timeframes partially responds to LGNZ's concerns, while requirements around te ao Māori and Māori development expertise, and the ability to consider effects from external building layouts, were specifically requested in LGNZ's submission.

However, there have been no substantive changes to key areas of concern raised by LGNZ. LGNZ remains particularly concerned about the regulatory relief regime and the sequencing of plan preparation, with spatial plans still required before natural environment and land use plans.

Alongside the Select Committee report, Cabinet announced that existing and initiated Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements would not transfer into the new system. Instead, councils will have the option of entering into new, more narrowly scoped iwi participation agreements that record how iwi authorities will participate in statutory planning processes and processes required to give effect to Treaty settlement redress.

National Council agreed that LGNZ needed to challenge the Government's process because it doesn't allow for public consultation. This is the second time in recent months that material changes have been made at a late stage in a legislative process with no opportunity for iwi/Māori and public (or council) input. National Council also supported Te Maruata to take a strong public position on the substance of the issue, which is the removal of Mana Whakahono ā Rohe as a mechanism for iwi participation.

LGNZ will continue to analyse the Select Committee report and share further insights with members.

Climate change

The Government has introduced the Climate Change Response Amendment Bill, which will require territorial authorities to undertake adaptation planning in priority locations. These locations will be identified through Regional Spatial Plans, with Adaptation Plans required to set out relevant risks, how those risks will be managed and who will be expected to pay.

LGNZ has provided an initial overview of the implications for local government through Keeping it Local and released a media statement responding to the Bill's introduction. LGNZ has noted that clarity around planning roles is positive, but the fundamental question remains how the costs of adaptation will be funded.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 9



Following the introduction of the Bill, Regional Sector Chair Deon Swiggs was interviewed by RNZ and Carbon News. He outlined the local government questions that still need to be answered, particularly who will fund climate adaptation.

LGNZ has also responded to Minister Watts' letter to councils on climate change assumptions. In its response, LGNZ made clear that councils are making complex planning and infrastructure decisions using technical advice, local circumstances and existing government guidance. LGNZ reiterated its call for a nationally consistent framework for climate risk assessment and adaptation planning, with clear roles, responsibilities and funding.

Emergency management

The Select Committee recommended several changes that respond in part to LGNZ's submission. Civil liability protections have been extended so councils and others are covered not only during a declared emergency but also when taking early, precautionary or preventative action in response to an imminent threat. The committee also made small but helpful changes to the definition of "disproportionately affected communities", providing additional clarity to help identify people who may be more affected or have specific needs during and after an emergency.

Several new provisions relevant to councils were also introduced. Emergency Management Committees will be able to appoint associate members with specialist skills, Mayor-elects will be able to declare a state of emergency in urgent situations, Long-term Plans will need to set out steps a local authority will take to implement or progress requirements imposed through Regional Emergency Management Plans, and "major transport incident" will be included as an emergency.

LGNZ will continue to keep members updated on the Bill and support the sector to understand new roles and responsibilities once the Bill becomes law.



Influence

Much of LGNZ's influence work now sits under the four **advocacy priorities** reported on above. Outside those priority areas, LGNZ has continued to focus on election-year advocacy, cross-party engagement, media visibility and policy issues that remain important for members.

Government relations

Since June, LGNZ's government relations work has focused on election-year advocacy. LGNZ developed our election-year manifesto to support conversations with candidates and parties. The manifesto sets out issues councils have consistently raised with LGNZ, including funding and financing, infrastructure, reform, climate resilience and strengthening local democracy. It also makes the case for the role local government plays in New Zealand's economic growth.

Cross-party engagement has continued. LGNZ met with Labour Leader Chris Hipkins, Local Government Spokesperson Tangi Utikere and Housing and Infrastructure Spokesperson Kieran McAnulty. The discussion covered Labour's public transport policy, Head Start and the backstop, Before the Deluge funding, and the regulatory takings provision in the Resource Management Act. Greater Wellington Chair and Te Uru Kahika Flood Resilience Sponsor Daran Ponter joined the meeting to speak to Before the Deluge.

In late July, LGNZ met with New Zealand First's Andy Foster and discussed a range of topics including rates capping, accommodation levies, Simplifying Local Government and potential reforms to the Local Government Act.

Earlier in the period, LGNZ's government relations activity centred on meetings with Local Government Minister Simon Watts, Opposition Leader Chris Hipkins and Green Party Local Government Spokesperson Mike Davidson, supported by wider engagement with political advisors and member zoom sessions with Minister Willis and Minister Watts on the fuel situation.

Working with Te Uru Kahika

LGNZ, with the support of Te Uru Kahika, has briefed the National Party caucus and, separately, the Labour leader and relevant spokespeople on Before the Deluge. This is the culmination of years of work by Te Uru Kahika, and LGNZ was pleased to support this work ahead of the election. The politicians who attended the briefing received a summary of Before the Deluge 3.0 and LGNZ also worked with Greater Wellington Chair Daran Ponter to support his briefing to the Green Party. Chair Deon Swiggs, the Chair of the Regional Sector, also attended the Green Party briefing.



Media

Media interest in local government has remained high, particularly around reform, climate adaptation, election settings, rates and funding tools. LGNZ's approach has been to stay visible as New Zealand moves into a period where general election stories will dominate.

Fuel remained an ongoing topic of media interest, especially at the start of this reporting period. Rehette was quoted by RNZ, and Regional Sector Chair Deon Swiggs spoke on morning radio bulletins, followed by an op-ed about the pressure diesel costs were placing on public transport and the important role regional councillors play in managing that pressure.

LGNZ's advocacy for new funding tools for councils has also received regular media coverage. The RAS and LGNZ's pre-Budget push for GST sharing both gained media attention, with the RAS covered online and on RNZ's Nine to Noon, and GST sharing set out in an op-ed by Selwyn Mayor Lydia Gliddon for The Press, developed with LGNZ.

As election policy announcements continue, media will remain a key part of LGNZ's advocacy. LGNZ's focus is to respond quickly where there is a local government angle and keep reinforcing manifesto priorities so the impact on communities and councils is not lost.

Other policy issues outside the advocacy priorities

Seismic strengthening

The Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Bill was reported back to Parliament in July. LGNZ strongly supported the Bill, which refocuses the seismic strengthening regime on the highest-risk buildings.

While most of the changes recommended in LGNZ's submission were not implemented by the committee, several changes relevant to councils were made. These included more clearly defining "urban centre" for the purposes of the Bill, creating a transitional period for councils to reassess strategic transport routes, allowing extensions for seismic work on heritage grounds, and clarifying terminology such as "full retrofit" and "façade strengthening".

Dog control

MCERT has released guidance on dog control and enforcement to support councils using existing tools and powers under the Dog Control Act 1996. This is an interim measure while the Government undertakes a comprehensive review of the Act. The review will consider challenges councils face around powers and functions, enforcement penalties and the ability to impose desexing obligations.

The Government has announced that the review will be carried out before the end of 2026, with replacement legislation to be introduced and passed next year. LGNZ has discussed the review with officials, who have agreed LGNZ will be involved.



The guidance was developed by MCERT with a working group of council officials working in dog control, along with LGNZ and Taituarā representatives. LGNZ will continue to engage with MCERT officials as the review begins.

Building system reforms

The Building Amendment Bill has been introduced to Parliament. It changes building and construction settings, most notably moving away from joint and several liability, where councils could become a last resort for homeowners seeking compensation for building defects, towards a shared liability system. This has been an area of sustained advocacy by LGNZ over many years, and was the subject of a remit passed by the 2023 AGM. The Bill also simplifies the process for consolidating Building Consent Authority functions between councils, changes some processing times and makes changes to levy funding for building research.

LGNZ has picked up concerns about levy funding changes and the effect this could have on BRANZ's work. LGNZ will consider these issues further as it prepares its submission and will also make clear that quicker consent processing relies on high-quality applications from builders.

Progress on 2025 remits

We've made progress on each of the remits that were adopted at the 2025 AGM, though more on some than others. Several remits have been built into our broader advocacy and policy work programme. In some cases, we've worked together with the council/s that proposed the remit to make progress. We will continue to work on 2025 remits that we've not yet fully achieved or where we've only been able to make limited progress so far.

A change of government, and the change of priorities that comes with that, always has an impact on our ability to make progress on remits. With every change of government, we re-assess and re-prioritise what we're advocating for – so that the issues we're focused on align with the Government's priorities.

Remit subject	Progress update
Improving Joint Management Agreements	We engaged early with officials at the Ministry for the Environment who made it clear that there were no plans, and no likely capacity, to make changes to policy regarding Joint Management Agreements (JMAs) prior to the replacing of the Resource Management Act with the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. Given this, we concentrated our efforts on improving the standing of JMAs in the new legislation as the initial proposal would only allow for the carrying over of existing JMAs and would not give councils and iwi the ability to establish new ones. This was primarily through our submission on the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill, where we outlined the important role JMAs

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 13



	can play and, based on legal advice we received, recommended the legislation be amended to allow for new ones to be established. We have also included information on JMAs in advice on Head Start guidance to councils.
Alcohol licensing fees	In September 2025, we wrote to the Minister of Justice raising the issues covered by this remit and requesting that he urgently update the fees to reflect current costs (including inflation) and provide annual CPI adjustments, as well as enabling cost recovery for objection hearings. The Minister responded, raising concerns around the risk of imposing additional costs on businesses and noting that fees will be reviewed in 2027. We have engaged with the Ministry for Regulation during its hospitality sector review noting the challenges councils face in not being able to fully recover costs. As part of this, we submitted on the discussion document for local authorities calling for improvements that would deliver better cost recovery. Ensuring cost recovery tools are kept in line with real costs is specifically called for in our election year manifesto. We are also including it in our rates capping advocacy as one way to reduce pressure on rates.
Aligning public and school bus services	We engaged with Nelson City Council, which put forward the remit. At that time, negotiations were underway with the Ministry of Education to trial better alignment in the Nelson region. LGNZ agreed that its next step would be to engage after the trial to inform potential next steps for our advocacy. The initial proposal for a trial was taken further, and the Ministry of Education has been approached about alternative approaches by Nelson City Council. Our understanding is that Nelson is yet to hear back from the Ministry. We will engage after this happens, to determine if we can offer any further support in implementing this remit.
Review of local government arrangements to achieve better balance	The Government's announcement of its Simplifying Local Government programme and Head Start pathway superseded proactive work planned to implement this remit. The remit has informed the approach we have taken in responding to these processes, including that local government accepts change is needed but that councils and communities must be fully involved in this change alongside central government. LGNZ has rolled out an extensive programme of zooms, advice and think pieces in May-July 2026 to support members' engagement with the

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 14



	Head Start pathway. This has included legal advice, examination of previous amalgamations in New Zealand and overseas, the important of regional functions, the unitary model, and engaging with iwi through the process.
--	---

Remits passed at our 2026 AGM

The AGM also ranked the successful remits in order of priority:

1. Financial support for government reform implementation costs
2. Improving LTP audit requirements
3. Removal of representation review requirements during Simplifying Local Government reform
4. Bulk funding of transport activities
5. Priorities for Dog Control Act reform
6. A fairer approach to uneconomic transport infrastructure funding
7. Improved regulation of vape retailers
8. Enhanced role for government in supporting subnational diplomacy
9. Devolution of place naming to territorial authorities

You can read more about each of these remits in [the paper that went to the AGM](#).

After weighing up the rankings and available resource, National Council has decided that the first five remits will be allocated the most resource, though actions will be taken for all remits.



Connection

Member communications

LGNZ has provided members with frequent updates and resources related to reforms, particularly Simplifying Local Government. This included multiple emails from Scott to Mayors, Chairs and Chief Executives, as well as personalised emails to members.

There have been strong turnouts to the large number of zooms LGNZ has organised, including the Simplifying Local Government series, legal advice sessions, Budget sessions and fuel crisis updates.

Zone meetings

LGNZ's new approach to zone meetings, with a Leadership Team member assigned to each zone and attendance by an out-of-zone National Council representative, is strengthening connections with members. The value of these in-person opportunities goes beyond formal LGNZ updates, helping build relationships and giving councillors the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions.

In early May, Scott, Simon and Fran attended Zone 4. The agenda focused on key regional partnerships, including CreativeHQ, WellingtonNZ and Chorus, and members toured the Riverlink project afterwards.

In mid-May, Rehette, Scott and Amanda attended Zone 5/6 in Christchurch, chaired by Dan and Tamah. The meeting included a range of expert and political speakers, visits to new infrastructure including the stadium and events centre, and positive feedback on the value LGNZ was delivering.

Rehette, Scott and Simon attended Zone 2 in late May, where the agenda was reworked to focus significant time on Simplifying Local Government and regional impacts, both with DIA and among zone members. Other presentations focused on climate adaptation and resilience.

In July, Rehette and Ranjani attended a Zone 3 meeting responding to Simplifying Local Government. The meeting featured several politicians, including strong representation from local MPs, which members found helpful.

Dan and Amanda attended Zone 1 on 21 July and provided a well-received update, taking a large number of questions.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 16



Sector meetings

LGNZ held separate sector meetings in May. The programmes focused on Simplifying Local Government, which had been announced ten days earlier, and the fuel crisis. Metro was very successful, with good discussion and feedback. Rural and Provincial was also successful, although attendees were more concerned about the reform agenda. At Regional, discussion focused on the complexities of reform and the future of regional councils.

Because SuperLocal shifted to October, the November sector meetings were rescheduled for July and August. Metro met in Auckland on 24 July, with all member Metro councils represented. The Auckland Mayor attended online, and a range of Auckland-based businesses and member organisations shared their election-year advocacy priorities with the group. Minister Erica Stanford, Opportunities Party's Qiulae Wong and NZ First local government spokesperson Andy Foster had candid conversations with the room, which attendees appreciated so close to the Head Start deadline.

Rural and Provincial met for useful conversation and presentations on 6 and 7 August, immediately ahead of the Head Start deadline, which dominated discussion. Regional met on 14 August as this report was being finalised.

SuperLocal26

We replanned the SuperLocal26 programme to accommodate the shift of the conference to October. We launched ticket sales and the programme in mid-June. Ticket sales were very strong in the lead up to early-bird pricing closing on 14 August.

The SuperLocal Awards launched in late June. We have had good numbers of entries across all categories, particularly SuperCollab.

Te Maruata

LGNZ facilitated two whānau whānui monthly zoom hui with the wider rōpū, which were positively received by Te Maruata members.

The July Te Maruata hui in Rotorua provided an important opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga during a significant reform period. The hui included a ceremony to honour longstanding Rotorua Councillor and former Deputy Mayor Cr Trevor Maxwell, described in the August leadership report as a strong champion of Te Maruata and the work of the rōpū.

Te Maruata perspectives have been important in LGNZ's work on Simplifying Local Government and wider system changes, including the implications of structural reform for Māori elected members, iwi partnerships and community voice. Te Maruata has also raised concerns about the proposed removal of voting rights for unelected members on council committees, which LGNZ wrote to the Minister about.

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 17



Alongside Te Maruata, LGNZ commissioned Poipoia to provide advice on engagement with iwi Māori through the Head Start process. LGNZ shared that guidance with members, including through a zoom, alongside wider guidance on structural options and iwi Māori representation.

Work is progressing on the Te Maruata Impact Framework, which is intended to provide a clear, Te Maruata-owned way to tell the story of the network's contribution to LGNZ and the wider sector. LGNZ is also working this triennium to ensure Te Maruata and YEM's work is more integrated into LGNZ policy and advocacy.

Young Elected Members

At National Council's May meeting, National Council agreed to put forward a rule change that would allow networks to submit remits (subject to the normal remit endorsement requirements). This motion was subsequently passed by the AGM in July.

YEM's flagship hui was held in Rotorua on 30 and 31 July. The programme focused on leadership, local government reform and how young elected members can navigate change in a rapidly shifting environment. It included sessions on Simplifying Local Government and resource management reform, representation in governance, resilience and building collective influence.

Women in Local Government

LGNZ held a zoom for women on 12 June featuring the Ministry for Women, which launched its Long-term Insights Briefing into how online harm is affecting the pipeline of women leaders. The zoom also featured Areto, which is offering two free years of its social media moderation platform for elected women.

LGNZ has secured a keynote speaker for the Women in Local Government breakfast ahead of SuperLocal.

There continues to be steady traffic on the WhatsApp group for women elected members.



Support

Ākona

Ākona continues to support elected members and councils through online learning and curated resources. In May, the most popular courses were Baseline learning, Responsibilities of a chair, Creating your own meeting culture, Chairing diverse dynamics, and Intro to funding and finance.

Over June and July, there were 213 individual logins to the Ākona platform. The most popular learning catalogues during these two months were Simplifying Local Government, Long Term Planning, Chairing meetings, Baseline learning, Upcoming reforms, Keeping yourself safe, Conflicts of interest and Asset management.

In July, we launched a suite of recommended learning to guide elected members through the Long-term Plan process. The package was developed in response to demand from councils, with LGNZ working extensively with LTP leads to curate existing content and develop new content, including two new micro-learns focused on “Finance for decision-makers”.

Since the LTP learning package launched, there have been 138 individual logins. The most popular learning activities in the package are Key information in the Long Term Plan, Key roles in the Long Term Plan, Updating the Long Term Plan, Finance for decision-makers, and Responsibilities of the chair.

LGNZ has also created an Ākona page where members can find all Simplifying Local Government resources and recordings.

An Ākona advisory group has been established to ensure member feedback informs the user experience, content and planning. The group includes Mayors, Chairs, elected members and staff. It met for the first time online on 4 June and is due to meet again in early October.

Micro-credentials

LGNZ has launched a new micro-credential pathway in partnership with Victoria University. The pathway will offer two certified qualifications: Certified Local Governance Practitioner at Level 7, achieved through three micro-credentials, and Certified Local Governance Advanced Practitioner at Level 8, achieved through the full suite of six micro-credentials.

Official registrations opened in July and have been much stronger than expected.

The micro-credential project is supported by an advisory group that provides advice and feedback to ensure content is accurate, relevant, aligned with governance expectations and practically applicable to elected member roles.



Road Efficiency Group

The REG programme has completed the second year of its three-year programme, in line with NZTA's financial year end. The FY2025/26 REG Learning and Development workshops successfully engaged sector participants, with increased attendance, positive feedback on content relevance and strong facilitation quality.

Feedback from participants showed high satisfaction with both the Learning and Development and REG components. Delivery performance was strong, with workshops achieving a high proportion of stated objectives and continued improvement evident across the series.

Executive support

LGNZ offers a range of executive support services. During this period, we completed the Chief Executive recruitment process for several councils. We are also working with two councils as the independent advisor for their Chief Executive performance review programmes, supporting one council's Chief Executive with an organisational review, and are in early discussions with two other councils about executive support opportunities.



Appendix 1: Reference group members

Local government system reference group

- Mayor Fran Wilde (chair), South Wairarapa District Council
- Councillor Dinnie Moeahu (deputy chair), New Plymouth District Council
- Chair Craig Williamson, Taranaki Regional Council
- Mayor John Robertson, Waitomo District Council
- Chair Sophie Siers, Hawkes Bay Regional Council
- Councillor Neil Gillespie, Otago Regional Council
- Councillor John Verry, Selwyn District Council
- Councillor Darren Ludlow, Invercargill City Council
- Councillor Steven Botica, Kāpiti Coast District Council
- Councillor Felicity Foy, Far North District Council
- Community Board Chair Linda Bonne, Whakatāne District Council

Funding and cost-efficiency reference group

- Mayor Mahé Drysdale (chair), Tauranga City Council
- Mayor Tamah Alley (deputy chair), Central Otago District Council
- Chair Nikki Riley, Horizons Regional Council
- Mayor Will Foley, Central Hawke's Bay District Council
- Mayor Scott Gilmore, Tararua District Council
- Mayor Steve Cretny, Carterton District Council
- Mayor Andrew Tripe, Whanganui District Council
- Councillor Flemming Rasmussen, Thames-Coromandel District Council
- Councillor Dave Woods, Tasman District Council
- Councillor Prabha Ravi, Hutt City Council
- Chief Executive Steven Perdia, Whakatāne District Council

Infrastructure reference group

- Mayor Andy Watson (chair), Rangitikei District Council
- Mayor John Glover (deputy chair), Queenstown Lakes District Council
- Mayor Dan Gordon, Waimakariri District Council
- Mayor Nigel Bowen, Timaru District Council
- Councillor Alex Crackett, Invercargill City Council
- Chair Daran Ponter, Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Mayor Tim King, Tasman District Council
- Councillor Tom Davies, Hurunui District Council
- Councillor Geordie Rogers, Wellington City Council
- Councillor Sophie McInnes, Selwyn District Council
- Councillor EJ Barrett, New Plymouth District Council
- Chief Executive Stace Lewer, Ōpōtiki District Council

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 21



Resilience reference group

- Chair Deon Swiggs (chair), Environment Canterbury
- Mayor Faylene Tunui (deputy chair), Kawerau District Council
- Deputy Mayor Aubrey Ria, Gisborne District Council
- Chair Warren Maher, Waikato Regional Council
- Deputy Mayor Shayne Barry, Buller District Council
- Councillor Lisa Thomson, Waikato District Council
- Councillor Kat Macmillan, Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- Councillor Sophie McInnes, Selwyn District Council
- Councillor Liz Stolwyk, Waikato Regional Council
- Chief Executive Bob Penter, Chatham Islands Council
- Chief Executive Aileen Lawrie, Thames-Coromandel District Council

LGNZ four-monthly report for members: March 2025 // 22

7.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - JULY 2026

Rā | Date: 3 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Marie Fullerton, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide councillors with an overview of Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) health, safety, and wellbeing performance, and to enable councillors to exercise their due diligence regarding health and safety governance.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 was passed by Parliament on 1 July 2026 and received Royal Assent on 8 July 2026. The amendments come into effect on 1 April 2027 and are intended to focus New Zealand's health and safety system on the management of critical risks that have the potential to result in death, serious injury, illness, notifiable incidents, or occupational disease. The reforms clarify duties for PCBUs and officers, strengthen the role of Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs), and address overlaps with other regulatory regimes. An Officer due diligence education session is scheduled for 4 August 2026 to strengthen governance oversight of health and safety and support readiness for the forthcoming Health and Safety at Work Act reforms.
3. The Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) implementation programme remains on track, with final workstreams focused on risk management capability, contractor management, competency and assurance, and injury and illness management. Assurance activities continue to perform strongly, exceeding review targets and providing confidence that health and safety risks, controls, and corrective actions are being managed across the organisation.
4. Psychosocial risk has been elevated for increased governance oversight in response to organisational change and uncertainty. Recognising that effective management extends beyond traditional risk management tools, a paper will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team outlining a coordinated organisation-wide approach, including roles, responsibilities and supporting actions to strengthen workforce wellbeing and organisational resilience.
5. Tier 1 and 2 leadership walkarounds are a due diligence activity and provide ELT with direct operational assurance by assessing the effectiveness of risk controls and confirming how work is conducted in practice. There were 24 scheduled Executive Governance Walkarounds from 1 July 2025 to 31 July 2026.
6. The recently introduced Tier 3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Walkarounds are part of the Health and Safety Risk Assurance Programme. Over the last 4 months, SLT members have completed risk assurance activities, review of key risk controls, and identified improvement opportunities. These assurance activities feed into critical risk reviews.

7. There were 17 staff event reports for the period July 2026, 9 were events, 5 injuries, and 3 near misses. The total reports for the last 12 months (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026) are 241.
8. A range of wellbeing initiatives were delivered during July to support employee health, wellbeing and engagement, reinforcing a positive wellbeing culture and awareness of available support resources.
9. EAP utilisation was 14.0% over the past 12 months and is within expected industry benchmarks. Consistent with broader trends, most referrals related to personal matters, particularly personal relationships, stress and anxiety, and grief and loss.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the report *Health and Safety Report - July 2026* (Council, 27 August 2026) be received.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

10. Council's health and safety performance is reported to Council each month. The information is presented under four sections: 1) Risk Profile 2) Performance Data 3) Governance 4) Assurance and General Information.

SECTION ONE: Risk Profile (general health and safety information)

Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026– WorkSafe July 2026

11. The Health and Safety at Work Amendment Act 2026 comes into effect on 1 April 2027 and focuses New Zealand's health and safety system on the management of critical risks that have the potential to cause death, serious injury, illness, notifiable incidents, or occupational disease. The reforms aim to provide greater clarity for duty holders and reduce unnecessary compliance burden.
12. The amendments require PCBUs to prioritise critical risks, with small PCBUs focused primarily on critical risk management and larger PCBUs continuing to manage all workplace risks while giving critical risks the highest priority. As a large PCBU, Waikato Regional Council's overall obligations remain largely unchanged, although the legislation reinforces the importance of critical risk management, assurance, and verification activities.
13. The Act also clarifies officer due diligence responsibilities, emphasising governance oversight through understanding organisational risks, ensuring appropriate resources and processes are in place, and verifying their effectiveness. The amendments further strengthen the role of Approved Codes of Practice and clarify how compliance with other regulatory regimes may satisfy equivalent HSWA requirements. An Officer due diligence education session, scheduled for 4 August 2026 aims to strengthen governance oversight of health and safety, and support readiness for the forthcoming Health and Safety at Work Act reforms.

National Event – Safeguard 20 July 2026: Aviation safety prosecution

14. A skydiving company was fined after a skydiver was blown more than 1km offshore following a mid-air collision and could not be rescued. The company admitted it had exposed the skydiver to unnecessary danger by failing to have suitable emergency water rescue arrangements in place.

15. The case reinforces the importance of seeking assurance that foreseeable risks are identified, critical controls are in place, and emergency response arrangements are suitable before high-risk work proceeds. It also highlights the need for operational decisions to respond to changing conditions and concerns raised by workers. This aligns with WRC's current focus on implementing dynamic risk management training in August. The training will support staff and managers to recognise changing conditions, pause work where required, and confirm controls, competence, communication and that emergency arrangements are in place and remain effective.

SECTION TWO: Performance Data (reporting, and outputs of the safety management system)

Incident Reporting Trends

16. The total number of incidents reported for last 12 months (1 Aug 2025 to 31 July 2026) is 241, including the events reported for the period July 2026 (n=17). Incident volumes vary month to month but remain broadly consistent with historical trends.



Graph 1. 12 month-Incident Report Trending data – July 2026

Event Type by Month

17. Graph 2 below provides a comparison of all reports by events, injury, illness and near misses. There was a total of 17 reports for the period of July 2026, 9 were events, 5 injuries and 3 near misses.
18. Incident volumes remain consistent with historical trends over the past three years. Near miss reviews continue to represent a significant proportion of reporting (approximately 32% annually), providing early visibility of hazards and control weaknesses before harm occurs. This supports Council's commitment to open kōrero, proactive risk management, and continuous improvement by enabling risks to be identified, reviewed, and addressed before injury or illness results.
19. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team is monitoring both near miss and event reporting. This includes spot checks and follow-ups with managers to confirm that risk controls are being reviewed, implemented effectively, and that workers have the required competence,

equipment, information and support to undertake work safely. This provides assurance that reports are being used to support staff learning, strengthen controls and prevent harm.



Graph 2. Incident type by month – July 2026

Events Report by Category

20. In July, 17 health and safety events were reported, comprising of 5 injuries, 9 events, and 3 near misses. Event reports were vehicle-related, along with people/behavioural matters and minor property damage.
21. The injury reports were minor in nature, and near misses made up 18% of the total reporting for number for July.

Event risk category (realised risk)	Nº
Facility/building (temperature)	1
People/behavioural	2
Property damage	4
Vehicle	2
Total	9
Injury/loss risk category (realised risk)	
Abrasion/scratch/bruising	4
Ergonomic discomfort	1
Total	5
Potential risk category (near-miss)	
Access/egress	1
Traffic	1
Facility/building	1
Total	3

SECTION THREE: Governance and Assurance

Exercising Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance – ELT Leadership Walkarounds

22. **Lead indicator:** Tier 1 and Tier 2 Governance Leadership Walkarounds are a key health and safety governance initiative that is actively supported by the Chief Executive and conducted by members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
23. From 1 Aug 2025 to 31 Jul 2026, a total of 24 leadership walkarounds have been completed across a range of work sites, resulting in 8 identified corrective actions. No walkarounds were conducted in July 2026.



Graph 3. Vault checks – June 2026

Risk Assurance – Senior Leadership Team

24. **Lead Indicator:** As part of the recently introduced Senior Leadership Team (SLT) risk assurance programme, leaders are undertaking targeted walkarounds and assurance checks to verify that critical controls are in place and operating effectively. Over the past 3 months, six assurance activities have been completed, with four focused on the critical risk of Working In, On and Around Water and two addressing Slips, Trips and Falls. The reviews confirmed implementation of controls while also identifying opportunities for continuous improvement, including strengthening Personal Protective Equipment requirements within operational documentation. The programme provides valuable frontline insight, reinforces leadership visibility, and verification of risk controls.

Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) Assurance

25. **Lead indicators:** As part of Council's Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001) requirements, the annual assurance programme is updated at the beginning of the new financial year (July), and is delivered by the Health and Safety Team, in collaboration with managers and their teams.
26. In July, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team undertook six event investigation reviews, focusing on the quality of event investigations, and providing coaching to uplift manager capability.
27. Performance against the HSMS assurance programme remains strong, with common risk reviews (83.3%) and HSMS document reviews (85%) meeting or exceeding targets. These activities provide assurance that health and safety controls, systems and supporting documentation remain current and effective.

Dynamic Risk Capability Development

28. Dynamic Risk Assessment training will be delivered to 90 field-based staff on 24 August 2026, equipping them with practical skills to assess changing conditions and make effective risk-based decisions in the field. The programme will be progressively rolled out to other field workers over the coming months.

Health and Safety Leadership Capability Development

29. **Lead Indicator:** The August assurance focus will move to contractor management, including how contractor-related risks, controls and responsibilities are identified and managed. A new Vault App check for overlapping duties is being introduced to provide assurance that discussions between WRC and contractors have occurred, responsibilities are understood, and critical risk controls are considered before work proceeds.

Health and Safety Management System Roll-out Timeline



SECTION FOUR: Management of risk

30. Councils Risk Management Framework sets out responsibilities and processes for managing risk, including strategic risks that may affect directorate operational risks, health and safety, and project and programme delivery.

Summary of critical risks review

31. The table below shows a summary of the six critical health and safety risks, risk statement, bowtie status, and the risk register review status.
32. *The Threat, Aggression and Violence* and *Working, In, On and Around Water* critical risks have been updated and is currently progressing through consultation with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Health and Safety Representatives. As part of the review, the associated Critical Risk Standards, risk registers, and other supporting documentation are also reviewed to ensure critical controls and supporting controls are appropriate, effective, and aligned with operational requirements.
33. Psychosocial risk has been included in the table below for increased governance oversight due to the potential impact of organisational change and uncertainty on workforce wellbeing, engagement and performance. Effective management will require a coordinated organisation-wide approach involving Executive Leadership, Human Resources, Learning and Development, Health, Safety and Wellbeing, and People Leaders. A paper outlining the proposed approach and accountabilities will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team for consideration.

Critical risk review status

WRC Critical Risk	Risk statement	Bowtie status	Risk review status
Vehicle Use	The risk of <i>losing control over the vehicle</i> leading to a crash and resulting in serious harm or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update. Completed Review due March 2027

Overlapping Duties (Contractor Management)	The risk that <i>works processes are not controlled</i> , leading to serious harm or death, loss of plant, equipment or impacts on the environment.	Not undertaken	Risk Register updated Completed Next review October 2026
Working in, on and Around Water:	The risk of the <i>accidental exposure to water bodies</i> , leading infection, serious harm, or drowning.	Bow-tie	Risk register update. Underway Next review August 2026
Working in Geothermal Areas	The risk of <i>exposure to gases and thermal heat</i> leading to asphyxiation, life threatening burns, or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update. Completed Next review due July 2026
Struck by Moving Vehicles, Plant or Equipment	The risk of <i>being struck by moving vehicle, plant or equipment</i> leading to personal injury or fatality.	Not undertaken	Risk Register update. Completed Review due September 2026
Threat, Aggression and Violence	Risks of <i>confrontational interactions with members of the public</i> , leading to physical and psychological harm.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update. Underway
Psychosocial Risk (Healthy Workplaces)	Risk of <i>unmanaged psychosocial hazards</i> , leading to in worker harm, reduced wellbeing, engagement and performance.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update Underway

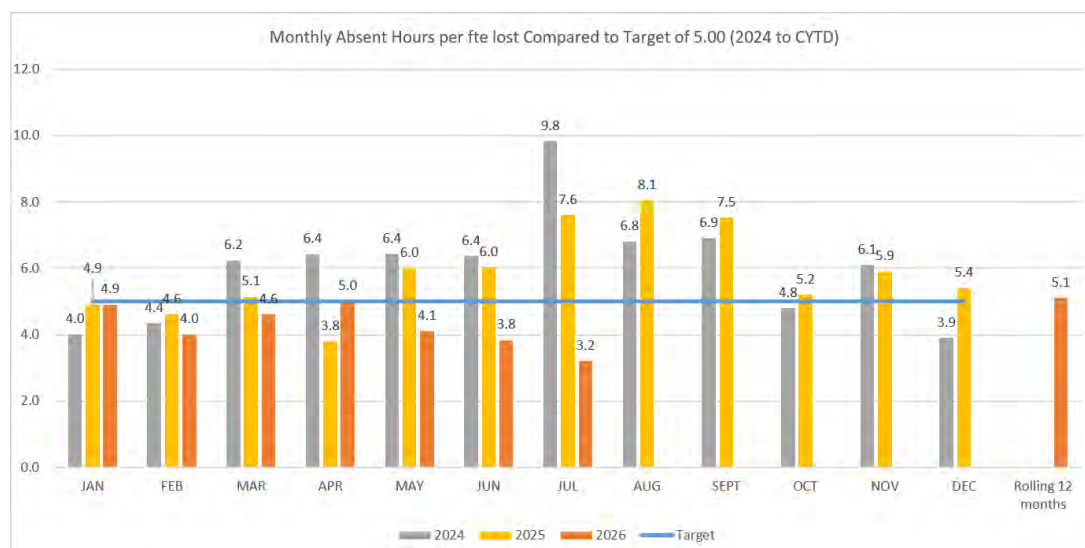
Waikato Regional Council Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

34. During July, the Wellbeing Team delivered initiatives focused on sleep health, fatigue management, personal wellbeing, physical activity and social connection, supporting employee wellbeing and a positive workplace culture.
35. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) utilisation remained within expected industry benchmarks during the reporting period. Between 1 Aug 2025 and 31 July 2026, 89 staff accessed EAP services, representing a utilisation rate of 14.0% (industry average 7%–15%). Consistent with wider industry trends, most referrals related to personal matters (78%), with 22% relating to work issues. The most common personal concerns were personal relationships (n=17), stress and anxiety (n=15), and grief and loss (n=8). The most common work-related concerns were workload (n=4), relationship with manager (n=3), and career-related matters (n=2).

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

Sick Leave Statistics

36. Graph 5 below shows sick leave numbers reported for July (3.2) is lower than the national benchmark of 5.0.



Graph 5. Hours of Sick Leave by Month

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

37. Council's existing focus on critical risks, critical controls, assurance, and officer due diligence is well aligned with the intent of the reforms. Further assessment will be undertaken as WorkSafe releases supporting guidance ahead of the 1 April 2027 implementation date
38. Event reporting remains strong, with 241 staff reports submitted in the last 12 months, including 17 for the period July 2026. Encouragingly, the quality of investigations continues to improve, driven by active support from the HSW Team through monthly event reviews and coaching. These efforts are fostering greater trust in the reporting process, growing manager expertise and strengthening our overall safety culture.
39. The continued commitment of the Chief Executive, Executive Leaders and Senior Leaders to the walkaround programme strengthens organisational assurance and supports officer due diligence by providing direct oversight of critical risks, control effectiveness, and workforce engagement across the organisation.
40. HSMS implementation continues to progress, with assurance activities, leadership engagement and capability development strengthening organisational risk management maturity. Dynamic Risk Assessment training in August will further enhance frontline decision-making and operational resilience.
41. Near miss reporting provides an important opportunity to learn and intervene before harm occurs. The current level of reporting gives Council useful visibility of potential risk and is being actively monitored through HSW Team review, manager follow-up and control assurance activity.
42. Council's EAP is a free, confidential support service available 24/7, with a 14.0% staff utilisation rate which is within the industry average. Most referrals (78%) are for personal issues, such as relationships, stress, and life transitions, consistent with national trends.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.4 WAIKATO RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Rā Date:	5 August 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Lisa Armstrong, Project Manager, Integrated Catchment Management
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide councillors with the final draft of the Waikato Resilience Framework for adoption.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Waikato Regional Council (the council) has developed a Waikato Resilience Framework, the council's approach to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation (the Framework). The Framework responds to the increasingly complex and dynamic operating for managing natural hazard risk and supports the council's role in planning for the long term, reducing future risk and making investment decisions that consider both current and future generations.
3. The Framework provides a whole-of-organisation approach for how the council will embed natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation considerations in its work. It focuses on pre-event risk reduction and adaptation in relation to communities and land use and applies to all natural hazards.
4. Organised around four pillars (pou), the Framework sets out the principles, steps, systems and processes the council will use to embed these considerations in its work.
5. Two councillor workshops have been held on the Framework, with the latest working draft workshopped with councillors on 4 August 2026. Feedback from the workshops has been incorporated into the Framework and a final communications review has also occurred.
6. The council is being asked to adopt the Waikato Resilience Framework (**Attachment 1**). The designed version of the Framework will be tabled at the council meeting.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Waikato Resilience Framework* (Council, 27 August 2026) be received.
2. That the Waikato Resilience Framework, Waikato Regional Council's approach to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation, be adopted.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

7. The council plays a key role in reducing and adapting to natural hazard risk through a range of core regional functions, including catchment management, flood protection and drainage,

regional transport, regional policy, spatial planning, science and monitoring, infrastructure planning, emergency management and the provision of information and advice on regional hazards to communities, stakeholders and partners. These activities form a key part of New Zealand's natural hazard risk management system.

8. Successive strategic directions have reflected our longstanding responsibilities for resilience to natural hazard risk and all five strategic priorities of *Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036*, recognise the council's role in resilience to natural hazards. The *Building Regional Resilience* strategic priority seeks an outcome that ensures "communities are less vulnerable and exposed to natural hazards" and explicitly references the Framework:

"The framework and plan for resilience to natural hazard risk meets adaptation legislation and helps inform the region's developing spatial plan.

The impact of future climate risk is consistently incorporated into natural hazard risk management plans and decisions."

TE TAKE | ISSUE

9. The Waikato region is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards, including flooding, drought, coastal inundation, erosion, land instability, wildfire and seismic and volcanic activity. Changes to our environment are increasing the frequency, intensity and complexity of many of these hazards, placing growing pressure on our communities, infrastructure, productive land, ecosystems, regional services and the economy. This region's resilience to natural hazards is also of national importance, where the effects of natural hazard events can extend beyond our local communities, disrupting national connectivity, supply chains, economic performance and environmental outcomes.
10. As natural hazard risks become increasingly complex and dynamic, the existing ways of how we work, plan and make decisions are inadequate for the responses that are necessary for the safety, prosperity and wellbeing of current and future generations.
11. In addition, the national policy and legislative setting for natural hazard risk management is changing. Planning system reform is underway, and the Climate Change Response Act 2002 Amendment Bill (16 July 2026) will require community adaptation plans to be completed for priority locations within set legislative timeframes.

THE FRAMEWORK

12. The Framework provides a strategic, organisation-wide approach to how we will deliver our core regional functions in relation to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.
13. It sets a common direction for how the council understands and reduces risk, navigates uncertainty, embeds adaptation in our work, and works with others to reduce risk and adapt across the region. It also identifies how to enable this approach and to respond to legislative reform, emerging risk information and evolving regional priorities. It focuses on reducing risk where possible before disasters occur, rather than only responding after events.
14. The Framework is split into three parts:
 - (a) **Part 1** sets the scene by explaining why an organisation-wide approach to natural hazard risk resilience is needed and how the council contributes to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.

- (b) **Part 2** sets out our approach, including the principles, processes, systems and tools that will guide how we embed natural hazard risk management and adaptation in our decision making, services and work programmes.
 - (c) **Part 3** sets out how we will implement the Framework.
15. The principles, steps, systems and processes of the Framework are organised across four pillars (pou):
- Pou 1 Integrated systems and collaboration,
 - Pou 2 Understanding current and future natural hazard risk,
 - Pou 3 Investment and decision -making for risk reduction and adaptation,
 - Pou 4 Managing risk for resilient people and places.
16. The Framework will:
- (a) Guide the council's forward work programme by setting out the approaches, processes, systems and tools to reduce and adapt to natural hazard risk, and what change is necessary to embed and implement these.
 - (b) Help the council to develop organisation-wide measures to track how the council is reducing and adapting to natural hazard risk across its core functions.
 - (c) Support the Executive Leadership Team and councillors to make informed decisions on priorities, investment, resourcing and trade-offs across the organisation over the short, medium and long term.
17. The Framework was introduced at the councillor workshop on 22 April 2026, followed by a second workshop on 4 August 2026 where the working draft was presented for feedback.
18. Feedback from the workshops pertained to minor edits, which have been incorporated into the final draft of the Framework. A final communications review has also occurred to sharpen and tighten wording, particularly in pou 3 and pou 4. No substantive changes to content have been made.
19. Council is being asked to adopt the Waikato Resilience Framework (**Attachment 1**). The designed version of the Framework will be tabled at the council meeting.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

20. The success of the Framework is highly dependent on its implementation. Staged implementation will be necessary, the pace of which is dependent on resourcing. An implementation plan will be developed and updates reported through the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

21. This decision will increase the ability of the council and region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.
22. It will achieve this by setting a common direction for how the council understands and reduces climate risk, navigates uncertainty, embeds adaptation in our work, and works with others to reduce risk and adapt across the region. It also identifies how to enable this approach and to respond to legislative reform, emerging risk information and evolving regional priorities.

TE WHAKAMAURU – TE WHAKAHEKE I NGĀ PĀNGA KI TE ĀHUARANGI | MITIGATION – REDUCING IMPACTS ON THE CLIMATE

23. Although the Framework is focused on natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation, it acknowledges the opportunity for the approaches in the Framework to mitigate multiple risks and achieve multiple outcomes, including emissions reduction.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

24. There are opportunities for council to demonstrate leadership arising from this decision. Council can provide leadership through the adoption of this Framework – by recognising the need and value of a strategic, consistent and co-ordinated approach. Pou 1 also recognises the systemic nature of climate risk, and the need to collaborate across the entire system.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

25. Although the subject matter is critical to the ongoing wellbeing and prosperity of the Waikato region, having regard to the decision-making provisions in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) and council's Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision-making requirements contained in Part Six of the LGA and that the decision-making requirements of the LGA have been met.

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

26. The preferred option is the adoption of the Framework. The Framework supports delivery of the council's strategic direction and responds to the increasingly complex and dynamic operating for managing natural hazard risk. It supports the council's role in planning for the long term, reducing future risk and making investment decisions that consider both current and future generations.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

27. The Framework is underpinned by the council's 2026-2036 strategic direction and supports the council to give effect to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.
28. To the best of the author's knowledge, this decision is not significantly inconsistent with and is not expected to have consequences that are significantly inconsistent with, any council-adopted policy or any plan required by the LGA or other legislation.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

29. This decision will not impact the council's obligations under the Treaty. The Framework recognises the importance of integrating te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori perspectives and seeks to strengthen our understanding and application of te ao Māori in a risk reduction and adaptation setting.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

30. The council is asked to adopt the Waikato Resilience Framework. The Framework sets out a whole-of-organisation approach for how the council will embed natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation into its planning, investment and operational decisions.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

Nil

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Final Draft - Waikato Resilience Framework (Doc# 38212690) [↓](#)

Final Draft

Te Anga Mārohirohi Waikato Resilience Framework

Waikato Regional Council's approach to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.

For inside cover: Acknowledgements

- Staff across the council and the wider Waikato local government sector who contributed to the development of the WRF.
- Otago Regional Council for sharing the work and insights of their regional natural hazards prioritisation programme, which helped inform our regional risk-analysis process.
- Auckland Transport for sharing their *Climate Adaptation Framework and Action Plan*.

Policy series: PS26-13, plus author information.

Rārangi kaupapa Contents

For inside cover: Acknowledgements	1
Kōrero whakataki Executive summary.....	4
At a glance	5
Part 1 –Te horopaki Setting the scene	6
The challenge facing Waikato	6
Purpose of the framework	6
Scope	7
Contribution to strategic risk management.....	7
Implementing the council’s vision and strategic priorities	7
Our role in natural hazard risk management.....	8
New Zealand’s natural hazard management system.....	8
The new planning system and risk management	9
Legislative responsibilities and activities	9
Regional policy obligations	10
Our tools and systems for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation	10
Our work to date.....	11
Part 2 – Te anga Our Framework	12
What does success look like?.....	12
Pou 1: Integrated systems and collaboration	13
Introductory text	13
Key approaches	14
Embed multi-criteria decision-making across planning, investment and delivery	14
Increase integration between regional functions within the council	14
Strengthen external collaboration and co-ordination	16
Pou 2: Understanding current and future natural hazard risk	17
Introductory text	18
Key approaches	18
Grow council-wide natural hazard, climate risk and adaptation intelligence	18
Strengthen the evidence base and tools for decision-making	19
Analyse and evaluate regional natural hazard risks	22
Prepare natural hazard information for the new planning system	24
Pou 3 – Investment and decision making for risk reduction and adaptation.....	24
Introductory text	24
Key approaches	25
Integrate natural hazard and climate risks into long-term planning and performance	25
Develop sustainable and equitable funding arrangements for resilience investment.....	26
Use a consistent methodology to identify locations for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation investment.....	26

Assess resilience investments for long term risk reduction, full lifecycle value, avoided risk and wider benefits	26
Pou 4 – Managing risk for resilient people and places	27
Introductory text	27
Key approaches	28
Embed adaptation planning in the delivery of core functions	28
Working with partners on community adaptation projects	31
Strengthen adaptive, risk-based asset management	33
Communicate risk and insights for action and change	33
Enable community-led action	34
Use the current reforms to improve risk reduction and adaptation outcomes	34
How we will get there	35
Ngā āpitihanga Appendices	36
Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub	36
Climate Change Adaptation Guideline for the Waikato Region	36
Excerpts from part 3 of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement	36
List of tools and systems for natural hazard and climate risk reduction and adaptation	37
Climate change risk assessment and climate scenario analysis	38
Methodology for climate change risk assessments	39
Priority climate risks	39
Key concepts for adaptation planning	40
How is adaptation planning different to community adaptation planning?	41
Appendix 2 – Principles for working with partners on community adaptation planning	42
Appendix 3 – Considerations for reform	44
Glossary	45
Acronyms	45
References	46

Kōrero whakataki Executive summary

The *Waikato Resilience Framework* (WRF) provides Waikato Regional Council's organisation-wide approach to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.

It responds to the growing challenges posed by flooding, drought, coastal hazards, erosion, land instability, wildfire and other natural hazards, which are increasing pressure on communities, infrastructure, the environment, and the regional economy. As the Waikato region is also home to nationally significant transport, energy, and primary production assets, the consequences of natural hazard events often extend beyond the region itself.

The WRF exists to ensure the council takes a coordinated, consistent, and forward-looking approach to resilience. It supports the vision and implementation of *Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036*. Natural hazard risk is managed through many council functions, including catchment management, flood protection and drainage, policy and planning, science and monitoring, infrastructure management, emergency management, and community adaptation. As risks become more complex and interrelated, these functions need to be increasingly well co-ordinated.

The WRF provides a common direction across all our organisation to align and co-ordinate how we will address natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation in our core functions, enabling the council to make good decisions under uncertainty and deliver long-term benefit.

It focuses on the **risk reduction and adaptation** aspects of resilience to natural hazard risk, and approaches include:

- taking a whole-of-system and partnership-based approach to risk reduction and adaptation
- building a clear, shared understanding of current and future natural hazard risk and its impacts across the Waikato region – for communities, infrastructure, natural systems and land use
- strengthening the resilience of communities, places, infrastructure, catchments and natural systems
- prioritising investment in risk reduction and adaptation where it delivers the greatest long-term reduction in risk, while balancing affordability, levels of service and long-term financial sustainability.

The WRF is an inward-facing document designed primarily for council staff, managers, executives, and elected members. It provides guidance for strategic and operational planning, investment decisions, policy development, service delivery, and organisational priorities. It also signals to partners and stakeholders how the council intends to contribute to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation and where it will focus its efforts.

The WRF is organised in two main parts.

- **Part 1** sets the scene by explaining why an organisation-wide approach to natural hazard risk resilience is needed and how Waikato Regional Council contributes to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.
- **Part 2** sets out our approach, including the principles, steps, processes, systems and tools that will guide how we embed natural hazard risk management and adaptation in our decision making, services and work programmes.

Ultimately, the WRF aims to help achieve our council's vision. **Waikato: Empowered people shaping a healthy, prosperous place for generations to come.**

At a glance

At a glance - shaded content block down the side of the executive narrative summary: (develop content for designers when Framework finalised)

Part 1 –Te horopaki Setting the scene

The challenge facing Waikato

The Waikato region is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards, including flooding, drought, coastal inundation, erosion, land instability, wildfire and seismic and volcanic activity. Changes to our environment are increasing the frequency, intensity and complexity of many of these hazards, placing growing pressure on our communities, infrastructure, productive land, ecosystems, regional services and the economy.

This region's resilience to natural hazards is also of national importance. State Highway 1, the main trunk rail line, nationally important electricity transmission infrastructure, major primary production systems, key tourism destinations and significant ecosystems all pass through or depend on the region. Consequently, the effects of natural hazard events can extend beyond our local communities, disrupting national connectivity, supply chains, economic performance and environmental outcomes.

As natural hazard risks become increasingly complex and dynamic, the existing ways of how we work, plan and make decisions are inadequate for the responses that are necessary for the safety, prosperity and wellbeing of current and future generations.

Purpose of the framework

Waikato Regional Council plays a key role in reducing and adapting to natural hazard risk through a range of core regional functions¹, including catchment management, flood protection and drainage, regional transport, regional policy, spatial planning, science and monitoring, infrastructure planning, emergency management and the provision of information and advice on regional hazards to communities, stakeholders and partners.

The WRF provides a strategic, **organisation-wide approach to how** we will deliver these core regional functions in relation to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation. It sets a common direction for how the council understands and reduces risk, navigates uncertainty, embeds adaptation in our work, and works with others to reduce risk and adapt across the region. It also identifies how to enable this approach and to respond to legislative reform, emerging risk information and evolving regional priorities.

The WRF will:

- guide the council's forward work programme by setting out the approaches, processes, systems and tools to reduce and adapt to natural hazard risk, and what change is necessary to embed and implement these
- help the council to develop organisation-wide measures to track how the council is reducing and adapting to natural hazard risk across its core functions
- support the Executive Leadership Team and councillors to make informed decisions on priorities, investment, resourcing and trade-offs across the organisation over the short, medium and long term.

The WRF is an inward facing document, intended to support council staff and decision makers.

¹ See the Groups of Activities in [2024-2034 Long Term Plan](#) | [2024-2034 Te Mahere Roa](#)

However, it also provides a clear signal to partners and stakeholders about how we will contribute to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation. Resilience to natural hazard risk is a shared responsibility across all of society, and our contribution will be more effective when it is part of coordinated action across local government, central government, iwi, lifeline utilities, industry and Waikato communities.

The WRF is a non-statutory document that provides the council with an organisation-wide approach for how we will deliver our natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation activities across the region. While it does not create new statutory obligations, it helps align and coordinate how we deliver our legislative responsibilities, statutory plans, and wider programmes of work.

Scope

The WRF focuses on the **risk reduction and adaptation** aspects of natural hazard resilience for **communities and land use**. Emergency readiness, response, and recovery are closely related but are outside the scope of the WRF.

The WRF is not focused on ecological or environmental resilience, which is addressed through the *Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy* and other mechanisms. However, natural hazard resilience for communities and land use cannot be addressed in isolation. Our planning and responses must be integrated with transition planning, environmental outcomes, sustainability principles and broader planning, investment and decision-making processes.

Contribution to strategic risk management

The WRF is consistent with and helps inform the *Waikato Regional Council Risk Management Framework*², which is underpinned by the *ISO 31000:2018 Risk management — Guidelines*. The WRF and its implementation will support the treatment of a number of the council's strategic and organisational risks. Strategic risks the WRF addresses include relationships, climate change, information, data and technology, governance and reform transition, financial sustainability, and giving effect to Treaty of Waitangi Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

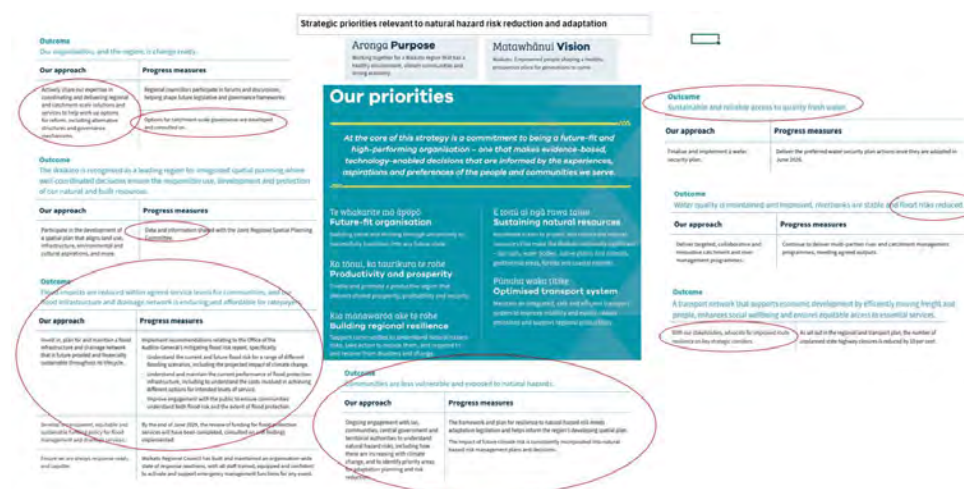
Implementing the council's vision and strategic priorities

Highlight: Matawhānui | Vision: Waikato: Empowered people shaping a healthy, prosperous place for generations to come.

Successive strategic directions have reflected our longstanding responsibilities for resilience to natural hazard risk. The WRF supports the vision and implementation of *Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036*, where all five strategic priorities recognise the council's role in resilience to natural hazards.

Design note: visual that highlights key SD connections as highlighted below:

² Waikato Regional Council Risk Management Framework ([Doc ID 3375577](#))



Our role in natural hazard risk management

New Zealand's natural hazard management system

Our natural hazard management activities exist within New Zealand’s natural hazard management system, which provides the legislative, policy, scientific and operational settings for our work. The following diagram shows the key features of New Zealand’s natural hazard management system.

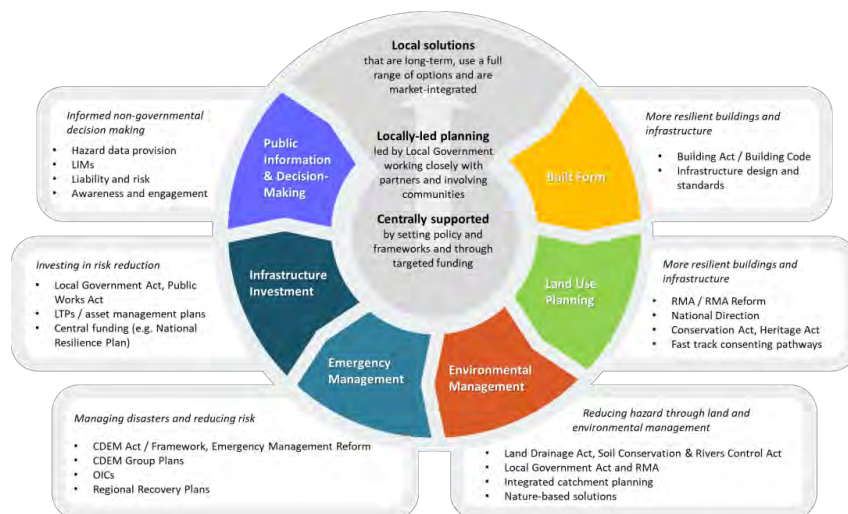


Diagram 1: Key features of New Zealand's natural hazard management system.³

³ Ministry for the Environment, 2026. Implementing the National Policy Statement on Natural Hazards [presentation to the Te Uru Kahika Regional Hazards and Risk Management Special Interest Group], 23 April.

The new planning system and risk management

Many of the current reforms are designed to address how this system operates, particularly in the context of climate-related risks. The following diagram shows how the new planning system fits within risk management processes.

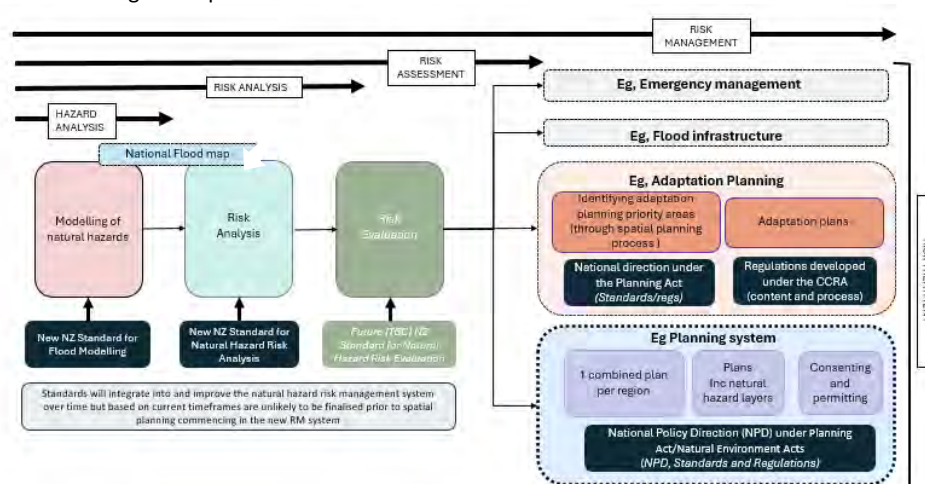


Diagram 2: How the new planning system fits within risk management processes.⁴

Legislative responsibilities and activities

Waikato Regional Council has natural hazard risk management responsibilities mandated, enabled and defined primarily through the following legislation and regional policy:

- Resource Management Act 1991
- Local Government Act 2002
- Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941, and its ownership and management of flood protection and drainage schemes
- Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002
- Waikato Regional Policy Statement⁵ which requires us to take a guiding and collaborative role in the for natural hazard, resilience and adaptation activities in the Waikato.

While 'regional hazards and emergency management' is a dedicated long term plan (LTP) 'group of activities', many of the council's activities contribute to natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation, even where this is not their primary focus. These include:

- river and catchment management, land drainage and flood infrastructure programmes
- policy development, spatial and adaptation planning and implementation
- regulatory processes and education
- community and primary industry advocacy and engagement
- regional land transport planning and policy
- biodiversity and biosecurity implementation
- water management and water security collaboration
- environmental monitoring, modelling and spatial analysis
- weather data and early warning systems

⁴ Ministry for the Environment, 2026. *Implementing the National Policy Statement on Natural Hazards* [presentation to the Te Uru Kahika Regional Hazards and Risk Management Special Interest Group], 23 April.

⁵ Waikato Regional Council, n.d. *Waikato Regional Policy Statement: Part 3 – topics*. Hamilton: Waikato Regional Council. <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/RPS-Part-3-Topics.pdf>

- emergency preparedness and natural hazard advice
- coastal, water and soil science advice and research programmes.

Shaded box: A wide range of our regional strategies, frameworks and plans contribute to reducing and adapting to natural risk, including:

- strategies such as
 - Waikato Regional Council's *Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036, Regional Water Security Strategy* and multi-stakeholder implementation plan, *Infrastructure Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, and Regional Energy Strategy*
- policy and plans such as
 - *Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan, Regional Asset Management Plan, Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2054, Regional Catchment Management Framework, and Waikato Regional Plan*⁶.

Regional policy obligations

The [Waikato Regional Policy Statement](#) is a fundamental document for our natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation activities. It sets out how the council must work in relation to natural hazards and risk.

Part 3 of *Waikato Regional Policy Statement* contains key objectives, policies and methods in relation to hazards and risk.⁷

HAZ-M1 contains the region's risk management framework and requires regional and district plans to incorporate a risk-based approach into the management of subdivision, use and development in relation to natural hazards. It requires that natural hazard risks do not exceed **acceptable levels** and **intolerable risk** is reduced to **tolerable or acceptable levels**.

Under **HAZ-M5**, Waikato Regional Council **must** collaborate widely to collect and analyse natural hazard risk information, raise public awareness of natural hazards and associated risks, store and share natural hazard risk information for the region, and advocate for proactive, best-practice natural hazard identification and risk management, including the use of mātauranga Māori and strategic approaches to development and redevelopment that minimise increased or residual risk.

An excerpt of these provisions can be found in Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub.

Our tools and systems for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation

We use a range of tools and systems to reduce and adapt to natural hazard risk.

Governance systems and processes for risk management and to support planning, decision making and investment prioritisation

Infrastructure and catchment management to support the management of risks via nature-based solutions, natural systems and fit-for-purpose infrastructure interventions.

⁶ Under the new planning system, existing regional policy statements, regional plans, and coastal planning provisions will be consolidated into a single regional combined plan.

⁷ Waikato Regional Council, n.d. *Waikato Regional Policy Statement: Part 3 – topics*. Hamilton: Waikato Regional Council. <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/RPS-Part-3-Topics.pdf>

Planning and regulatory systems, including spatial and adaptation planning, planning provision and technical input.

Monitoring, science and modelling to support evidence-based decision making based on robust science and data.

Community resilience and preparedness to support communities at both property and catchment scale in managing risk via response planning (CDEM), hazard risk communication and education.

More detail on these can be found in Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub.

Our work to date

Our responsibilities for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation have been delivered over decades, often as part of ongoing work and multi-year programmes. A selection of initiatives and projects that have been achieved over the past 10 years or so are summarised below.

These projects also demonstrate the changing focus of the council's work programmes and the increasing demands and complexity as we respond to new drivers, both legislative and climatic.

Table 1: Summary timeline of our work on natural hazard reduction and adaptation over the past ~10 years (excludes site specific physical works).

Year	Projects
2015-2019	- Launched key public-facing hazard information tools, including the Waikato Coastal Inundation Tool and Waikato Regional Hazards Portal. - Published foundational climate change direction-setting and impact assessment work.
2020-2024	Strengthened our natural hazard and climate resilience work: - new hazard layers in the Waikato Regional Hazards Portal - published new or updated climate and water security strategies - improved hazard information tools - expanded telemetry sites - contributed to adaptation planning - embedded climate change into infrastructure, catchment and sediment-erosion management work.
2025 +	Since 2025, we have significantly expanded our natural hazard and climate resilience work: - new regional hazard and risk reports and community risk assessments, including the development of regional adaptation guidance - organisational climate risk assessment - updated flood and coastal inundation modelling and data, - improved forecasting and decision-support tools - developed a water security strategy and a regional energy strategy - stronger use of modelling, AI and infrastructure decision-making frameworks to support long-term resilience.

Part 2 – Te anga Our Framework

The WRF is organised around four pou, or pillars, that set out how the council will approach natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation.

- Pou 1: Integrated systems and collaboration.
- Pou 2: Understanding current and future natural hazard risk.
- Pou 3: Investment and decision making for risk reduction and adaptation.
- Pou 4: Managing risk for resilient people and places.

Design note: Create diagram representing the four pou

Each pou outlines the steps, systems, processes and principles we will use. And all pou are interconnected. The framework should therefore be considered and applied as a whole, rather than as a collection of separate components.

What does success look like?

Short term, we'll know we are making progress as an organisation when we:

- collaborate and connect across the council and the wider system to manage and adapt to natural hazard risk
- have the expertise, and partner with others, to translate outputs into trusted information, insights and advice
- invest in the data, science, models, tools and technology that enable our risk management and adaptation work
- use and integrate the full range of tools available to us to manage and adapt to natural hazard risk
- incorporate intergenerational, system-wide and te ao Māori perspectives and long-term public value into our decision-making processes.

Long term, we'll know we are successful when the following outcomes are achieved for the region.

- Iwi and communities have the information, tools and support they need to make informed decisions that reduce current and future natural hazard risks.
- People and nature adapt and thrive together in the Waikato region.
- Prioritised investment in risk management and adaptation reduces long-term costs and enables a healthy environment, vibrant communities and strong economy for current and future generations.
- Planning and investment decisions support adaptive responses and reduce community vulnerability and risk.

Pou 1: Integrated systems and collaboration

Take a whole-of-system and partnership-based approach.

Side bar/summary of approaches and specific actions: Pou 1 at a glance

Key approaches (steps, systems, processes)

Embed multi-criteria decision-making across planning, investment and delivery.

Increase integration between regional functions within the council.

- Strengthen co-ordination and cross-discipline collaboration
- Increase integration between spatial/growth planning and infrastructure and catchment planning
- Implement the Infrastructure Strategy to better support river and catchment assets
- Evolve drainage services to support water management
- Transition to whole-of-catchment performance assessments
- Increase the scale and uptake of nature-based solutions

Strengthen external collaboration and coordination

- Focus external collaboration effort where it can have the greatest impact on regional resilience outcomes
- Strengthen our understanding and application of te ao Māori in a risk reduction and adaptation setting
- Improve strategic alignment and planning between CDEM and council

Introductory text

Natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation depend on systems that work together. Pou 1 focuses on strengthening integration across the council's functions, tools, decisions and partnerships so that risk is managed in a coordinated, consistent and enduring way.

Climate change is increasing the frequency, severity and complexity of many hazards, with impacts felt across catchments, communities, ecosystems and infrastructure networks. Responding effectively requires a whole-of-system approach that connects governance, planning, investment, science, infrastructure, catchment management, regulatory functions and community action. It also requires strong collaboration with iwi, territorial authorities, central government, lifeline utilities, communities and other partners.

By working across boundaries and using the full range of available tools, the council can make better decisions, reduce duplication, manage trade-offs and support long-term resilience across the Waikato region.

Some kind of highlight(important point) **Ki uta ki tai – from the mountains to the sea** recognises the interconnectedness of land, water, people, ecosystems and infrastructure across the whole catchment. This pou promotes a **ki uta ki tai** approach, supporting holistic and integrated catchment-wide decision-making that considers cumulative effects, cross-boundary impacts and long-term resilience.

Graphic if space: showing water connection from the mountains to the sea (see Rick for example from the regional flood model).

New page here

Key approaches

Embed multi-criteria decision-making across planning, investment and delivery

To recognise the systemic and compounding nature of natural hazard risk, a systems-based approach to decision making is essential. Community resilience, natural-system resilience, sustainability, adaptation and emissions reduction are mutually dependent outcomes.

A decision that protects people or land but degrades natural systems may increase long-term risk. Similarly, a decision that reduces emissions but places infrastructure in hazard-prone locations may create maladaptation. Our decisions must consider these interdependencies and seek to balance outcomes across environmental, social, economic, and cultural systems. And deliver benefits without shifting risk, cost, or consequences to other communities, places or future generations.

To support enduring outcomes, we will assess options across multiple dimensions, including:

- reducing risk to people, places, infrastructure and services
- the resilience of rivers, wetlands, floodplains, soils, coastal systems and biodiversity
- cultural values, mātauranga Māori and iwi/hapū aspirations
- water quality, water availability and catchment health
- emissions reduction and transition impacts
- lifecycle costs, avoided costs and long-term affordability
- intergenerational equity and maintaining future adaptation choices
- the risk of maladaptation and the transfer of risk to other places, communities or future generations.

Side bar: Opportunity in reform

New Zealand's resource management reforms present an important opportunity to strengthen natural hazard risk management through a more integrated, system-wide approach. This extends beyond protecting communities to enhancing the resilience of natural systems as well. The proposed Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill both give greater prominence to climate change and natural hazards. In particular, the Natural Environment Bill incorporates climate change and natural hazards into environmental limits, requiring consideration of how natural systems will respond to future climate-related pressures and disturbances. Together, these reforms support a more holistic approach to resilience, recognising the interdependence of communities, infrastructure and the natural environment when responding to current and future hazards.

Increase integration between regional functions within the council

Managing natural hazard risk effectively requires us to use the full range of our regional functions, powers, assets and partnerships in a coordinated way. Operating as an integrated system helps planning and decisions account for multiple hazard types, infrastructure limitations, catchment processes, sediment and flood dynamics, nature-based interventions, growth planning, and upstream/downstream interactions. It also improves collaboration and reduces duplication of effort.

Strengthen co-ordination and cross-discipline collaboration

Effectively managing natural hazard risk and adaptation requires close integration across the council's natural hazards, climate change, catchment management, infrastructure, environmental management and planning functions.

While teams and sections already work closely together across the council on a range of projects and initiatives, a key focus of the WRF is to strengthen co-ordination and cross-discipline collaboration. The council's Resilience and Adaptation Advisory Group is one mechanism to help achieve this.

Increase integration between spatial/growth planning and infrastructure and catchment planning

Opportunities for closer integration include strengthening the relationship between spatial and growth planning, and infrastructure and catchment planning. This is because the performance and limitations of infrastructure and catchment management activities can influence land use opportunities and constraints.

Implement the Infrastructure Strategy to better support river and catchment assets

Although river and catchment management assets are identified as being within the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy, the strategy provides limited guidance on their long-term management. We need to better support the planning, maintenance and renewal of river and catchment management assets, including rock groynes, weirs, erosion control structures and green infrastructure such as fencing and planting. This will include making better use of existing IT systems to improve catchment asset information, lifecycle management and investment decision-making.

Evolve drainage services to support water management

Drought is an increasing climate risk, but our drainage services are primarily focused on managing excess water. Transitioning from a drainage-focused approach to integrated water management will enable a more balanced and resilient response to flooding, drought, water security and future water storage needs.

Transition to whole-of-catchment performance assessments

Current assessments focus primarily on the performance of flood protection infrastructure. However, this infrastructure operates within a broader flood risk management system that includes river and catchment management activities, nature-based solutions, and emergency management arrangements, for example, stopbank breach/overtopping evacuation plans.

By evaluating the performance and resilience of components within an entire catchment system, we'll also consider residual risk, the effectiveness of complementary risk reduction measures, and areas where formal flood protection infrastructure are not in place. This approach will enable the assessment of triggers and thresholds for a catchment (see Pou 4). There is also an opportunity to incorporate other non-hazard thresholds, such as water quality and biodiversity.

A whole-of-catchment approach will support better decision making by accounting for catchment processes, sediment and flood dynamics, nature-based interventions, growth and land use planning, and upstream and downstream interactions.

Increase the scale and uptake of nature-based solutions

These solutions offer a multi-faceted opportunity to reduce natural hazard risk across the Waikato region's landscapes, while advancing the restoration and protection of catchment systems.

Solutions such as wetland restoration, river naturalisation, floodplain reconnection, riparian planting, detention systems, constructed wetlands, upstream reforestation, animal pest control and pole planting on hill country can complement, and in some cases replace, traditional hard infrastructure solutions. They do this by:

- increasing infiltration and storage capacity across rural headwaters (for example, the Waipā hill country) and lowland flood-prone areas (for example, Whangamarino Wetland)

- attenuating peak flows, which slows and reduces runoff
- stabilising land and controlling sediment and erosion impacts on lower river systems.
- reducing pressure on engineered infrastructure
- mitigating downstream flood risks
- providing water retention in drought
- delivering shade in heat.

Nature-based solutions can also deliver a wide-range of co-benefits, including cultural, water quality, climate adaptation, biodiversity, amenity, recreation, economic, and water security outcomes. These co-benefits reinforce the value of nature-based solutions as integrated responses to natural hazard risk. They not only reduce exposure and vulnerability to hazards, but enhance community wellbeing, biodiversity and the long-term health of our waterways.

Recognising their ability to address multiple risks and deliver multiple outcomes, increasing the scale and uptake of nature-based solutions is a key approach of the WRF. The council's *Regional Catchment Management Framework* provides the vehicle to achieve this.

Highlight: *"Hard infrastructure might sit idle for years because it's designed for rare events. Nature-based solutions can work every day."*

- Staff reflection

Strengthen external collaboration and co-ordination

Responsibility for managing natural hazard risks is distributed across multiple organisations and legislative frameworks, with roles varying depending on the hazard and what is exposed.⁸ As a result, achieving resilience requires strong partnerships, shared understanding, and coordinated action across local, regional and national agencies, iwi, communities, infrastructure providers and other sectors. Irrespective of broader national reforms simplifying the regulatory landscape, collaboration remains one of the most important tools for achieving integrated, region-wide resilience. Nationally, there is much to gain by working collaboratively with our colleagues across local government, the regional sector and central government, while joint governance and partnership arrangements with iwi provide an important mechanism for bringing together different knowledge systems, values and perspectives.

Focus external collaboration effort where it can have the greatest impact on regional resilience outcomes

Reducing natural hazard risk requires coordinated action and collaboration across many organisations and decision makers – locally, regionally and nationally. Purposeful co-ordination is necessary to ensure the right people across the council are working where we can have the greatest impact on risk reduction and adaptation outcomes. Clear definition of where Waikato Regional Council will lead, influence or align with territorial authorities, iwi and hapū, CDEM, lifeline utilities, central government and sector groups will support a focused and prioritised approach to external collaboration.

⁸ The complexity of our operating environment was recently recognised in a review of the state of New Zealand's regulatory systems: Ministry for Regulation, 2026. *The state of New Zealand's regulatory systems*. Wellington: Ministry for Regulation. <https://www.regulation.govt.nz/assets/Publication-Documents/The-state-of-New-Zealands-regulatory-systems.pdf>

Strengthen our understanding and application of te ao Māori in a risk reduction and adaptation setting

Te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori provide a systems-based understanding of the world, recognising people, whenua, wai, ecosystems, infrastructure and future generations as interconnected and interdependent parts of a wider living system.

Combining these perspectives with scientific, technical and local knowledge, and integrating te ao Māori into our risk reduction and adaptation activities, supports integrated and holistic decision-making and is essential for developing solutions that are sustainable, place-based, and resilient over the long term. Iwi bring valuable mātauranga Māori, deep connections to whenua and wai, and an intergenerational perspective that considers outcomes over 100 years or more. By strengthening our understanding of te ao Māori and our engagement with iwi, we can better address complex environmental challenges, make better informed decisions, and give effect to Te Mana o te Wai, ensuring the health and wellbeing of our water bodies, communities, and future generations.

Improve strategic alignment and planning between CDEM and council

Risk reduction, emergency management and climate adaptation are closely connected, yet strategic planning between Waikato Regional Council and CDEM can be better aligned and occur earlier in the planning process. A key action is to strengthen coordination between the council and CDEM by aligning strategic planning cycles and developing a shared work programme across risk reduction, readiness, response, recovery, flood risk management and adaptation planning.

Earlier and more integrated planning will reduce duplication, improve identification of interdependencies, and strengthen community resilience. It will result in a more strategic partnership with shared priorities, clear roles and coordinated delivery.

Pou 2: Understanding current and future natural hazard risk

Build a clear, shared understanding of current and future natural hazard risk and its impacts across the Waikato region.

Side bar/summary of approaches and specific actions: Pou 2 at a glance

Key approaches (steps, systems, processes)

Grow council-wide natural hazard, climate risk and adaptation intelligence.

- Build capability to understand risk and adaptation planning
- Mature the organisational climate change risk assessment
- Use climate scenario analysis as a tool

Strengthen the evidence base and tools for decision making.

- Co-ordinate resilience data improvement
- Enable fit for purpose information technology to support core functions and innovation
- Embed catchment-scale modelling insights in council-wide decision-making

Analyse and evaluate regional natural hazard risks

- Carry out spatial assessments of exposure and risk
- Apply our regional risk-based analysis process for prioritisation
- Know our priority climate risks and align with national priority risks

Prepare natural hazard information for the new planning system

Introductory text

Understanding current and future natural hazard risk is the foundation for effective risk reduction and adaptation. Pou 2 focuses on strengthening the council's evidence base, tools, capability and processes so we can identify changing hazards, understand exposure and vulnerability, and translate complex information into clear insights for decision making.

Climate change is reshaping the risks facing the Waikato region, increasing uncertainty and challenging past assumptions about land use, infrastructure, communities and natural systems. Historical records remain important, but they are no longer sufficient on their own.

Data, technology, modelling, monitoring systems and digital tools are critical enablers, helping us bring together multiple knowledge sources, detect change, test scenarios and make information accessible. By combining these with mātauranga Māori, local knowledge and expert judgement, the council can better understand where risks are emerging, how they may change over time, and where action should be prioritised.

Key approaches

Grow council-wide natural hazard, climate risk and adaptation intelligence

Resilience to natural hazard risk starts with strengthening our ability to understand, anticipate and respond to a changing risk environment. We must also understand how risks interact and cascade across systems and consider the full range of climate and natural hazards affecting the region.

Looking beyond individual assets, activities and hazards helps us identify where risks are connected, where actions can deliver multiple benefits, and where coordinated intervention has opportunity to mitigate multiple risks.

Build capability to understand risk and adaptation planning

As natural hazard risks become increasingly complex and interconnected, the council needs the expertise, tools and systems to identify emerging risks, understand their implications, and make informed decisions in the face of uncertainty. A key enabler of the WRF is building the organisational capability needed for action, with an immediate focus on increasing climate risk and adaptation planning capability across relevant council functions. With the growing need for this expertise across multiple sectors, we will need deliberate capability, workforce and partnership planning.

Mature the organisational climate change risk assessment

This risk assessment is a key tool for understanding climate related risks to the council's people and assets and to the services we provide to the region. Establishing this process was a key first step in building organisational risk intelligence, but deliberate effort is required to ensure it continues and matures as an effective tool for managing current and future climate risks.

Use climate scenario analysis as a tool

Climate scenario analysis complements climate change risk assessments by testing how risks, opportunities and decisions may change under different plausible futures. Climate scenario analysis is most valuable when used as a tool for exploring uncertainty, not trying to eliminate it. Climate scenarios help us ask, "what if?" and to prepare for a range of outcomes – even while the exact future remains unknown.

Side note: A range of agencies recognise climate risk as a crucial governance issue, including the New Zealand Institute of Directors⁹, the External Reporting Board (XRB)¹⁰ and the New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency¹¹. To support good decision-making by councils, *Local Government Sector Climate Scenarios* have been developed and are hosted by New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency. **These scenarios present science-based, plausible but challenging futures that can be used as a practical tool to help local government navigate uncertainty, stress-test decisions, and build long-term resilience.**

We'll use climate scenario analysis, together with our organisational climate change risk assessment, as critical organisational tools to understand our specific climate related risks and opportunities and test whether existing plans and proposed decisions are resilient under different futures.

Highlight/breakout/bubble:

In practice:

- **Risk assessment = identify, evaluate and prioritise the risks.**
- **Scenario analysis = test whether today's plans remain effective under different futures.**
- **Dynamic adaptive planning pathways (DAPP) = decide what to do and when as those futures unfold.**

Learn more about these in Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub.

Strengthen the evidence base and tools for decision-making

Good decision-making depends on good information – and on the tools to analyse, interpret and communicate it clearly. These tools help us identify changing hazards, understand exposure and vulnerability, test future scenarios, and make informed decisions about where and how to invest in resilience.

Our evidence base must also be broad enough to support a multi-hazard understanding of risk. It cannot be limited to visible climate impacts such as floods, storms and other extreme weather events. We also need to understand and plan for:

- **geologic hazards**, including earthquakes, landslides and volcanic activity
- **interactions between geology, hydrology and climate-driven hazards**, including vertical land movement, peat subsidence, sea level rise and saline intrusion into groundwater
- **climate-exacerbated hazards**, such as wildfire, drought, higher temperatures and fewer frosts
- **rapid shifts between extreme conditions**, such as prolonged drought followed by intense rainfall and flooding
- **cascading and compounding risks**, where one hazard or impact can trigger, intensify or worsen another.

Co-ordinate resilience data improvement

The council is already improving its data management and governance through valuable initiatives and projects delivered through our *Enterprise Data Strategy* and the *Data Information Governance Group*.

⁹ Institute of Directors New Zealand, n.d. *Chapter Zero New Zealand*. <https://www.iod.org.nz/chapter-zero-new-zealand> [Accessed 12 August 2026].

¹⁰ External Reporting Board, 2022. *Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standard 1: Climate-related disclosures (NZ CS 1)*. Wellington: External Reporting Board. <https://www.xrb.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4770/>

¹¹ Local Government Funding Agency, 2025. *Local government sector climate scenarios: guidance document*. Wellington: Local Government Funding Agency. <https://www.lgfa.co.nz/sustainability/sustainability-lgfa/local-government-sector-scenarios>

However, further collaboration and co-ordination is required on the specific domain of resilience data. In recent years, there has been a vast increase in the pace of development of resilience data internationally, nationally and regionally. Taking a strategic, co-ordinated organisation-wide approach to resilience data requires focused effort.

Resilience data includes natural hazard data, telemetry, climate projections, asset/element data (for example, water conveyance asset attributes, floor levels for building footprints, critical infrastructure, bridge heights, infrastructure monitoring) and satellite imagery. It is fundamental to the delivery of our core services.

To ensure we can meet the current and future needs of our core functions, we must co-ordinate and collaborate on resilience data across **the council**, and **regionally, nationally and internationally**, to understand:

- what data already exists and whether it is accessible and fit for purpose
- where critical information gaps exist and what data will be required to understand emerging and future risks
- what new data is being developed, the purposes it will be suitable for, and when it will become available
- who is the organisational 'owner and manager' of different data
- what key data is needed to undertake effective natural hazard and climate change risk assessments
- where investment in data collection, research, and modelling should be prioritised
- the capability, capacity and specialist expertise required to manage data and modelling, and to translate modelling outputs into decision-ready insights.

Not all data necessary for regional decision making needs to be collected or managed by the council. Central government agencies, territorial authorities, research institutes, utilities, emergency management agencies, insurers and other sector partners are often better placed to develop, manage or improve certain datasets. With multiple institutions working on new resilience datasets, knowing what data is available or planned, and being able to influence this, is a growing strategic need if the council wishes to optimise the data it chooses to invest in.

Enable fit for purpose information technology to support core functions and innovation

Our investments in information technology infrastructure and services, geospatial systems, modelling and analytical tools enable many of our core functions.

Continued investment in digital technologies, data systems and analytical tools will help us meet future information needs and support effective decision-making across the organisation.

Understanding current and future organisational data, modelling and technology requirements is a critical first step in planning the investments needed to support effective risk management and informed decision-making.

Embed catchment-scale modelling insights in council-wide decision-making

Breakout or different treatment:

Monitoring provides information on current and historic conditions, trends, and impacts, helping us understand how systems are changing and validating predictive models. Our telemetry sites provide real-time information to support flood forecasting, emergency response and early warning systems, while also supplying essential data for regional flood modelling and national forecasting systems such as those used by MetService.

Modelling provides insights into **current** hazards and risks and how they may change over time by combining historic data, current observations, and future projections to support informed decision-making.

content

Advances in hydraulic, hydrological and related modelling are significantly improving our understanding of Waikato catchment systems.

Our investment in water resource modelling through the *2024-34 Long Term Plan* represents a major step forward in strengthening the region's natural hazard evidence base and decision-making capability. By combining real data about rainfall, land surfaces, soils and water flow, the model simulates how water moves through the landscape under a range of conditions, including climate change scenarios. The model is now a major regional asset with benefits that can be realised beyond flood management. It enables better planning, stronger adaptation pathways, clearer investment cases and improved operational decisions.

Catchment-scale water resource modelling can support a wide range of planning, risk management, and decision-making activities, including:

- how different interventions, such as land use change and nature-based solutions, can increase or reduce the extent of flooding
- performance assessments of our flood schemes, including the limitations of the infrastructure
- identifying current and future locations suitable for potential wetland restoration and refugia for native species
- improving the regional flood hazard layer of our Regional Hazards Portal
- providing more comprehensive flood information on Land Information Memoranda (LIM)
- informing developers and consultants of flood risks affecting individual land parcels and development proposals
- supporting land use planning, zoning decisions, and resource consenting processes
- informing implementation of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement
- identifying current and future land use constraints and opportunities for the regional spatial plan
- the identification of priority locations for adaptation planning by spatial plan committees and councils as part of the process of creating regional spatial plans under the Planning Act, once it is in force
- assessing exposure and flood risk across communities, catchments and the wider region
- strengthening community response planning, including evacuation protocols
- improving flood forecasting before and during weather events
- identifying where further monitoring and/or research is needed.

A key focus of the WRF is ensuring the model:

- supports decision-making across the council by providing consistent, evidence-based insights
- informs planning, investment, and risk management activities across relevant functions
- serves as an enduring decision-support tool for natural hazard and climate resilience initiatives
- supports collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and other users by providing information that can inform their own planning and decision-making.

We will continue to refine and enhance the model, while working with communities to improve its accuracy and ensure it reflects local knowledge and experience.

Analyse and evaluate regional natural hazard risks

The risk profile of a particular location, community or asset can change over time as development increases, land use changes, demographics shift or hazard intensity increases. Assumptions may also exist around the extent of hazard risk management in place and its suitability in a changing climate.

To support the delivery of our core functions, we need a clear understanding of:

- current and future hazard exposure and risk across the region
- the vulnerability of particular locations, communities or assets, including the extent and limitations of flood defence infrastructure
- residual risk and how it may change over time
- how the suitability of existing hazard risk management approaches may change
- how risk will change if land use, demography or the economy changes
- where adaptation planning, risk reduction activities or development should be prioritised
- how different tools, such as infrastructure, early warning systems, community preparedness and land-use planning, work together to support resilience in specific locations.

To achieve this, we need to use **multiple sources of knowledge and information** and take a **multi-hazard approach**.

Understanding risk requires more than a single hazard dataset, model or assessment. It is built by bringing together qualitative and quantitative information that provides different perspectives on how hazards may interact and affect the region now and in the future.

High-quality, location-specific quantitative data will not always be available for every hazard, asset, community or value at risk. Where gaps exist, informed expert judgement, evidence-based assumptions and consistent assessment approaches are essential. In many cases, we already know enough to act; waiting for certainty may mean losing the opportunity to reduce risk.

Scientific research, environmental monitoring, hazard and climate modelling, mātauranga Māori, local knowledge, community experience, historic event observations and technical expertise all contribute to a stronger, more rounded understanding of risk.

Together, these sources help the council identify priority risks, compare locations consistently, and make better decisions about where and how to invest in resilience. The following approaches support the council to analyse and evaluate natural hazard risk.

Carry out spatial assessments of exposure and risk

A spatial understanding of the region's exposure to natural hazards is a key foundation for prioritisation and decision making. A key tool for this is an exposure assessment, which assesses the exposure of elements such as roads, people, buildings, critical infrastructure and marae to in-scope natural hazards, both now and in the future with climate change. An exposure assessment differs from a risk assessment, as it does not consider vulnerability of the exposed elements.

With the region-wide water resource model and coastal inundation modelling now available, we are in a good position to progress our first regional exposure assessment. An exposure assessment can:

- provide region-wide exposure analysis to quantify spatially the exposure of elements to particular hazards now and in the future with climate change
- assist with identifying priority locations for adaptation planning in regional spatial plans

- help inform evidence-based prioritisation of the council and territorial authority investment of resources in hazard management and adaptation, including where a detailed risk assessment may be required.

As more detail becomes available on the planning system reforms, we will seek to confirm future roles and responsibilities for natural hazard risk assessment.

Apply our regional risk-based analysis process for prioritisation

A key step in our natural hazard risk management approach is to consistently understand and analyse natural hazard risk across the region.

To support this analysis, we will apply our *Regional Risk-based Analysis Process for Prioritisation* (RRAPP, see pou 4 for further detail on how this informs investment decisions). The process supports investment decision making by combining an exposure assessment with practical expert-led judgement about urgency and consequence to identify, compare and rate locations across the region.

Know our priority climate risks and align with national priority risks

Climate risk assessments are not just about identifying hazards and vulnerabilities. They are a tool for prioritising action, directing resources, and supporting adaptation planning through a structured and evidence-based understanding of risk. They help inform decisions about where, when and how to intervene to reduce risk and build resilience.

Individually, the approaches set out in this pou improve our understanding of climate risks. However, a critical step is to bring this knowledge together in a clear set of priority climate risks for the council that inform planning and decision making (see also pou 3). One possible framework to help prioritise climate risks for adaptation investment and action is as follows. For more information on risk severity and policy readiness, referenced in the diagram, please refer to the priority climate risks section of Appendix 1 – Knowledge Hub.



Diagram X: Approach to support risk prioritisation¹²

We also need to align with the evidence-based national climate risk priorities in New Zealand's National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA). The second NCCRA was released in May 2026 by the Climate Change Commission. It identifies the country's 10 priority risks where focused and coordinated action can make the biggest difference for people, places and ways of life. These risks are already seriously affecting people, or will soon, and will take time to prepare for; and they are risks where acting soon can have the biggest influence on many other risks.

¹² Climate Change Commission, 2025. Webinar: National Climate Change Risk Assessment call for evidence – academics and researchers [video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jShoXA9pp68> [accessed 11 April 2025].

We must understand how these NCCRA priority risks translate to our local context and ensure they are reflected in the council's risk management, planning and decision-making processes. To do so will help inform our choices and align effort regionally and nationally.

Prepare natural hazard information for the new planning system

The planning system reforms are a major opportunity to shape where and how growth occurs. Managing natural hazard risk better is one driver for the reforms and is intended to deliver reduced future exposure, stronger land-use decisions and better alignment between planning, infrastructure and adaptation.

A key step for reform readiness is to ensure that appropriate natural hazard information is built into spatial choices from the start. At present there is a varying natural hazard data held and used by territorial authorities across the region. Not enough is currently known as to what information the new planning system will require, but it is flagged as a key piece of work that will likely require focus, effort and co-ordination.

Pou 3 – Investment and decision making for risk reduction and adaptation

Prioritise investment in risk reduction and adaptation where it delivers the greatest long-term reduction in risk, while balancing affordability, levels of service and long-term financial sustainability.

Side bar/summary of approaches and specific actions: Pou 3 at a glance

Key approaches (steps, systems, processes)

Integrate natural hazard and climate risks into long-term planning and performance.

Develop sustainable and equitable funding arrangements for resilience investment.

Use a consistent methodology to identify locations for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation investment.

Assess resilience investments for full lifecycle value, avoided risk and wider benefits.

Introductory text

Natural hazards and climate change are reshaping the risks faced by communities, infrastructure, the environment and regional economy. Managing these challenges requires decisions that look beyond immediate needs and consider the long-term consequences, costs and opportunities associated with risk reduction and adaptation.

Finance is both an enabler and a constraint. It enables the council to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and invest in projects that improve community wellbeing by providing the funding, planning and financial insights needed to support informed decision-making and long-term outcomes. At the same time, the council must operate within limits of affordability, available funding, and long-term financial sustainability. This requires balancing competing priorities and making choices about where resources can deliver the greatest benefit.

Pou 3 provides approaches for making resilient, evidence-based decisions. It recognises finance as both an enabler and a constraint, while supporting the integration of natural hazard and climate risks into long-term planning, sustainable and equitable funding arrangements, targeted investment in resilience, and assessment of projects based on their full lifecycle value. Together, they support proactive, financially responsible actions that deliver enduring risk reduction and adaptation outcomes for current and future generations.

Side bar/breakout

Head: **Spending to save**

Prioritising investment in proactive risk reduction and adaptation makes economic and social sense, even though the benefits may be long term and in the form of avoided costs.

Recent analysis of New Zealand's public natural-hazard spending found that since 2010, around **97 per cent** of central government spending has gone to response and recovery, compared with only **3 per cent** on risk reduction and resilience – a ratio of roughly **32:1**. The common international benchmark is that **\$1 invested in risk reduction can save about \$4 in response and recovery spending**.¹³

Key approaches

Integrate natural hazard and climate risks into long-term planning and performance

Knowing the anticipated financial impacts of natural hazard and climate change risk is fundamental to robust financial planning. That's why it's a key requirement of the XRB's climate-related disclosures regime. Although the council is not subject to that regime, the good practice principles driving the requirement apply equally to us. Having a good handle on the council's anticipated financial impacts enable us to:

- make adequate financial provision for current and future costs
- ensure the adequacy of our insurances
- provide sufficient disaster reserves.

We will use climate scenario planning and risk assessments to anticipate future financial impacts and inform long-term financial planning, including funding, insurance, reserves, investment decisions, and key financial assumptions. Alongside assessing the adequacy of insurance cover, we will monitor its affordability and availability, recognising that changes in insurance markets can provide an early signal of increasing climate and natural hazard risk.

As our adaptation planning matures and community adaptation plans are developed across the region, adaptation pathways will need to be reflected in our *Infrastructure Strategy*, financial strategy and long term plan. This includes identifying the timing of investment, funding requirements, affordability impacts and decision triggers. We will also embed natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation outcomes into long term plan group of activities (GOA) performance measures to strengthen long-term resilience.

¹³ Sapere Research Group, 2025. *Natural hazards-related public spending in New Zealand: tracking costs over time by the nature of spending*. <https://sapere-ausnz.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Natural-hazards-related-public-spending-in-New-Zealand-16.05.25.pdf>

Develop sustainable and equitable funding arrangements for resilience investment

Flood management is central to building resilience across the Waikato region, but it faces growing engineering and financial challenges. Climate variability, ageing assets, rising costs, changing land use and increasing expectations of environmental, adaptation and cultural outcomes are placing greater pressure on both flood protection assets and the targeted-rate model that supports them.

For this reason, it's important to develop funding arrangements that are sustainable, affordable and equitable, ensuring that costs, benefits and decision-making responsibilities are shared fairly across communities and future generations. We'll also identify and leverage other funding sources beyond general and targeted rates where appropriate.

The last in-depth systemic review of the funding system for flood management was Project Watershed, which was completed nearly 20 years ago. A review of funding mechanisms for essential infrastructure is now underway, including the development of principles to guide how adaptation costs are shared among beneficiaries, ratepayers, asset owners, communities and external funding partners. This work aims to ensure funding responsibilities are transparent, equitable and clearly understood before investment decisions are made.

This work is timely given the CCRA 2002 Amendment Bill requirement for adaptation plans to identify how adaptation will be funded. By requiring plans to state how costs will be met before an event occurs, the bill shifts responsibility for adaptation decisions and costs to local authorities, property owners, and communities – with the expectation they will be met through rates, targeted rates, user charges, or reduced service levels. The implications for decision makers are significant. Adaptation plans will need to be reflected in councils' long-term planning, infrastructure planning and financial strategies, meaning adaptation costs can no longer be treated as unquantified future risks. While territorial authorities must lead the development and adoption of community adaptation plans, implementation will often depend on regional council functions, and trigger-based adaptation pathways will effectively create commitments to future investment and funding.

Use a consistent methodology to identify locations for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation investment

Given financial and resource constraints, we need to prioritise where and how we invest in natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation. Robust, evidence-based analysis is essential to identify investment priorities, inform decision making, and to support applications or requests for central government investment in regional resilience.

We will use our RRAPP to provide a consistent and transparent process for informing investment decisions in natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation. It brings together hazard and risk evidence with expert judgment to assess urgency and consequence and compares locations across the region. The RRAPP also considers key enabling factors, including social, political, economic and cultural factors, to ensure investments are practical, achievable, and supported by effective collaboration and engagement.

Assess resilience investments for long term risk reduction, full lifecycle value, avoided risk and wider benefits

Resilience investments should be assessed on their long-term risk reduction potential, full lifecycle value, avoided risk and wider benefits. Traditional cost assessments can undervalue avoided damage, avoided disruption and wider co-benefits that proactive investment can prevent. Short-

term responses that focus on immediate needs without considering future risk and a range of plausible future conditions can create unintended consequences, increase long-term costs, and result in maladaptation.

Focusing on whole-of-life value, rather than upfront costs alone, helps ensure limited funding and resources are directed to investments that deliver the greatest long-term risk reduction benefits and public value. It also supports more transparent, evidence-based decisions, stronger business cases, clearer trade-off advice and better recognition of co-benefits such as community wellbeing, environmental outcomes and service continuity.

Pou 4 – Managing risk for resilient people and places

Strengthen the resilience of communities, places, infrastructure, catchments and natural systems.

Side bar/summary of approaches and specific actions: Pou 4 at a glance

Key approaches (steps, systems, processes)

Embed adaptation planning in the delivery of core functions.

- Integrate adaptation planning into existing planning frameworks
- Develop signals, triggers and thresholds for assets, services and systems
- Develop intergenerational, integrated adaptation pathways for catchments
- Establish processes for determining risk tolerance and risk tolerance thresholds for land use

Working with partners on community adaptation planning.

- Use transparent and consistent processes for our involvement in community adaptation planning
- Develop a pipeline of flood risk management and community adaptation projects

Strengthen adaptive, risk-based asset management.

Communicate risks and insights for action and change.

- Develop and deliver a proactive communication and education programme for hazard and risk information

Enable community-led action.

- Support practical land-use transition/adaptation pathways
- Provide mechanisms for community-led adaptation

Use the current reforms to improve regional risk reduction and adaptation outcomes.

Introductory text

Breakout/highlight: “Enough is already known about the changes Aotearoa New Zealand will face over the coming decades to put the country in a good position to prepare for those impacts.”¹⁴
2026 National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand

¹⁴ He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission, 2026. *Full assessment – 2026 National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington: He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission.
<https://www.climatecommission.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/NCCRA/finals/2026-NCCRA-Full-assessment.pdf>, p. 12.

Pou 4 focuses on turning risk understanding into practical action that strengthens the resilience of people, places, infrastructure, catchments and natural systems. The council brings important strengths to this work, including a regional and landscape-scale perspective, flood and drainage infrastructure delivery, catchment management, science, monitoring, modelling, hazard information and experience working with partners on adaptation planning.

Managing risk requires more than knowing where hazards and risks exist – it requires coordinated decisions about land use, infrastructure, investment, communication, community action and long-term adaptation pathways. By embedding adaptive planning into core functions and working with iwi, territorial authorities, communities, infrastructure providers and central government, the council can help reduce exposure and vulnerability, avoid creating new risk, and support resilient places that can adapt as conditions change.

Breakout/highlight:

This pou contains reference to a number of terms and concepts, such as:

- adaptation planning
- DMDU – decision making under deep uncertainty
- DAPP – dynamic adaptive policy pathways
- PARA – protect, avoid, relocate/retreat, accommodate.

Learn more about these in Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub.

Key approaches

Embed adaptation planning in the delivery of core functions

Climate change requires responses far beyond traditional hazard management. Adaptation planning is a key tool to support our response and involves more than traditional preparedness for climate variation, natural hazards and disaster events. It requires developing a comprehensive understanding of how a changing climate will affect the environment, communities and economy, actively working to reduce our exposure and vulnerability to climate risks and capturing new opportunities.

Irrespective of scale or purpose, adaptation planning must consider how multiple environmental, social, economic, cultural, and infrastructure pressures interact and compound over time to influence risk and resilience. Although the WRF has a community and land-use focus, adaptation planning must extend beyond people to include the region's ecosystems and species, which have value in their own right and also play a key role in community resilience.

Successful adaptation is a proactive and long-term process. It can take many forms, including changing the way we do business, constructing better infrastructure, building resilient communities, and eliminating stressors on our biodiversity and critical ecosystem services.

Successful adaptation also requires monitoring and evaluating performance, so we can learn from experience, adopt actions that provide the most benefit, and adjust plans as necessary.

Together with integrated systems thinking, multi-criteria decision-making and risk-based prioritisation, we'll use DMDU (decision making under deep uncertainty) and DAPP (dynamic adaptive policy pathways) to help the council navigate uncertainty. DMDU and DAPP help us by stress-testing options against a range of future scenarios, using "signals and triggers" to enable timely adjustments before critical thresholds are reached. In the context of climate change adaptation, this approach supports flexible decision making that can respond to changing conditions

over time and avoids locking in unsustainable strategies or costly transitions for future generations.¹⁵ In short, DMDU and DAPP approaches help the council invest wisely for both current and future generations.

Breakout box/highlight Using DAPP for water security

The region's [Water Security Action Plan](#) proposes a DAPP approach to help plan and stage the Waikato region's water security decisions. In the context of water security this means monitoring river flows, storage, seasonal outlooks, demand patterns, and environmental and cultural considerations, and progressing pre-identified strategic option/s when a trigger is reached.

Integrate adaptation planning into existing planning frameworks

The council has a broad suite of strategies, policies and plans that guide the delivery of our core functions. These include catchment management plans, zone plans, business contingency plans, asset management plans, the *Regional Land Transport Plan*, *Infrastructure Strategy*, long term plans, *Waikato Regional Policy Statement* and *Waikato Regional Plan*. Many of these already recognise climate change as a key issue.

The next step is to integrate adaptation planning, using DAPP as a key tool, across these existing planning frameworks and new ones being developed through the planning system and local government reforms.

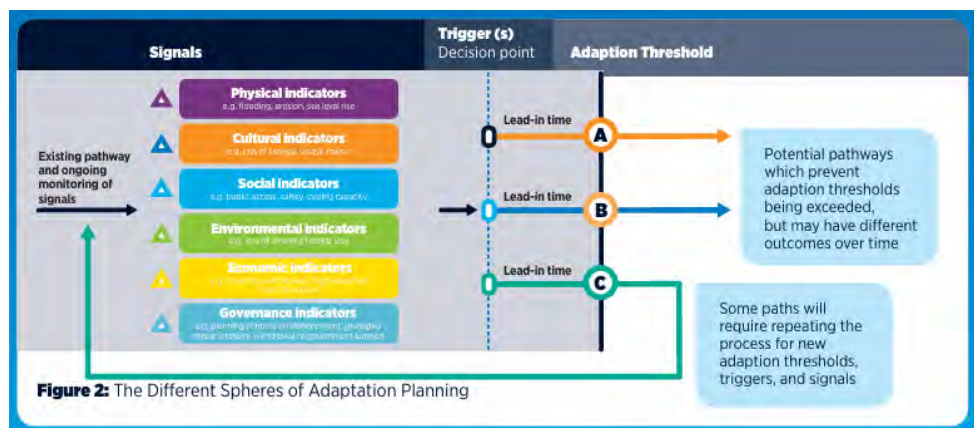
Develop signals, triggers and thresholds for assets, services and systems

A key component of adaptation planning is the establishment of signals, triggers and thresholds (STATs). Once thresholds are defined, signals and triggers provide a mechanism for monitoring when assets, services or systems are approaching their adaptive limits, indicating when preparation is needed to transition to an alternative pathway. This enables decision-makers to anticipate change and take timely action before risks become unacceptable or critical thresholds are exceeded.

Setting STATs for assets, systems and services is a key next step in maturing the council's climate risk management practices. Many organisations are facing similar challenges in identifying and implementing STATs, creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and coordinated approaches to climate adaptation.

Figure 2 below shows how STATs fit within adaptation planning.

¹⁵ Lawrence, J., 2023. *A decade of dynamic adaptive decision-making tools in New Zealand: practice applications, lessons learned and next steps*. Resilience to Nature's Challenges. Wellington: Climate Change Research Institute, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. <https://resiliencechallenge.nz/outputs/a-decade-of-dynamic-adaptive-decision-making-tools-in-new-zealand-practice-applications-lessons-learned-and-next-steps/>, p. 2.



Break out box/highlight: Multiple ways of knowing

For adaptation planning to be a systemic risk response, it must consider multiple types of knowledge. Social and cultural indicators should also be used wherever appropriate, integrating inclusive worldviews and understanding in decision making.

Develop intergenerational, integrated adaptation pathways for catchments

Every part of the region will need to adapt to changing climatic conditions – not just those areas undertaking community adaptation planning projects.

Given that many of the council's core functions are place-based and centred on catchments, an opportunity exists to develop and monitor intergenerational, integrated adaptation pathways for each catchment. These pathways would provide a long-term plan for managing changing conditions, showing how flood protection and drainage infrastructure, water quality and quantity, environmental outcomes, land use and nature-based solutions may need to evolve over time as key thresholds are reached.

These pathways could be incorporated into existing operational catchment management or zone plans, or their future equivalents as planning frameworks evolve. They would provide an integrated view of the thresholds, signals and triggers across a catchment that may require changes in management approaches over time.

Bringing together agreed or evidence-based thresholds across multiple functions, rather than considering individual assets or activities in isolation, would support more coordinated and proactive decision making. It would also enable clearer conversations with communities and stakeholders about future levels of service, adaptation choices, and the trade-offs that may be required as climate risks and environmental conditions change. It would also enable potential recovery actions to be identified in advance, helping to ensure post-event rebuilding or restoration reduces future risk rather than recreates existing vulnerabilities.

The pathways would also be deliberately intergenerational, looking beyond typical timeframes used in local government planning to reflect the time scales that natural and indigenous systems operate within. As this is a new approach, a pilot will be an important first step.

Establish processes for determining risk tolerance and risk tolerance thresholds for land use

Risk tolerance and risk tolerance thresholds are an important part of managing current and future natural hazard risk in land use planning. Together, they are used to put risk-based policies into

practice. Decisions about how risks are managed require consideration of the level of risk that governments, councils, communities and individuals are prepared to accept, and when intervention is needed to reduce unacceptable levels of risk.

Risk tolerance is the willingness to bear a risk. It is classified as ‘acceptable’, ‘tolerable’ or ‘intolerable’, and recognises that not all risk needs to be reduced. Understanding risk tolerance helps decide risk thresholds for managing potential impacts of a hazard on the things we value (such as our health, environment, economy, and buildings and infrastructure).

Risk tolerance thresholds provide clear delineation between ‘acceptable’, ‘tolerable’ or ‘intolerable’ levels of risk. A risk tolerance threshold is used to identify when a different adaptation pathway is required. Risk thresholds need to be determined at asset, community, catchment and regional scale. Signals and triggers are used to allow adequate time to transition from one adaptation pathway to another.

Thresholds can be measured using qualitative, quantitative or combined metrics. Regardless of the approach, metrics should be measurable, based on available information, and clearly documented. Supporting descriptive criteria can also help ensure the intent of the threshold is consistently understood and applied.

There are many challenges with setting risk tolerance thresholds, such as deciding which life metrics to use, scalability, and reconciling varying risk tolerances. Additionally, risk tolerance (and thresholds) may change over time, or when considered against cost. It is important to have a clear process for determining and reviewing risk tolerance and risk tolerance thresholds, so that there is an agreed approach to putting risk-based policies into practice.

The Natural Hazard Commission has identified the lack of clear national guidance as a critical gap¹⁶ and the *Waikato Regional Policy Statement*, which provides our regional risk management framework, does not set out processes for how to determine what is tolerable and intolerable, nor agreed metrics. If the planning system reforms do not provide direction, a priority piece of work will need to be the development of regional policy on how to set risk tolerance and risk tolerance thresholds for land use.

Working with partners on community adaptation projects

Community adaptation planning is already underway across the Waikato region. It is resource intensive and requires ongoing commitment by multiple stakeholders. After adoption, a community adaptation plan requires funding for ongoing monitoring of risk (signals and triggers for agreed pathways), periodic review of thresholds, and implementation of interventions.

The council has a key role in adaptation planning, regardless of the legislative framework, which is currently shared between central government and territorial authorities. This is due to the region-wide implications of adaptation decisions, the catchment-scale nature of many natural hazards, our responsibility for key regional functions and infrastructure, and our role in enabling and implementing adaptation responses.

Flood protection and drainage infrastructure, along with key resource management considerations such as water quantity and quality, biodiversity, catchment management and soil conservation, are critical inputs into community adaptation planning. These factors shape the scope of adaptation

¹⁶ Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake, 2025. *Risk tolerance methodology 2025*. <https://www.naturalhazards.govt.nz/resilience-and-research/research/search-all-research-reports/risk-tolerance-methodology/>, pp. 3, 6, 16.

projects, the development and assessment of options, and their eventual implementation. The council also holds essential hazard, risk and geospatial information that supports multiple stages of community adaptation planning. In addition, our rating and funding frameworks play an important role in determining how adaptation options can be financed and delivered.

What do the adaptation planning amendments to the CCRA 2002 mean for us?

The proposed amendments to the Climate Change Response Act (CCRA) 2002 would introduce significant resource and financial implications for the council. In particular, adaptation planning would shift from discretionary good practice to a statutory obligation, with prescribed timeframes for delivery.

Local government would be required to adopt community adaptation plans for 'priority 1' locations identified in the first regional spatial plan within five years and adopt plans for 'priority 2' locations in the following five years.

Territorial authorities would be required to lead the preparation of the adaptation plans and adopt them. Regional councils, and other agencies, would be required to have regard to them, and reflect the agreed adaptation pathways in their own planning.

The council will need to carefully plan its resourcing to contribute to the proposed mandatory adaptation plans.

Use transparent and consistent processes for our involvement in community adaptation planning

With resourcing and investment constraints, the council is only able to contribute to a small number of adaptation plan processes at one time. Transparent and consistent processes for how the council works with partners on community adaptation projects are important – to guide the council and so partners can know what to expect.

Appendix 2 – Principles for working with partners on community adaptation planning sets out clear parameters to how the council works with partners on community adaptation projects. These principles expand on the principles adopted by the Strategy and Policy Committee in 2023¹⁷. The principles support a coordinated, risk-based approach to community adaptation planning, with the council's involvement focused on priority areas. They emphasise early partnership, clear roles and responsibilities, evidence-based decision making, integrated regional solutions that consider environmental, social, cultural, economic, and intergenerational outcomes, and alignment between adaptation planning, infrastructure investment and future funding decisions.

The RRAPP discussed in Pou 2 and Pou 3 provides risk-based analysis to support this approach.

Both the RRAPP and the principles in Appendix 2 will need to be reviewed as the new planning system is implemented and when adaptation planning amendments to the CCRA, and supporting regulations, are passed.

Develop a pipeline of flood risk management and community adaptation projects

Managing flood risk is a core council function that relies on significant investment in flood protection infrastructure, drainage services, and catchment management. As community adaptation planning will identify adaptation pathways that are likely to include flood mitigation measures, it is important

¹⁷ Adopted at the meeting of the Strategy and Policy Committee on 6 September 2023 (SP23/28).

that flood risk management programmes are aligned with the timing and outcomes of adaptation planning.

To support this, the council will develop a pipeline of regional flood risk management and community adaptation projects. This will improve the sequencing and alignment of work programmes, support resource and investment planning, avoid duplication of community engagement, and provide greater certainty for councils, infrastructure providers and communities as adaptation pathways are developed and implemented.

Strengthen adaptive, risk-based asset management

The *Infrastructure Strategy* and *Regional Asset Management Plan* already propose a risk-based approach to managing the council's flood protection, land drainage and river and lake management assets. As part of our approach, we'll extend and strengthen this adaptive, risk-based approach across the council's wider asset portfolio. Key approaches include the following.

- Identify our critical assets. In the case of flood infrastructure, update the criteria to determine criticality so that it focuses on risk to life and regional significance, and then reassess the assets against the new criteria.
- Develop and monitor signals, triggers and thresholds for the management of each asset type.
- Ensure we hold accurate, up-to-date information about our assets so we can assess and monitor risks from natural hazards.
- Understand the vulnerabilities of our assets and the feasibility or limitations of upgrades.
- Develop adaptation pathways for council assets that incorporate PARA response options (see Appendix 1). The 2024/34 *Infrastructure Strategy* has already begun aligning with the PARA framework through its *maintain, optimise, adapt, transform, retreat* pathways, and recognises the need for transformational responses.
- Place-based resilience planning where assets are managed as part of a wider system. For flood infrastructure, asset management must take place as part of a wider system of risk management responses.

These approaches embed a strategic asset management approach across the council's entire assets portfolio, shifting the focus from managing individual assets in isolation to place-based resilience planning. They also acknowledge financial constraints by supporting the prioritisation of investment towards critical assets and allowing lower-priority assets to be managed through alternative approaches where appropriate. The use of signals, triggers and thresholds aligns with best practice in adaptive asset management, enabling proactive planning and investment.

Communicate risk and insights for action and change

As an organisation, we hold a vast *kete* (basket) of data and knowledge, and our understanding of natural hazards and risk continues to grow. However, as recognised by the *Building regional resilience* priority of our *Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036*, information alone does not build resilience. We must translate our knowledge into clear, accessible insights and practical decision-support tools that help inform action. By making information easier to understand and apply, and proactively communicating it, we can support better decision making by the council, partners, iwi, hapū and whanau, communities and individuals.

Achieving this will require significant capability and investment. Effective science communication, risk communication and behaviour change engagement all rely on specialist skills and expertise. There is also growing demand to translate complex natural hazard and climate risk information into accessible maps, spatial products and other decision-support tools, placing increasing pressure on

the capacity and capability of the council's spatial information team. Technical experts must be closely involved in the development of communication materials and decision-support tools to ensure information is robust, relevant and fit for purpose. Delivering these outputs effectively will also require coordinated, strategic communication and engagement programmes that help different audiences understand risk and enable them to make informed decisions.

Develop and deliver a proactive communication and education programme for hazard and risk information

We need to strengthen our approach to risk communication by establishing a coordinated communications and education programme that delivers timely, accessible hazard and risk information ahead of events and when it is most relevant to decision-making. This includes key moments such as property purchases, land use and zoning decisions and the release of new hazard layers.

Enable community-led action

Community-led risk reduction and adaptation planning can be a practical way to build durable, locally supported resilience. It can:

- support earlier action to progress preparedness, risk reduction and local adaptation conversations before a formal council-led adaptation plan is possible
- strengthen social resilience by building relationships, capability, preparedness and mutual support networks, which are critical before, during and after natural hazard events
- reduce pressure on councils – seed funding, guidance and technical support can enable communities to begin adaptation planning where councils do not yet have capacity to lead a full process.

Support practical land-use transition and adaptation pathways

Practical land-use transition and adaptation pathways, that reduce risk and meet the needs of landowners, iwi and hapū, industry and communities, are key to future regional prosperity. We'll work with partners to support a regional transition that aligns catchment, adaptation and primary sector outcomes. Trusted relationships, clear advice and coordinated support will be central to this approach.

Provide mechanisms for community-led adaptation

Waikato Regional Council and territorial authorities are unlikely to have capacity or capability to work with every community or group interested in developing an adaptation plan. Currently, there is no community adaptation grant fund available to provide seed funding for locally led adaptation planning initiatives. This contrasts with other areas of council work where funds such as the Environmental Initiatives Fund, the Natural Heritage Fund and the Community Transport Grant Fund support community groups to deliver outcomes that councils may not have resources to achieve directly.

Once there is greater certainty around the future structure of local government, we will consider opportunities to establish a community adaptation grant fund. In the meantime, we'll support communities and groups to advance their own adaptation planning efforts by continuing our current work to make hazard information, adaptation guidance and decision-support tools accessible and publicly available.

Use the current reforms to improve risk reduction and adaptation outcomes

Highlight: Tomorrow's risk is built today

There is no such thing as a natural disaster. Hazards – earthquakes, floods, cyclones – are natural, but disasters are not. Disasters occur when people, places and infrastructure are exposed and vulnerable to hazards, often as a result of the choices we make about where and how we develop.

Therefore, an immediate focus is to be well prepared for the planning system and local government reforms. These reforms will provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build natural hazard resilience and climate adaptation into the Waikato's future planning, investment and decision-making systems.

From a natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation perspective, the reforms raise several key considerations, outlined in Appendix 3. One opportunity is to shape the Combined Plan, which will replace multiple existing district, city and regional plans, to support integrated, system-wide natural hazard resilience across the region.

Implement changes to existing regional operational planning and management frameworks

Regional operational planning and management frameworks, including regional and catchment-based plans, will need to evolve in response to the changing legislation. This is an opportunity to make changes to our existing operational planning frameworks, for example, zone and catchment plans, to achieve resilience outcomes in the new legislative operating environment.

Implement regional policy changes to address issues

Subject to the scope of the new planning system, the reforms provide an opportunity to address shortcomings in our current policy settings for natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation. A key priority will be identifying and implementing the regional policy changes needed to improve natural hazard resilience outcomes across the Waikato region.

How we will get there

The WRF will be implemented through a range of initiatives. Some are already underway or planned through funding provided in the current long term plan, while others are ongoing ways of working or will be progressed through longer-term work programmes.

Implementation will be phased over time, supported by a structured implementation plan. Any additional investment requirements will be considered through future long term plan and annual plan processes.

Ngā āpitihanga Appendices

Appendix 1 – Knowledge hub

Climate Change Adaptation Guideline for the Waikato Region

Our [Climate Change Adaptation Guideline for the Waikato Region](#) is a technical guide which offers the latest policy guidance, scientific information and frameworks to help the Waikato region prepare for climate impacts and promote a coordinated approach. It includes guidance on climate risks for Māori and working with our iwi partners.

Excerpts from part 3 of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement

[Waikato Regional Policy Statement-RPS-Part-3-Topics](#)

HAZ-M1 – Risk management framework

Regional and district plans shall incorporate a risk-based approach into the management of subdivision, use and development in relation to natural hazards. This should be in accordance with relevant standards, strategies and plans, and ensure that:

1. new development is managed so that natural hazard risks do not exceed acceptable levels;
2. intolerable risk is reduced to tolerable or acceptable levels;
3. the creation of new intolerable risk is avoided;
4. any intolerable risk as a result of existing use and development is as low as reasonably achievable; and
5. where intolerable risk remains, the risks will be managed until an acceptable level is achieved.

HAZ-M5 – Information, education and advocacy

Waikato Regional Council will

1. collaborate with:
 - a. territorial authorities to support the collection and analysis of natural hazard risk information;
 - b. territorial authorities, the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, the Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group and other agencies to develop and implement public education and awareness programmes on natural hazards and their associated risks;
 - c. agencies involved in the property market, including insurance companies, lending agencies and real estate agencies to promote understanding and awareness of natural hazard risk to properties; and
 - d. research organisations; and
2. store all natural hazard risk information that is available and relevant to the Waikato region, and share this information with territorial authorities and other relevant stakeholders; and
3. advocate for:
 - a. a proactive approach to natural hazard identification in district and regional plans;
 - b. the use of best practice approaches, including mātauranga Māori, to natural hazard identification and management of the associated risks; and
 - c. a strategic approach to development (including redevelopment) that seeks that any increase in risk from natural hazards (including residual risk) is minimised.

List of tools and systems for natural hazard and climate risk reduction and adaptation

Governance systems and processes

- Governance processes for support planning, decisions and investment.
- Decision-making frameworks and assessment criteria.
- Organisational, programme and project-based risk and issue management.
- Long-term financial planning, including assumptions, funding mechanisms, insurance, reserves and investment decisions.
- Long term plan outcomes, levels of service and performance measures.

Infrastructure and catchment management to support the management of risks via nature-based solutions, natural systems and fit-for-purpose infrastructure interventions

- Flood protection and drainage infrastructure such as stopbanks, pump stations, floodgates, telemetry networks and tide gauges.
- Catchment management, river management and erosion control programmes.
- Wetlands, forests and other nature-based solutions that improve resilience while delivering biodiversity, water quality and carbon benefits.
- Ki uta ki tai approaches that recognise the connections between land, water, ecosystems and communities.

Planning and regulatory systems

- Regional policy and planning frameworks.
- Resource consent applications and conditions for managing natural resources and land use.
- Spatial planning and land-use controls.
- Community adaptation planning.
- Natural hazard provisions in plans and consent processes.
- Technical guidance and regulatory requirements.
- Compliance and enforcement activities that support risk reduction outcomes.

Monitoring, science and modelling to support evidence-based decision making based on robust science and data

- Weather forecasting and flood forecasting systems.
- Monitoring networks and telemetry.
Hazard and climate risk modelling.
- Environmental monitoring and trend analysis.
- Understanding changing risk profiles over time.

Supporting community resilience and preparedness at property and catchment scale

- Response planning (CDEM).
Hazards risk communication and public education.
- Access to natural hazard and risk information, for example, the Regional Hazards Portal, Coastal Inundation Tool, and Flood Room on our council website.
- Provision of property-specific or general natural hazard information on request.

Climate change risk assessment and climate scenario analysis

Climate change risk assessment and climate scenario analysis are different but complementary tools to manage risk and test our planning and decision-making under uncertainty. The table below describes the differences.

Climate Change Risk Assessment	Climate Scenario Analysis
Identifies and assesses climate-related risks and opportunities .	Explores different plausible futures and how those futures could affect objectives, services, assets and decisions.
Answers " What are our risks? "	Answers " What if this future occurs? "
Focuses on likelihood, consequence, vulnerability, exposure, and risk prioritisation.	Focuses on uncertainty and stress-testing plans and decisions under different future conditions.
Produces a risk register, priorities, controls, and treatment actions.	Produces insights about resilience, strategic options, triggers, adaptation pathways, and robustness of plans.
Usually based on current information plus projected climate impacts.	Uses multiple plausible narratives (physical and transition futures).
Helps determine where action is needed.	Helps determine whether proposed actions remain effective across different futures.

Together, these tools can help inform a range of strategic and operation decisions.

- **Infrastructure planning** can be guided by adaptive pathways, enabling investment to be staged over time as conditions change. For example, restoring wetlands now may provide sufficient risk reduction, with future investment in hard infrastructure triggered if rainfall intensifies or land use changes through growth and development.
- **Managing transitional impacts**, such as changes in national climate policy, economic activity or evolving expectations around low-emissions living. Councils may need to plan for increased uptake of electric vehicles, changing building standards, or the economic implications of decarbonisation pathways aligned with Aotearoa New Zealand's emissions budgets and the Zero Carbon Act.
- **Land use and spatial planning** can use scenario insights to steer development away from high-risk zones, such as low-lying coastal areas or regions prone to wildfire, while identifying areas suitable for future growth, housing demand and changing community needs.
- **Public health and emergency preparedness** can be strengthened by considering demographic change and potential shifts in transport modes. This can help ensure public transport is equipped to support an emergency response or evacuations if private vehicle ownership declines.
- **Financial planning** can be informed through scenario stress-testing, helping councils understand how climate risks may affect long-term service delivery costs, insurance availability and affordability, and infrastructure renewal and depreciation profiles.
- **Service provision** may be challenged or constrained as funding is redirected towards transition or climate impact response. Scenarios can be used by councils to work with

communities to explore potential necessary trade-offs if climate action takes a priority. Equally, they can help identify opportunities for innovation and operating agility.¹⁸

Methodology for climate change risk assessments

Climate change risk assessments use a specific methodology that considers the hazard, exposure and vulnerability to determine risk. Vulnerability can be combination of both physical and social vulnerability and includes considerations of sensitivity to the hazard and capacity to adapt. This methodology differs from the traditional risk assessment methodology of *likelihood* and *consequence*.



Diagram X. Components of climate change risk assessment¹⁹

Priority climate risks

To understand risk severity, factors that need to be considered include:

- the level or severity of the risk in different time periods under different emissions scenarios
- how the risk may compound and cascade
- whether the risk varies in different locations
- whether the risk has significant impacts for Māori
- potential lock-in risks and at what point in time this will occur (lock-in is where decisions made today are difficult to reverse and can increase exposure to subsequent risks long-term and/or will commit decision-makers to future interventions to manage exposure)
- climate and non-climate aspects that may exacerbate or reduce the risk, such as thresholds, tipping points, socio-economic trends and climate mitigation action.

To understand policy readiness, consider:

- what actions can be taken to address the risk, the potential impact of those actions on future risk, and the lead-in time for those actions
- what action is already being taken to address the risk and the impact it is having
- whether any actions could have, or lead to, maladaptation
- when risks may become locked in

¹⁸ Local Government Funding Agency, 2025. *Local government sector climate scenarios: guidance document*. Wellington: Local Government Funding Agency. <https://www.lgfa.co.nz/sustainability/sustainability-lgfa/local-government-sector-scenarios>, p. 8.

¹⁹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2014. *AR5 Climate change 2014: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Working Group II contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>

- whether there are any barriers delaying action to address the risk
- shortfalls in planned adaptation action – a sense of what further action is needed.

Key concepts for adaptation planning

Design note: show nested nature of these terms visually:

Adaptation planning is the broad process of deciding how to adjust to actual or expected climate and natural hazard impacts. It asks “what risks are we facing, what matters, and how should we respond?”.

= the “what are we planning for and how do we respond?” process

DMDU – *Decision Making under Deep Uncertainty* – is the broader decision-making family of approaches used when future conditions are highly uncertain and cannot be predicted confidently.

= the “how do we make good decisions when the future is uncertain?” approach

DAPP – *Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways* – is one structured method used within adaptation planning to sequence actions over time using signals, triggers and thresholds. It is one type of DMDU approach, and answers which responses should happen now, which should happen later, and what will trigger a change.

= the “what pathway do we follow, and when do we change course?” tool

PARA – *Protect, Avoid, Relocate/retreat*, Accommodate* – is a practical way to organise and compare response options. It answers what types of responses are available.

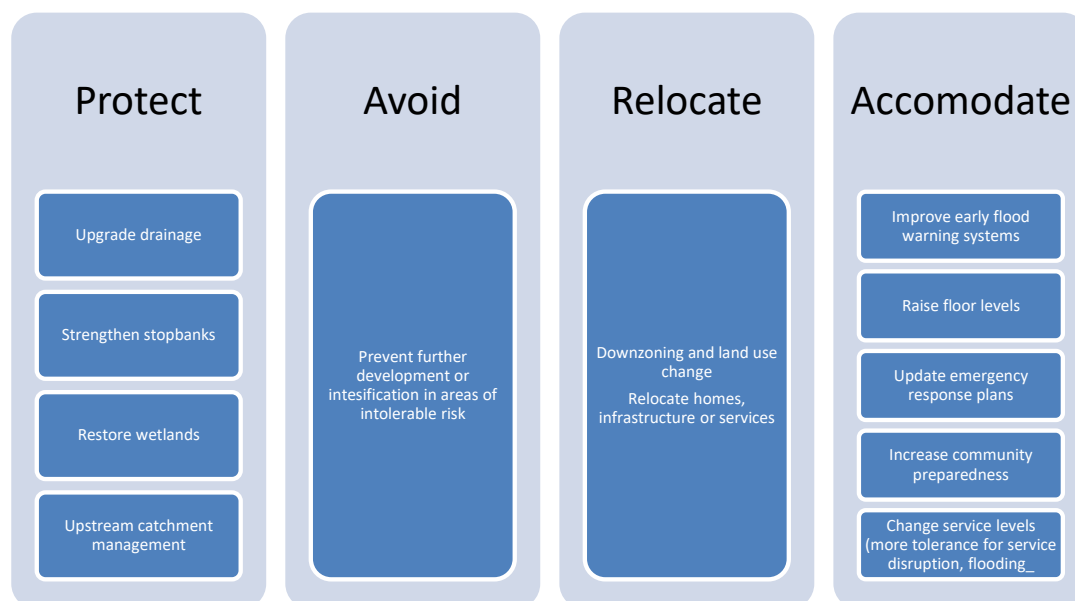
= the “possible actions” menu

*Communities in Waikato adaptation projects have signalled a preference to use the term “relocate” over “retreat”.

DAPP can be used either as part of a community adaptation planning process or by itself to scope the range of available options and pathways. It can be tailored for any scale. Over the past decade, DAPP has been applied in New Zealand to help reduce the risk of pluvial, fluvial and coastal flooding exacerbated by climate change, and to manage other hazards and situations of deep uncertainty. Applications span national and local levels: coastal adaptation, flood management, conservation, agriculture, infrastructure, and military planning.²⁰

The diagram below shows how **PARA** is used to consider and organise responses for a flood prone community. Used with DAPP, these options can be sequenced over time, with signals and triggers identifying when the council should shift from maintaining or upgrading an asset to alternative risk management pathways.

²⁰ Lawrence, J., Gallop, S.L., Marquardt, L., Bell, R., Blackett, P., Cradock-Henry, N.A. and Wreford, A., 2025. Dynamic adaptive pathways planning for adaptation: lessons learned from a decade of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 22(1), p.2451424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1943815X.2025.2451424>



Examples of applications of PARA adaptation approach for a flood-prone community

How is adaptation planning different to community adaptation planning?

We talk a lot about community adaptation planning in local government, however, adaptation planning is used at different scales and for many different purposes, including for sectors, specific assets, infrastructure networks, locations, communities, catchments and ecosystems. Because these processes vary in scope, purpose and level of community involvement, we need to be clear about the differences.

Adaptation planning for specific assets and infrastructure is often technical and asset-based, focused on asset performance, service levels, investment timing and adaptive pathways.

Community adaptation planning is broader and more participatory, supporting communities, iwi, partners and stakeholders to understand risk, consider acceptable levels of risk, and identify options and pathways for managing that risk over time.

Both are important for the council, as they are closely connected and need to inform one another. The risk tolerance thresholds of communities will inform the service levels for specific assets and infrastructure. The council's own asset planning and management processes may also identify the need for a more comprehensive community adaptation project. The performance of specific assets and infrastructure will inform thresholds for community adaptation planning. The adaptation pathways developed in community adaptation projects will inform our own planning.

For some of the council's assets and services, such as our **flood and drainage infrastructure** and our **public transportation services**, adaptation planning must be both **technical** and **community-focused**. They provide services to specific communities and landowners, based on agreed levels of service. Future decisions about them will directly affect community risk, costs and adaptation choices.

Appendix 2 – Principles for working with partners on community adaptation planning

Regional infrastructure and adaptation pipeline: The council will seek to work with territorial authority partners to develop a pipeline of risk-informed flood management projects and community adaptation projects. This pipeline would:

- o be a key tool to support both regional council and territorial authority resource and investment planning
- o integrate the timing of community adaptation planning projects with the timing of flood infrastructure projects (capital, maintenance, nature-based)
- o signal ongoing resourcing needs for the monitoring and implementation of community adaptation plans
- o deliver clearer sequencing and better partner alignment.

Risk-based involvement: The council values its partnership with territorial authorities. However, due to resource constraints, the council cannot be involved in every adaptation project. Our involvement will be determined by the Regional Risk-based Analysis Process for Prioritisation and the identification of priority locations for adaptation planning in spatial plans. Where the council is able, it will provide resilience leadership, technical, and political and project governance support to agreed community adaptation planning projects.

Involvement in early planning: The council will seek to be involved in community adaptation planning with external partners and stakeholders from the very outset. The council's experience across multiple adaptation projects, combined with its data, technical expertise, regional functions and understanding of flood protection policy settings, rating mechanisms and funding, provides a critical foundation for shaping the scope, priorities and approach of community adaptation planning.

Advocacy: As community adaptation projects are scoped and planned, the council will advocate for key local and regional considerations to be incorporated. These include:

- o the development of options for intervention, which will be integrated whole-of-catchment, whole-of-region solutions
- o using multi-criteria decision-making frameworks to ensure system-wide intergenerational implications are addressed in option development and decisions
- o consideration of iwi perspectives and interests, and inclusion of te ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori perspectives and lived experience in the risk assessment and optioneering
- o inclusion of iwi, CDEM and critical infrastructure providers as key strategic partners in the project
- o consideration of environmental risks and opportunities, which are often more difficult to quantify
- o opportunities for non-climate hazard risk reduction activities to be incorporated to increase resilience to all hazards
- o seeking to integrate project community engagement with existing community events to increase participation and reduce engagement-fatigue.

Clear definition of roles and responsibilities: The council will ensure a clear understanding of roles and the extent of commitment is agreed.

Data and knowledge: The council holds and will make available key data and knowledge that is necessary to inform community adaptation planning, including hazard data such as drought, erosion, landslip, seismic, tsunami and liquefaction and modelling for flood and coastal inundation, water

quality and availability, flood risk management and groundwater. Key data requirements should be determined early to ensure enough time to develop/source/check hazard and element data prior to commencing the risk assessment.

Regional functions integral to enduring future-proofed solutions: Regional functions such as flood and drainage infrastructure, catchment management, soil conservation, water quantity and quality and biodiversity are all integral to developing future-proof options for community adaptation planning. Experts for these work areas need to be closely involved in both early planning and scoping of a community adaptation project, risk assessment and the development and assessment of suitable options for community adaptation plans.

Agreement in writing: The council's input into adaptation planning process will be agreed and formalised in writing at the outset of projects and approved via appropriate governance forums. This should consider:

- o councillor representation on political governance arrangements
 - the constituent Waikato Regional Council councillors of the relevant community will be the first preference for governance appointment requests
- o the council's staff representation in project governance
- o the council's staff representation on technical advisory groups
- o roles and responsibilities at each stage of a community adaptation project, including:
 - **implementation** of agreed adaptation plan outcomes that require a council service or further support
 - **ongoing** monitoring and review of the community adaptation plan
- o nature and detail of technical support
- o proposed funding arrangements for the project itself and potential interventions.

Funding of interventions:

- o The council will advocate for
 - options for intervention to include indicative costs to guide conversations
 - funding options and impacts on rates to be outlined early to assist communities to understand the cost implications of adaptation pathways.
- o The council's participation in a community adaptation planning process does not indicate an agreement or a commitment to fund interventions.
- o The funding of options and interventions will:
 - need to travel through additional funding processes, such as council LTP processes or seek external funding
 - include consideration of whether targeted and/or general rates will apply, where a discussion on option beneficiaries will be well canvassed.

Appendix 3 – Considerations for reform

Consideration for reform include the following.

1. Ensuring spatial and land use plans:
 - a) account for future risk of existing development
 - b) identify areas of likely future natural hazards and extents
 - c) allow for changing hazard and risk data rather than static maps
 - d) have robust mechanisms for managing uncertainty
 - e) set policies and objectives to prompt consideration of *all* natural hazards, not only hazards which are specifically referenced in the plan. See for example the approach taken by the Rotorua Lakes Council in its [District Plan Change 8 - Natural Hazards | Participate Rotorua Lakes Council](#)
 - f) incorporate the integrating role of the current Regional Policy Statement.
2. Preparing the data required to inform spatial and land use planning.
3. Management and quality control of natural hazard data.
4. Designing systems, structures and processes to ensure land use planners are aware of the activities of asset management and capital planning, and vice versa.
5. Appropriate governance, institutional and decision-making arrangements, recognising the systemic nature and complexity of climate change and the cross boundary nature of hazards.
6. The interaction between community adaptation planning and the development of spatial and land use plans, and how community adaptation plans are implemented via other local government processes.
7. Where key opportunities for community engagement and consultation about regional risk management are likely to occur in the new system, noting that:
 - a) community engagement is intended to occur primarily during the development of spatial and land use plans, where strategic choices about growth, infrastructure, and environmental limits are made
 - b) in local areas, community input will be through adaptation plans
 - c) public input into consent applications is expected to be limited to more significant developments.
8. If not provided through the planning system reforms, the development of regional policy on setting risk tolerance and risk thresholds for land use.

Glossary

Adaptation planning

The broad process of deciding how to adjust to changing natural hazard and climate risks over time.

Natural hazard risk reduction

The concept and practice of reducing existing natural hazard risk, avoiding or minimising future risk, and managing residual risk. It can be achieved by reducing one or more of the key components of risk: hazard, exposure, and/or vulnerability.

Nature based solutions (NbS)

Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, cost-effective, and simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience.

Residual risk

Describes the part of the risk that remains after efforts have been made to reduce it. It describes the level of risk that remains after efforts to address the risk.

Resilience

Resilience has become a commonly used term and can mean different things in different contexts. For the purposes of developing the WRF, we have adapted the *Resilient Cities Network* definition of urban resilience:

“Resilience is the capacity of a region/district/city/community’s systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” [What is Urban Resilience? - Resilient Cities Network](#)

This is generally consistent with the definition of resilience used in New Zealand’s National Disaster Resilience Framework, as shown below, which is more disaster/event focused.

“Resilience is the ability to anticipate and resist the effects of a disruptive event, minimise adverse impacts, respond effectively post-event, maintain or recover functionality, and adapt in a way that allows for learning and thriving.” [National Disaster Resilience Framework](#)

Acronyms

AI – Artificial intelligence

CCRA – Climate Change Response Act 2002

CDEM – Civil Defence and Emergency Management

DAPP – Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways

DMDU – Decision Making under Deep Uncertainty

GOA – Group of activities

HAZ-M1 – Waikato Regional Policy Statement hazards method 1: Risk management framework

HAZ-M5 – Waikato Regional Policy Statement hazards method 5: Information, education and advocacy

ISO – International Organization for Standardization

LIM – Land Information Memorandum

LTP – Long Term Plan

NbS – Nature-based solutions

NCCRA – National Climate Change Risk Assessment

NIWA – National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
PARA – Protect, Avoid, Relocate/retreat, Accommodate
RPS – Regional Policy Statement
RRAPP – Regional Risk-based Analysis Process for Prioritisation
STATs – Signals, triggers and thresholds
WRF – Waikato Resilience Framework

References

- Climate Change Commission, 2025. Webinar: National Climate Change Risk Assessment call for evidence – academics and researchers [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jShoXA9pp68> [Accessed 11 April 2025].
- External Reporting Board, 2022. *Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standard 1: Climate-related disclosures (NZ CS 1)*. Wellington: External Reporting Board. <https://www.xrb.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4770/>
- He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission, 2026. *Full assessment – 2026 National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington: He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission. <https://www.climatecommission.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/NCCRA/finals/2026-NCCRA-Full-assessment.pdf>
- Institute of Directors New Zealand, n.d. *Chapter Zero New Zealand*. <https://www.iod.org.nz/chapter-zero-new-zealand> [Accessed 12 August 2026].
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC), 2014. *AR5 Climate change 2014: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Working Group II contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>
- Lawrence, J., 2023. *A decade of dynamic adaptive decision-making tools in New Zealand: practice applications, lessons learned and next steps*. Resilience to Nature's Challenges. Wellington: Climate Change Research Institute, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. <https://resiliencechallenge.nz/outputs/a-decade-of-dynamic-adaptive-decision-making-tools-in-new-zealand-practice-applications-lessons-learned-and-next-steps/>
- Lawrence, J., Gallop, S.L., Marquardt, L., Bell, R., Blackett, P., Cradock-Henry, N.A. and Wreford, A., 2025. Dynamic adaptive pathways planning for adaptation: lessons learned from a decade of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 22(1), p.2451424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1943815X.2025.2451424>
- Local Government Funding Agency, 2025. *Local government sector climate scenarios: guidance document*. Wellington: Local Government Funding Agency. <https://www.lgfa.co.nz/sustainability/sustainability-lgfa/local-government-sector-scenarios>
- Ministry for Regulation, 2026. *The state of New Zealand's regulatory systems*. Wellington: Ministry for Regulation. <https://www.regulation.govt.nz/assets/Publication-Documents/The-state-of-New-Zealands-regulatory-systems.pdf>

- Ministry for the Environment, 2026. *Implementing the National Policy Statement on Natural Hazards* [presentation to the Te Uru Kahika Regional Hazards and Risk Management Special Interest Group], 23 April.
- Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake, 2025. *Risk tolerance methodology 2025*. <https://www.naturalhazards.govt.nz/resilience-and-research/research/search-all-research-reports/risk-tolerance-methodology/>
- NIWA, 2024. *Nature-based solutions for flood management: literature review*. National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) client report no. 2024141CH prepared for Envirolink. <https://www.envirolink.govt.nz/assets/2419-TSDC191-Nature-based-solutions-for-flood-management.pdf>
- Sapere Research Group, 2025. *Natural hazards-related public spending in New Zealand: tracking costs over time by the nature of spending*. <https://sapere-ausnz.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Natural-hazards-related-public-spending-in-New-Zealand-16.05.25.pdf>
- Waikato Regional Council, 2024. *2024–2034 long term plan | 2024–2034 Te Mahere Roa*. Waikato Regional Council Policy Series 2024/12. Hamilton: Waikato Regional Council.
- Waikato Regional Council, n.d. *Waikato Regional Policy Statement: Part 3 – topics*. Hamilton: Waikato Regional Council. <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/RPS-Part-3-Topics.pdf>
- Waikato River Authority, 2019. *Vision and strategy for the Waikato River*. Reprinted ed. <https://waikatoriver.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Vision-and-Strategy-Reprint-2019web.pdf>.

7.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN FARE POLICY VARIATION

Rā Date:	17 August 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Katherine Simpson, Team Leader - Transport Planning
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement on the proposed preferred package and consultation approach for the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) Fares Policy Review to proceed with public consultation.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. This report presents the proposed preferred package and consultation materials for the RPTP Fares Policy Review. The review seeks to ensure the region's fare policies remain fit for purpose by balancing affordability, patronage growth, equity and financial sustainability, while preparing for the introduction of Motu Move. Following technical assessment and elected member workshops, a preferred package has been developed and is proposed for public consultation.
3. This preferred package has been shared with the WRC Transport Committee and has been recommended to Council for endorsement to proceed with consultation from the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee.
4. The proposed changes require consultation under the Special Consultative Procedure. Subject to Council endorsement, consultation is proposed to occur between September and October 2026, with final recommendations to be presented to Council in December 2026.
5. Specifically, the report:
 - (a) Presents to Council the proposed preferred package of fare policies and structures for the Fares Policy Review project.
 - (b) Shares the Statement of Proposal (**Attachment 1**) for consultation and draft consultation questions (**Attachment 2**).
 - (c) Outlines the proposed consultation process, including key consultation steps, timeframes and decision points.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Public Consultation on Regional Public Transport Plan Fare Policy Variation* (Council, 27 August 2026) be received.

2. That Council endorses the proposed preferred package and consultation approach for the Regional Public Transport Plan Fares Policy Review, noting that an additional survey question to test public feedback on changes to the Hamilton central city zone and/or a new inner/outer Hamilton zone is still in development, and approves staff to proceed with public consultation.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

6. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) is undertaking a comprehensive review of its public transport fares policy to ensure the fare system remains fit for purpose in a changing policy, funding and operating environment.
7. The purpose of WRC's fares policy is to support a public transport system that is simple, affordable, accessible and financially sustainable. Fare setting is not solely about determining how much passengers pay; it is about making deliberate choices regarding how the costs of providing public transport are shared, how affordability is maintained for those who most rely on the network, and how fares can support the continued growth of public transport use across the region.
8. The Council recognises that fares influence people's travel choices and that public transport delivers wider benefits to the region through improved access to employment, education, healthcare and social opportunities, while also supporting broader transport, environmental and wellbeing outcomes. The fare system should therefore encourage public transport use wherever practical, while acknowledging the need to recover an appropriate share of operating costs and ensure the network remains financially sustainable for both passengers and funders.
9. In setting fares, Council seeks to balance three interrelated objectives: growing and retaining patronage, promoting equitable access, and maintaining sustainable revenue. These objectives do not always align, requiring trade-offs between affordability, simplicity and cost recovery. The fare system aims to provide affordable travel for those most likely to face transport disadvantage, including young people, people with accessibility needs and lower income households, while ensuring that fare products are easy to understand and targeted where they can deliver the greatest benefit. The preferred fare package reflects this approach by retaining strong support for passengers with limited transport alternatives, improving affordability for a broader range of young people, simplifying aspects of the fare structure, and supporting continued investment in a reliable and effective public transport network.
10. The review is occurring against a backdrop of several significant and interrelated drivers. Central government, through the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 (GPS), introduced higher private share revenue targets for public transport funding. These targets require that public transport authorities recover a greater proportion of operating costs from fares (and other third-party revenue sources).
11. WRC is also preparing for the transition to the Motu Move, expected to be implemented in the Waikato region during the 2027/2028 period. This transition presents both constraints and opportunities for fares policy as future fare structures must be compatible with Motu Move's technical capabilities while also being simpler, more consistent, and easier for customers to understand.

12. The fare review also interfaces with other live and evolving work programmes. These include ongoing Annual Plan deliberations, which have included decisions to increase fares to meet private share targets, changes to Total Mobility funding, as well as work relating to Te Huia and the continued evolution of on-demand / flex services. The sequencing and timing of these programmes has meant that the fare review has needed to remain adaptable, with assumptions and inputs evolving as wider policy and funding settings are clarified.
13. The Scope of Work for the Fares Policy Review intentionally focuses on fare and tariff structures rather than operational delivery. It seeks to strike an appropriate balance between three competing objectives: maintaining financial sustainability, supporting patronage growth, and addressing social and equity considerations. The review also considers opportunities to simplify the existing fare system, including zoning, concessions, fare capping, and fare presentation, while retaining a zonal approach.
14. Elected member workshops were conducted to seek high-level feedback on policy directions and trade-offs to prepare a final report and recommendation. Workshops were held with the WRC Transport Committee and the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee on 2 June and 15 June 2026, respectively.
15. Feedback from the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee and WRC Transport Committee workshops has informed the development of the preferred package. Both committees have also seen the proposed package with the RTC PT Subcommittee, at their meeting on 11 August 2026, recommending the package to Council for endorsement to consult.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

16. The Fares Policy Review has reached a key milestone with the identification of a preferred package. This preferred package proposes a number of changes to fare policy and fare settings, including:
 - (a) Te Huia fares are proposed to be set separately from bus fares and marketed by station rather than by zone. This reflects Te Huia's role as an inter-regional rail service with a distinct market and cost structure.
 - (b) As the rail fare structure is proposed to diverge from bus fares, there are technical and administrative challenges in providing free transfers between bus and rail. Free bus-rail transfers are therefore not proposed to continue as part of the preferred package at this stage. This is expected to affect a relatively small proportion of trips where only 0.05% of Te Huia journeys involved a bus-rail transfer between January 2025 and April 2026. Any future bus-rail transfer arrangement would need to be tested through the Motu Move tariff configuration process to confirm whether it is technically possible and operationally feasible.
 - (c) Free transfers between eligible bus services would be retained.
 - (d) On-demand fares are proposed to be set in line with the equivalent fixed-route bus fare to provide free transfers and consistent pricing messaging to passengers unless a premium fare is warranted for a service with a specific use case (such as with the Hamilton Night Flex).
 - (e) For bus services, the zonal fare structure would be retained but simplified by reducing the number of rural fare zones. Fares would be marketed across 1 to 6+ zones, with the maximum bus fare reached at 6 zones.

- (f) The Accessibility Concession would be retained in full, including the PlusOne.
 - (g) SuperGold travel on buses would be aligned with the national scheme (how it is currently implemented on Te Huia). This means SuperGold cardholders would continue to travel free on all services during off-peak times, and all day on weekends and public holidays, but free weekday peak travel on buses would no longer continue.
 - (h) Adult fare capping is proposed to remain at 9 journeys per week.
 - (i) A new 20% youth discount on all smartcard user trips is proposed for passengers aged 5 to 18 years on buses. Youth fare capping would also be aligned with the adult fare cap of 9 journeys per week. This provides a simpler and more consistent approach than maintaining separate adult and youth capping rules.
 - (j) Every youth rail journey would continue to receive a 50% discount on all smartcard user trips. However, it is proposed to extend the age band of 'youth' who are eligible to receive this 50% discount to be 5 to 18 years to align with buses. This would improve consistency and reduce complexity across the fares system. Youth fare capping on rail would still continue, but it would be aligned with the adult cap of 9 journeys a week.
17. The preferred package also proposes new RPTP policies, including policies for relative zonal bus fares, fare rounding and annual fare adjustments. A table of the proposed RPTP policy changes and new policies can be found in **Attachment 1**.
18. The preferred package, draft Statement of Proposal and draft survey questions alongside the technical reports for the project were shared with the WRC Transport Committee on the 4th of August. These documents were also shared with the RTC PT Subcommittee at an Extraordinary meeting on the 11th of August where the subcommittee recommended the package to Council for endorsement to consult.
19. Under the RPTP significance policy, the proposed changes require full public consultation using the Special Consultative Procedure.
20. A draft Statement of Proposal has been developed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002 and is appended as **Attachment 1**. This document is intended to support public consultation on the fare policy review. The document explains the need for the review, the objectives being sought, the key policy proposals being consulted on, and the potential implications of those proposals for public transport users. The Statement of Proposal is designed to provide sufficient information for submitters to understand the options being considered, the reasons for the proposed changes, and the trade-offs involved, enabling informed feedback before final decisions are made by Council.
21. **Attachment 2** provides a draft set of consultation questions that are intended to test public views on the key fare policy proposals arising from the review. The questions focus on the main themes identified through the review, including youth fare discounts and fare caps, and SuperGold concessions. The questions have been designed to gauge the level of public support for the preferred policy directions, understand the reasons behind that support or opposition, and identify any unintended consequences or implementation considerations that should be taken into account before final policy decisions are made. The consultation material is intended to focus on strategic policy choices and trade-offs rather than detailed fare calculations or operational matters.
22. The RTC PT Subcommittee requested the inclusion of an additional survey question to test public feedback on changes to the Hamilton central city zone and/or a new inner/outer

Hamilton zone. WRC staff are still working through the precise wording, and intend to include this question while being clear that it is currently not part of the recommended package.

23. The proposed public consultation period will overlap with the communication of upcoming public transport fare increases. This presents a risk that public feedback may focus on the fare increases rather than the Fares Policy Review itself. To reduce this risk, the consultation material will clearly explain the scope of this project and the specific matters being consulted on.
24. Public consultation is proposed between 3 September 2026 and 5 October 2026 with hearing dates expected to be in late October / early November 2026.
25. The project timeframes are tight due to the need to be ready for implementation of the Motu Move in 2027. WRC staff are intending to present to Council the final recommendation for decision in December 2026. To meet these timeframes and reduce the administrative requirements associated with establishing a separate hearing panel, the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee will act as the hearing panel for this process. This would enable the Subcommittee to hear submitters who wish to speak to their submissions, consider feedback received, and make recommendations to Waikato Regional Council before Council makes a final decision.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

26. This decision will increase the ability of the Council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.
27. Public transport plays an important role in supporting community resilience by providing access to employment, education, healthcare and essential services. The Fares Policy Review seeks to ensure the fare system remains affordable, accessible and fit for purpose, helping maintain access to public transport for a wide range of users, including groups that may be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Public consultation will provide an opportunity for communities, stakeholders and iwi to contribute to the decision-making process and identify any potential impacts on access and affordability that should be considered before final decisions are made.
28. The decision is not sensitive to higher emission scenarios or more rapid climate changes.

TE WHAKAMAURU – TE WHAKAHEKE I NGĀ PĀNGA KI TE ĀHUARANGI | MITIGATION – REDUCING IMPACTS ON THE CLIMATE

29. This decision is likely to result in a no direct impact in greenhouse gas emissions.
30. The decision relates to seeking approval to undertake public consultation on the proposed Fares Policy Review package and does not in itself change public transport service levels, fare settings, or travel behaviour. As a result, no direct greenhouse gas emissions increase or reduction is expected from this decision.
31. However, the Fares Policy Review considers fare settings that may influence public transport patronage and mode choice over time. Maintaining an affordable, simple and accessible fare system can support the attractiveness of public transport and contribute to broader regional objectives of increasing public transport use and reducing reliance on private vehicles.

32. The decision does not result in any material greenhouse gas emissions and no emissions estimate has been calculated

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

33. This decision provides an opportunity for Council to demonstrate leadership by engaging with communities, stakeholders and iwi on the future of public transport fares, helping to build awareness of the role that affordable and accessible public transport can play in supporting a more sustainable and lower-emissions transport system.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

34. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the LGA and Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision making requirements contained in Part Six of the LGA and that the decision making requirements of the LGA have been met.

TE HOROPAKI Ā-TURE | LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

35. The RLTP and the RPTP is prepared under the direction of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA). The recommendations presented in this report are considered to meet the requirements of the LTMA and consultation will be in accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA).

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

36. The preferred option is for Waikato Regional Council to endorse the proposed preferred package and consultation approach for the RPTP Fares Policy Review and proceed with public consultation. The preferred package, as outlined in **Attachment 1**, reflects feedback received through elected member workshops and seeks to balance affordability, patronage growth, equity and financial sustainability while preparing for the implementation of Motu Move. Public consultation will provide an opportunity for passengers, stakeholders and communities to provide feedback before final decisions are made by Council.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

37. To the best of the writer's knowledge, this decision is not significantly inconsistent with, nor is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with any policy adopted by Council or any plan required by the LGA or any other enactment.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

38. Council is obligated under the LGA to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes.

39. Council is committed to recognising and respecting its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi through partnership, participation and protection. The proposed public consultation process will provide opportunities for iwi and Māori to participate in the review of the region's fares policies and to share their views on the proposed changes before final decisions are made.
40. Staff will work with Council's communications and engagement teams to support appropriate engagement with iwi and Māori throughout the consultation process. This approach recognises the importance of Māori participation in decision-making and provides an opportunity for Māori perspectives and interests to be considered as part of the final recommendations to Council.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

41. The Fares Policy Review has reached a key milestone with the identification of a preferred package and associated consultation materials. The preferred package has been developed following technical assessment and elected member engagement and seeks to balance affordability, patronage growth, equity and financial sustainability, while supporting preparation for the implementation of Motu Move.
42. Following the recommendation from the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee on the 11th of August, this report seeks the Waikato Regional Councils endorsement of the proposed preferred package and consultation approach and proceed with public consultation. Consultation will provide an opportunity for passengers, stakeholders, iwi and the wider community to provide feedback on the proposed changes before final decisions are made by Council.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Statement of Proposal for Consultation (doc # 38085005)** [↓](#)
2. **Draft Consultation Questions (doc # 38089755)** [↓](#)

Fares review policy - Statement of Proposal**What is the proposal?**

Waikato Regional Council is reviewing the region's public transport fare policies. This will involve looking at how fares are structured, including fare zones, concessions, fare products, transfers, and how fares apply to different services such as buses, rail (Te Huia), and on-demand transport. The aim is to create a fare system that is simpler, fairer, and more financially sustainable, while keeping public transport affordable and accessible.

As part of this review, WRC is seeking feedback on a recommended package of changes to the fare policies in the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) 2022–2032. Following consultation, final recommendations could lead to the variation of the RPTP. The Waikato RPTP is a statutory document that sets out the public transport services, policies and rules that apply across the Waikato region.

We want to understand what people support, any concerns they may have, and how the proposed changes could affect passengers, households, communities and organisations.

No final decision has been made. Your feedback will help inform Council's final decision.

What is this proposal not?

This review does not aim to set individual fare prices. Rather, this is about reviewing the policy settings behind the fare system, including how fares are structured, how concessions apply, what fare products are available, and what rules should guide future fare decisions.

Fare prices are considered separately through Council's Annual Plan process. Council has recently confirmed fare price changes through that process. Information about those fare changes is available here: [\[insert link\]](#).

Some proposed policy changes may affect what certain passengers pay in the future. Council wants to understand these potential impacts before making a final decision.

Why is this review happening?

The public transport fare system in our region has become more complex over time. There are now different fare products, concessions and rules across the network. This review will look at how the system can be made simpler and easier for people to understand and use.

Public transport operating costs have increased significantly in recent years due to fuel, labour, maintenance and service expansion costs. At the same time, the Government expects a greater share of public transport operating costs to be paid through fares. Council needs to balance affordability and accessibility while ensuring services remain financially sustainable.

The introduction of the new National Ticketing Solution (Motu Move) also means this is the right time to review the region's fare structure to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and better aligned with the national approach.

What is currently in place?

The current fare system includes a mix of national concessions and regional fare products and rules. This includes national schemes such as SuperGold and Community Connect, as well as region-specific fare products such as the Accessibility Concession, PlusOne, peak SuperGold travel on buses making SuperGold travel free all-day, youth discounts on Te Huia, and fare capping for adults and youth. The system also includes fare zones, free transfers, and concession arrangements with partner organisations.

Doc # 37753049

There are several strengths in the current system. The zonal structure provides a simple basis for fare identification. Concessions help reduce travel costs for some passengers while promotions and incentives encourage more people to use public transport. However, the system has become more complex over time. There are now opportunities to make it simpler, clearer and better suited to the future public transport network.

When will this be implemented?

If the Council decides to go ahead with proposed changes, this would be implemented when the National Ticketing System (Motu Move) is implemented in Waikato in 2027.

The Proposal

Council has developed a proposed package that aims to keep public transport affordable and accessible, while making the fare system simpler and more financially sustainable. The proposal would retain key parts of the current system, including the broad zonal structure of the fare system (with slight changes), the Accessibility Concession, the PlusOne companion concession, youth discounts on Te Huia, youth and adult fare capping, and discounted Hamilton Central City zone travel.

Some changes are proposed where current fare products may not be working as well as intended, or where there is an opportunity to better align with the national approach.

The key areas of the proposed hybrid package are summarised below.

Proposed Area	What this means
Bus fare zones	What is currently in place Bus fares are calculated based on the number of zones a passenger travels through. The current structure includes 9 fare zones, plus the discounted Central City zone. What we are proposing The proposal is to retain the bus fare zone structure but simplify it by reducing the overall number of fare zones. The maximum bus fare would also be capped at 6 zones. This means the fare map may still show more than 6 areas, but passengers would not pay more than the 6-zone fare. What this means for passengers Passengers would still pay based on the number of zones they travel through, but the maximum bus fare would be reached at 6 zones. Why we are proposing change This change would make the fare zone structure simpler and easier to understand. It would also better reflect current travel patterns and reduce the cost of some longer regional bus trips. Proposed bus fare zones are provided in Appendix B.
Te Huia fares	What is currently in place Council has already decided to set Te Huia fares separately from bus fares through Council Annual Plan. What we are proposing The proposal is to set Te Huia fares by station, rather than by bus fare zones. What this means for passengers

Proposed Area	What this means
	Passengers using Te Huia would continue to pay rail fares based on their trip between stations. There would be no free transfers between bus and Te Huia services because bus and Te Huia fares are proposed to be managed under separate fare structures. Currently, only around 0.05% of Te Huia journeys involve a bus-rail transfer. Why we are proposing this change Te Huia is an inter-regional rail service with a different customer market, service level and cost structure from standard bus services. Keeping Te Huia fares separate from bus fares reflects the different role and operating costs of the service.
On-demand services fares	What is currently in place The current RTP allows on-demand services to have different fare prices depending on the type of service and how it operates. What we are proposing The proposal is to keep on-demand fares the same as the equivalent bus fare. A higher fare may apply where an on-demand service has a specific purpose or provides a premium service. What this means for passengers On-demand fares would be the same as the equivalent bus fare. However, some specialised services, such as Hamilton Night Flex, may have a higher fare to reflect the different service they provide. Why we are proposing this change This would make fares more consistent across bus and on-demand services, while still allowing higher fares for services that provide additional benefits or a specialised service.
Accessibility Concession	What is currently in place Accessibility Concession cardholders currently travel free at all times on the public transport network. The concession also includes a PlusOne companion entitlement for cardholders who need travel assistance. What we are proposing The proposal is to retain the Accessibility Concession, including the PlusOne. What this means for passengers There would be no change to how Accessibility Concession cardholders currently travel. Why we are proposing this change Council recognises the importance of this concession for Accessibility Concession cardholders and places a high priority on retaining it.
SuperGold	What is currently in place SuperGold cardholders currently travel free at all times on Waikato bus services. On Te Huia, SuperGold free travel is already limited to off-peak times, weekends and public holidays, in line with the national SuperGold scheme. What we are proposing The proposal is to align SuperGold travel on buses with the national SuperGold scheme and with how SuperGold already applies on Te Huia. What this means for passengers SuperGold cardholders would continue to travel free during off-peak times and all day on weekends and public holidays. Free travel on

Proposed Area	What this means
	buses during weekday peak times, between 7.00am – 9.00am and 3.00pm – 6.30pm, would no longer continue. Why we are proposing this change Central government funds the national SuperGold scheme, which provides free off-peak travel. Free travel during weekday peak periods is an extra benefit funded locally through rates and fares. This change would help make public transport more financially sustainable.
Fare capping	What is currently in place Adult fares are currently capped at 9 journeys per week. What we are proposing The proposal is to retain the existing adult fare cap and apply the same weekly cap to youth passengers on both bus and rail services. What this means for passengers Adult and youth passengers would pay for a maximum of 9 eligible journeys per week. Any eligible journeys after that would be free for the rest of that week. Why we are proposing this change This would provide certainty for frequent passengers, limit how much regular users pay each week, and make the fare capping approach more consistent across adult and youth fares.
Youth (5-18 age band) Fares - Bus	What is currently in place Youth fares for passengers aged 5-18 are currently capped at 6.5 journeys per week. However, only around 12.6% of youth journeys currently receive a capped fare benefit because many young passengers do not travel often enough each week to reach the cap. What we are proposing The proposal is for every youth bus journey to receive a 20% discount in addition to fares being capped at 9 journeys per week. What this means for passengers More young passengers would receive a fare benefit, including those who only use public transport a few times a week. Youth passengers would pay discounted fares for up to 9 eligible journeys per week, and any eligible journeys after that would be free for the rest of that week. Why we are proposing this change This approach would make youth fares simpler, easier to understand and more consistent, while still supporting young people who use public transport regularly.
Youth (5-18 age band) fares - Rail	What is currently in place Youth rail fares currently apply to passengers aged 5-15, who receive a 50% discount on Te Huia fares. Youth fares are also currently capped at 6.5 journeys per week. Passengers aged 16-18 pay adult fares. What we are proposing The proposal is to keep the 50% youth discount on Te Huia, extend eligibility from ages 5-15 to 5-18, and cap fares at nine journeys per week. What this means for passengers More young passengers would be eligible for the 50% youth discount on Te Huia. Youth passengers would pay discounted fares for up to 9 eligible journeys per week, and any eligible journeys after that would be free for the rest of that week. Why we are proposing this change

Proposed Area	What this means
	This approach would make youth rail fares simpler, easier to understand and more consistent with the wider fare system. This will also support young people and families who use Te Huia.
Transfers	What is currently in place Free transfers are currently available between eligible bus services, subject to the current transfer window rules. Free transfers may also apply between bus and rail services. What we are proposing The proposal is to retain free transfers between eligible bus services. However, free transfers between bus and rail services would no longer apply under the proposed fare structure. What this means for passengers Passengers would still be able to transfer between eligible bus services, subject to the current transfer window rules¹. However, passengers transferring between bus and Te Huia would need to pay separate bus and rail fares. Why we are proposing this change Bus and Te Huia fares are proposed to be managed under separate fare structures. This creates significant technical and administrative challenges for providing free transfers between bus and rail.
Annual fare adjustments	What is currently in place Historically, fare increases in the region have often happened in large steps, with long periods of no change followed by sharper increases when fare revenue falls below sustainable levels. What we are proposing The proposal is to include a policy that would allow Council to review fares annually, taking inflation, operating costs and revenue requirements into account. What this means for passengers Fares may be changed annually but would be smaller and gradual changes that are easy to plan for. Why we are proposing this change Regular fare reviews would help keep fares in line with changing costs, support the long-term sustainability of public transport, and allow gradual fare adjustments that are easier for passengers to manage.

Additional recommendations of the proposal

The review also recommends several supporting updates to make the fare system easier to manage, understand and promote over time.

These include continuing externally funded concessions with partner organisations, rounding fares so they are easier to communicate, and clarifying the objectives of local concessions so they can be better implemented in the future.

How can you have your say?

Council is seeking feedback on the proposed fare policy changes. You can provide feedback by:

- completing the online survey;
- making a written submission by email, post or hand delivery; or
- asking to speak to your feedback or submission at a hearing.

Council is particularly interested in understanding:

- what you support;
- what concerns you;
- how the proposed changes may affect you, your household, your organisation or your community; and
- any suggestions you have before final decisions are made.

The online survey is available at **[insert link]**.

Written submissions can be made by:

- email to [\[transport@waikatoregion.govt.nz\]](mailto:transport@waikatoregion.govt.nz);
- post to **[insert postal address]**; or
- hand delivery to a Council office at **[insert address]**.

Public consultation opens on Thursday, 3 September 2026 and closes at 5.00pm on Monday, 5 October 2026.

If you are making a written submission, please include:

- your name;
- your contact details;
- the name of any organisation you are representing, if applicable; and
- whether you would like to speak to your submission at a hearing.

If you need help providing feedback, making a submission, or attending the hearing, please contact Council at **[insert email / phone number]** or visit one of our offices.

Written submissions are public information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and may be made publicly available, including on Waikato Regional Council's website. Personal contact details will not be published.

Council intends to hold a hearing for submitters who wish to speak to their submission. The hearing dates will be confirmed later. If you indicate that you would like to be heard, Council staff will contact you to arrange a time. You can speak to councillors about your feedback in person or via video link (if you wish). Your feedback will be taken into account along with other submissions from across the region.

The Hearing committee will consider all feedback received, including written submissions, responses to the online survey, and feedback presented at the hearing. The Hearing committee will then make recommendations through the relevant committee process before Council makes a final decision.

Timetable for consultation

The dates below outline the timetable for the consultation process. Any changes to these dates will be publicly advised on Waikato Regional Council's website.

Indicative date	Activity
4 August 2026	Council receives the preferred package for public consultation.
11 August 2026	RTC PT meeting considers recommendation of the preferred package to the Council for public consultation.
27 August 2026	Council considers endorsement of the preferred package for public consultation.
3 September 2026	Consultation period begins (8.00 am).
5 October 2026	Consultation period ends (5.00pm).
Late October / early November 2026 (to be confirmed)	Oral submissions will be heard by the council hearing panel. Hearing dates will be confirmed at a later stage and provided to submitters who indicate they wish to speak to their submission.
December 2026	Council deliberations and adoption.

What happens next?

After the consultation period closes, all feedback received will be carefully reviewed. This includes online survey responses, written submissions and feedback presented at hearings.

Submissions and feedback will be analysed to identify key themes, areas of support, areas of concern, and any suggested changes to the proposal. This information will be reported to elected members to support their decision-making.

Council will consider the feedback before making final decisions. If the Council decides to go ahead with proposed changes, this would be implemented when the National Ticketing System (Motu Move) is implemented in Waikato in 2027.

The final outcome will be communicated publicly, including information on how consultation feedback was considered.

Appendix A- Proposed policy changes

The proposed amendments to the current RTPP fare policies are provided in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

Table 2- Proposed amendments to existing policies within the current Waikato RTPP

Relevant existing RTPP Policy	Proposed Changes
P34 - Public transport services will be delivered under an integrated zonal-fare structure that covers the Waikato region.	<i>P34 – Coordinated Fares Framework: The council will maintain a coordinated fares framework across the Waikato public transport network. Fare structures may differ between service types to reflect differences in market, service characteristics, operating costs, and customer outcomes.</i> <i>P34A – Bus Fares: Bus services will generally be delivered under an integrated zonal fare structure across the Waikato region. The council will seek to maintain a simple and consistent fare structure that supports network integration, customer understanding, and equitable access to public transport. Transfers between eligible bus services may be provided in accordance with council's published fare and ticketing rules.</i> <i>P34B – Passenger Rail Fares (Te Huia): The council will set fares and discounts for passenger rail services separately from bus services, recognising the distinct market, operating characteristics, and service offering of rail. Rail fares may be based on station-to-station travel, and the council may introduce additional rail-specific fare products and promotions to support patronage and revenue objectives.</i> <i>P34C – On-Demand Service Fares- The council will set fares for on-demand public transport services according to the role and characteristics of the service. Where on-demand services are closely integrated with the fixed-route bus network, fares should generally align with equivalent bus fares. The council may apply premium fares where an on-demand service provides a distinct or higher-value transport offering.</i>
P35 - The council will develop a Public Transport Revenue Plan to identify any anticipated changes in fare settings and revenue over the three-year period.	<i>P35 – The council will review public transport fare levels on an annual basis as part of the Annual Plan process. The review will consider changes in operating costs, consumer price inflation, the impact on passenger demand, and progressing towards any current cost recovery objectives as set out in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.</i>
P36 – Children under the age of 5 to travel for free on all services.	No change.
P37 - All SuperGold Card holders with their concession loaded onto a registered smartcard are	<i>P37 - All SuperGold Card holders with their concession loaded onto a registered smartcard are</i>

Doc # 37753049

8

eligible for free travel on all services included within the SuperGold Card scheme at all times.	<i>eligible for free travel on all services included within the SuperGold Card scheme.</i>
P37 (numbering error in original document) - An accessibility concession will be available to eligible people with a transport disability to enable free travel on all contracted public transport services at all times. One additional support person may travel for free when accompanying an accessibility concession holder where the nature of the card holder's disability means they are unable to travel alone.	<i>No change to the policy wording. Change to the numbering to P38.</i>
P39 - The council may work with any entity to introduce additional fare concessions for specific user groups provided the concession is funded directly by a third party to offset any public subsidy costs.	<i>No change.</i>
P40 - The council will seek to implement a common integrated ticketing system on all contracted public transport services within the region.	<i>P40 - The council will implement the National Ticketing Solution and provide a common, integrated ticketing system across contracted public transport services in the Waikato region.</i>
P41 - The council will minimise the use of cash on public transport services by setting cash fares higher than equivalent smartcard fares.	<i>No change.</i>
P42 - The council will implement weekly fare capping for smartcard users to encourage frequent public transport travel.	<i>No change.</i>
P43 - The council may implement temporary promotional fare and ticketing products to encourage uptake of public transport from time to time.	<i>No change.</i>
P44 - Free transfers will be available on all public transport services (including passenger rail) for smartcard users only for travel within a prescribed transfer time and/or trip limit as published by Waikato Regional Council. To encourage the use of smartcards and improve safety by reducing the amount of cash on buses, free transfers will not be available in association with cash fares.	<i>P44 - Free transfers may be provided between eligible public transport services within prescribed transfer windows and conditions published by Waikato Regional Council. Transfer arrangements may vary between service types and fare structures.</i>
P45 - The council will participate in and transition to a national ticketing system.	<i>Removed as integrated into P40.</i>
P46 - The council will remove the use of cash on public transport services as part of implementing a national ticketing system and will investigate the viability of doing so earlier.	<i>P46 - The council will take a phased approach to removing cash from contracted public transport services as part of the implementation of the National Ticketing Solution.</i>

Table 3- Additional Recommended Policies

Proposed Recommendation	Policy number	Suggested Policy wordings
Relative Zonal Bus Fares	PXX	<i>The council will set relative zonal fares to reflect distance travelled, shared or fixed costs, and relevant equity and access considerations</i>
Rounding of fares	PXX	<i>The council will set individual smartcard fares in increments of 10 cents to support simplicity,</i>

		<i>consistency, and ease of communication, while achieving the revenue outcomes determined through the annual fares review.</i> <i>While cash fares continue to be offered, cash fares will be rounded to the nearest 50 cents to support efficient fare collection and administration.</i>
Youth fare discounts	<i>PXX</i>	<i>The council will provide a discount on every bus and rail trip for youth smartcard users.</i>

Appendix B- Proposed Bus fare zone

The current and proposed new bus fare zone diagrams are provided below.

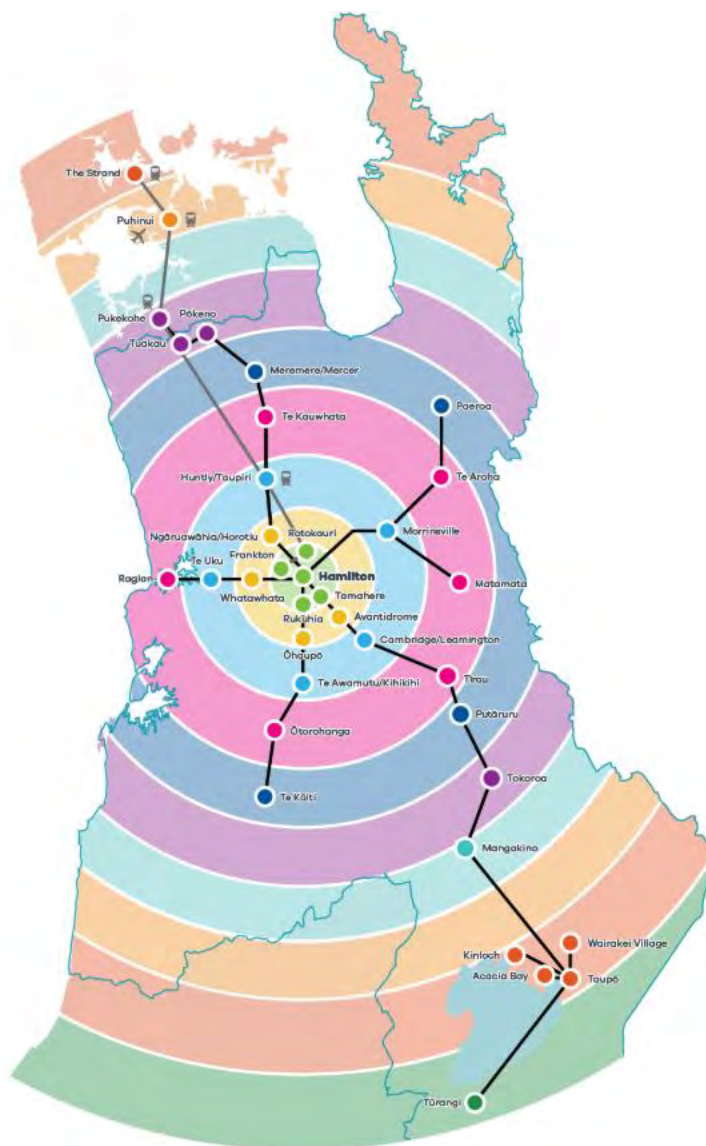


Figure 1- Current Fare Zone Diagram

Doc # 37753049



Figure 2- Proposed Fare Zone Diagram

RPTP Fare Policy Review consultation questions

This survey focuses on the proposed changes that are expected to have the most direct impact on passengers. You can provide feedback on any other part of the recommended package at the end of the survey.

Please choose which questions you would like to provide feedback on:

- Youth fares
- SuperGold

Youth bus fare proposed changes:

Under the proposal, every youth bus journey (5-18 years) would receive a 20% discount in addition to fares being capped at 9 journeys per week. This would provide discounts to a greater range of young passengers, especially those who only use public transport a few times a week.

1. Do you support this change?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
2. What impact would the **proposed increase to the bus fare cap** have on you/your loved ones?
 - No impact
 - Minor impact
 - Moderate impact
 - Significant impact
 - Not sure
3. What impact would the **20% discount** have on you/your loved ones?
 - No impact
 - Minor impact
 - Moderate impact
 - Significant impact
 - Not sure
4. If you have any comments on this change, please include here

Youth rail fare proposed changes:

Under the proposal, every youth rail journey (5-18 years) would receive a 50% discount in addition to fares being capped at 9 journeys per week.

5. Do you support this change?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

|

6. What impact would the **proposed increase to the rail fare cap** have on you/your loved ones?

- No impact
- Minor impact
- Moderate impact
- Significant impact
- Not sure

7. If you have any comments on this change, please include here

SuperGold proposed changes:

Under this proposal, Council is proposing to remove free Super Gold travel during peak periods. SuperGold travel would be continue to be free during off-peak times, weekends and public holidays, in line with the national SuperGold scheme.

The national SuperGold scheme is funded by central government. Free weekday peak travel is an additional local extension funded through rates and fares.

8. Do you support this change?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

9. If you have any comments on this change, please include here.

10. What impact would removing free SuperGold travel during peak period have on you/your loved ones?

- No impact
- Minor impact
- Moderate impact
- Significant impact
- Not sure

11. If you have any comments on this change, please include here

12. Do you have any further feedback on the proposed fare policy changes?

Please use the space below to tell us anything else you would like Council to consider before final decisions are made.

Hearings and decision making

You can speak to councillors about your feedback in person or via video link (if you wish).

Details will be available online at waikatoregion.govt.nz/council-meetings.

Councillors will make decisions.

Your feedback will be taken into account along with other submissions from across the region. All meetings are open to the public.

|

13. Would you like to speak to your feedback or submission at a hearing?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, please provide your details to arrange hearings.

- First name
- Surname
- Organisation/ group submitting (if applicable)
- Email:
- Phone/Mobile no:

DRAFT

7.6 TE MATATINI EVENT

Rā Date:	5 August 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Phil King, Director, Regional Transport Connections
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. In the context of Te Matatini 2027, the purpose of this report is to seek:
 - (a) Funding to provide enhanced bus services for the duration of the event.
 - (b) Approval to release Te Huia carriages for use as a shuttle service by the event organisers, at no cost to Council.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Te Matatini event will be held in the Waikato region in February 2027. With 20,000 predicted daily visitors on event days (Tuesday to Friday) and up to 45,000 predicted visitors for the finals day (Saturday), it is of national significance.
3. In the context of policies included within the 2022-2032 Regional Public Transport Plan, Waikato-Tainui as event organisers have asked Council to consider the role of public transport for event attendees.
4. A passenger rail shuttle service between Rotokauri and Hopuhopu is proposed (subject to National Timetable Committee approval). Council funding has not been requested. Council is asked to approve the use of Te Huia carriages for this service noting the slightly increased risk to timetabled services if all carriages are in use at the same time resulting in no spare.
5. Council staff have considered what enhancements can be made to existing bus services for the duration of the event. Two options for bus services are provided in this report:
 - (a) A base bus option based on operating normal route 21 weekday services with a minor change of bus stop location to reduce the walk to the event entrance. Saturday operates on a reduced timetable, potentially at odds with the larger predicted audience on this day. There is no additional cost for this option.
 - (b) An enhanced bus package with the following elements:
 - (i) Operating normal route 21 weekday services but extending the route slightly to take passengers directly to the event entrance – additional cost \$1,620.32
 - (ii) Upscaling to operate a weekday timetable for the finals day on Saturday 27 February has been costed at \$2,400.57.
 - (iii) In addition, operating double decker buses for some trips on the Saturday has been costed at an additional \$640.
 - (iv) The total cost of this enhanced status quo option is \$4,660.89. Normal bus fares would be charged for these services, offsetting costs.

6. Information about economic development benefits and opportunities for the region arising from this event will be provided to the Council in the context of the draft 2026/27 implementation plan of the Waikato regional economic development strategy. The draft implementation plan is currently scheduled to be presented to the Council for endorsement by the end of September 2026.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Te Matatini Event* (Council, 27 August 2026) be received.
2. That Council approves the enhanced bus package option outlined in this report at total cost of \$4,660.89.
3. That Council confirms that **EITHER** 50% **OR** 100% of the costs of the enhanced bus package option should be funded by Council, with the balance to be funded by the event organiser.
4. That Council approves the release of Te Huia carriages for use by the event organiser at their cost as a shuttle service between Rotokauri and Hopuhopu on event days, subject to approval by the National Timetable Committee. Council notes the slight increased risk to timetabled Te Huia services if all carriages are in use at the same time resulting in no spare.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

Te Matatini

7. Te Matatini is Aotearoa's premier kapa haka festival, drawing performers and spectators from across the motu and Australia. Its vision is *Mana motuhake ki te kāinga. Matatū, Mataora, Matatini ki te ao*, to contribute positively to the overall health and social wellbeing of Aotearoa whānui, through the vehicle and means of kapa haka.
8. Announced in September 2025, following a pōwhiri at Turangawaewae Marae on 22 February, the event will take place at the Hopuhopu Tribal Complex from 23 to 27 February 2027.
9. Hosting the event at Hopuhopu reflects both the cultural significance of the site and the leadership role of Waikato-Tainui under the time-honoured mantle of the Kiingitanga.
10. Last held in the Waikato more than two decades ago, the festival is forecast to attract up to 100,000 attendees across five main days, showcasing 55 of the top kapa haka teams from Aotearoa and Australia. Its scale delivers significant regional economic and social benefits, activating multiple town centres, businesses and community organisations throughout the Tainui waka region.
11. The event is expected to generate strong flow-on impacts for hospitality, transport, tourism, retail and the wider events sector, while also boosting local employment, supplier engagement, domestic visitation and repeat travel.
12. There is strong strategic alignment with regional and national priorities by strengthening regional economic development and destination promotion, enhancing community wellbeing and cultural inclusion, upholding Māori outcomes, partnership and Te Tiriti commitments, expanding workforce development and volunteer activation, ensuring the delivery of safe, well-managed large-scale events (leverage), and advancing long-term, sustainable strategies (legacy) rather than one-off benefits.

13. Attendance from Tuesday to Friday is expected to be approximately 20,000 people per day. People are likely to come and go during the day as teams deliver kapa haka performances and they and their supporters then depart. From a transport perspective, this may smooth demand across the day but will require services to operate more frequently rather than at peak only.
14. Attendance at finals day on Saturday is expected to exceed 45,000 people. It is understood many attendees will stay for the full day, resulting in peak transport requirements at the start and end of the event.

Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032

15. The Regional Public Transport Plan¹ (RPTP) sets out the policy framework for targeted services as a contribution to special events.
16. Public transport enables increased accessibility to events and can minimise the impact of congestion caused by large movements of attendees. Services to special events can also provide broader opportunities for marketing the public transport system, as well as exposing potential non-users to the benefits of public transport use.
17. Policy 31 states that where there are opportunities and benefits for promoting public transport, such as exposing non- users to the benefits of public transport, the council may support delivery of public transport for special events by:
 - (a) undertaking promotional/marketing activities
 - (b) leveraging the existing public transport network through provision of discounted travel for specific purposes within limited duration
 - (c) contracting and managing service provision on behalf of event organisers, provided funding for those services is secured by event organisers.
18. Policies 32 and 33 set out how Council may contribute to the provision of public transport services to special events These are summarised below.

Policy 32: Commercial Events	Policy 33: Community Events
Admission fee is charged	Free entry for attendees
At least 50 per cent of the cost of services provision would be funded by the event organiser	100% of the cost of services provision would be funded by Council.
Request received 12 months in advance	Request received 12 months in advance
Sufficient public funding being available	Sufficient public funding being available
More than 20,000 attendees on any one day	More than 20,000 attendees on any one day
Takes place within the Waikato region	Takes place within the Waikato region
Traffic Management Plan that ensures a positive journey experience for public transport passengers	Traffic Management Plan that ensures a positive journey experience for public transport passengers

¹ [2022-2032-RPTP-document.pdf](#)

Will result in demonstrable benefits for the wider community	Will result in demonstrable benefits for the wider community
Funding may be subject to conditions	Funding may be subject to conditions

19. These policies were considered in the context of the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan where additional funding to enable delivery was requested. Council decided to retain the existing policies but provided no additional funding. As such, Council has a total annual budget of \$50,000 to support special events, which is fully allocated to Waikato Stadium rugby shuttles and the annual Balloons Over Waikato Night-glow event. No NZTA funding has been approved within the National Land Transport Fund to subsidise Council's commitment.
20. There is therefore currently no budgeted funding to support Te Matatini or any other additional event in the 2026/27 financial year.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

21. In June, Waikato-Tainui provided Waikato Regional Council with an update on its planning for transport (attachment one). This seeks approval to release Te Huia carriages for use as a shuttle service by the event organisers, at no cost to Council.
22. In addition, Council staff have considered what enhancements can be made to existing bus services for the duration of the event.
23. An assessment of the current RTP policy identifies several areas for consideration.
 - (a) Run by Te Matatini Society Incorporated and led by a national board, this would be classified in the policy as a commercial event, noting that it that aspires to improve the wellbeing of communities in a measurable way, preserve the strengths of cultural identity and achieve economic sustainability².
 - (b) Consistent with previous events, an entry fee will be charged but ticket prices have not yet been announced. Tickets for the 2025 event were kept at 2023 prices.
 - (c) Following announcement of the event in September 2025, Waikato-Tainui as event organisers have presented progress with organisation of the event at the Co-Governance Committee and have been working with Council staff across several teams. The event organiser also reached out operationally to the organisation in early February 2026 seeking engagement with Council staff. Together, these discussions and operational engagement satisfy the requirement for more than 12 months' notice.
 - (d) The event is within the region, has at least 20,000 expected visitors per day, and can identify demonstrable benefits for the wider community.
 - (e) A full transport plan, including a site-specific traffic management plan, is in development.
24. The event therefore appears suitable for consideration within the context of the Regional Public Transport Plan as a commercial event, subject to funding.

Event Transport Plan

² [About Us - Te Matatini](#)

25. Historical evidence from previous events confirms the network's limitations, including repeated queueing, local gridlock and slowed emergency response times, reinforcing the need for a managed, well-designed transport solution. Past events at the site have resulted in severe congestion and queueing onto Great South Road, creating unacceptable risks for pedestrians, drivers and emergency access. Traffic modelling shows that unmanaged congestion would cause extensive delays across Great South Road and surrounding roads, whereas a controlled closure with detours via the Waikato Expressway maintains network efficiency and predictable event flows.
26. A comprehensive transport network plan is essential to ensure safety, efficiency and cultural integrity. Council staff have been working with event organisers to understand their transport plans for the event. This will include road closures around the event location with controlled parking, supported by wide network of park & ride services at key locations. A fleet of shuttles will connect to local accommodation.

Passenger Rail

27. The event organiser seeks Council approval to release Te Huia carriages. At their cost, the event organiser wishes to use these as a shuttle service between Rotokauri and Hopuhopu.
28. Council is asked to note the slightly increased risk to timetabled services if all carriages are in use at the same time resulting in no spare.

Bus Services

29. Two bus options have been identified, considered below.

NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA | OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Option One – Base bus services

Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa | Description of option

The closest bus service to the event is Route 21 Northern Connector. This operates 17 northbound and 19 southbound services each weekday. On a Saturday 8 northbound and 10 southbound services are operated.

There are existing bus stops at the intersection of Great South Road and Fox Road. Access to the event entrance from this location would involve a 1.1km walk (approximately 15 minutes) along Great South Road up to Old Taupiri Road then along this to the Hopuhopu Tribal Complex Guardhouse entrance. Alternatively, it is likely many people would look to cross the rail tracks at risk to themselves and in breach of the event boundary security fencing.

Within existing budgets, an alternative would be to install temporary bus stops at the intersection of Great South Road and Old Taupiri Road. This intersection will form one edge of the event traffic management zone and would allow attendees to alight at a safer location and reduce the walking distance to 700m (approximately 9 minutes).

Tearo matawai i ngā pānga | Impact assessment

Ngā Pānga Ture Legal Implications	None
Tūraru Risk	None, noting the minor delay to services from this extra stop.
Ngā Pānga Kaupapahere / Hononga Rautaki	Aligns with RPTP – no impact.

Policy Implications / Strategic Links	
Ngā utu me ngā hua o te rohe Regional costs and benefits	Existing services operating between Hamilton Transport Centre and Huntly provide adjacent access to the event at no additional cost. This is a benefit to Council and event organisers. There are three main benefits to the event by providing an additional bus stop at the intersection of Great South Road and Old Taupiri Road: 1. Reduced walking distance for attendees 2. Safer stop location, within traffic management zone. 3. Improved security due to not encouraging attendees to cross the rail lines and breach event fencing. Services would be promoted as part of event marketing.
Ngā Pānga Putea Financial Implications	None
Ngā Pānga LTP / Mahere ā- Tou LTP Implications/ Annual Plan	None
Ngā Putanga Hapori Community Outcomes	Maintains existing community outcomes
Ngā Tirohanga Hapori Community Views	This option has been developed in partnership with event organisers. Community consultation has not taken place.
Pānga Kiritaki Customer impact	Positive – minimal impact for existing customers, some benefit to event attendees.

Option Two – Enhanced bus package (preferred)

Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa | Description of option

An enhancement to the weekday status quo would be to operate a minor diversion of Route 21 Northern Connector from Great South Road left onto Old Taupiri Road and into the Hopuhopu Tribal Complex at the event entrance. The service could then proceed through the attendee drop off zone and enable attendees to alight directly into the event. The service would then proceed back to Great South Road and return to its existing route. This would enable 17 northbound and 19 southbound services per day to directly connect with the event.

With the largest crowds expected on the Saturday, this option also includes the upscaling of services to a weekday frequency on that day.

Extending this, on the Saturday there is also more opportunity to utilise double decker buses on more of the runs, further increasing capacity.

Tearo matawai i ngā pānga | Impact assessment

Ngā Pānga Ture Legal Implications	None
-------------------------------------	------

Tūraru Risk	Weekday - slight delay to Route 21 but considered to be manageable within the timetable.
Ngā Pānga Kaupapahere / Hononga Rautaki Policy Implications / Strategic Links	Aligns with RPTP – no impact.
Ngā utu me ngā hua o te rohe Regional costs and benefits	Existing services operating between Hamilton Transport Centre and Huntly would provide direct access to the event at a relatively small additional cost (see below). There are three main benefits to the event by diverting the bus to directly connect into the event: 1. No walking distance for attendees 2. Safer stop location, within traffic management zone. 3. Improved security due to not encouraging attendees to cross the rail lines and breach event fencing.
Ngā Pānga Putea Financial Implications	The total daily cost of this minor diversion is \$405.08 per weekday, or a total of \$1,620.32 for 23 to 26 February. Operating a weekday timetable for the Saturday 27 February has been costed at \$2,400.57. In addition, operating double decker buses for some of the trips on the Saturday has been costed at an additional \$640. The total cost of this enhanced option is \$4,660.89. In the context of the RPTP policies, Council needs to consider whether it is willing to fund these costs (unbudgeted) and/or whether the event organisers should be asked to fund 50% or 100% of the total. Event organisers are interested in integrating bus ticket costs within the event entry ticket. If this option is approved by Council, further discussions would take place to confirm how this would work. Services would be promoted as part of event marketing.
Ngā Pānga LTP / Mahere ā- Tou LTP Implications/ Annual Plan	This sum is not budgeted within the Annual Plan although it could be funded within existing budgets.
Ngā Putanga Hapori Community Outcomes	Maintains existing community outcomes
Ngā Tirohanga Hapori Community Views	This option has been developed in partnership with event organisers. Community consultation has not taken place.
Pānga Kiritaki Customer impact	Positive – minimal impact for existing customers, significant benefit to event attendees.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

30. Staff continue to work with Waikato-Tainui to support development of integrated transport plans for the event.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

31. This option will have virtually no impact on the ability of the Council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.

TE WHAKAMAURU – TE WHAKAHEKE I NGĀ PĀNGA KI TE ĀHUARANGI | MITIGATION – REDUCING IMPACTS ON THE CLIMATE

32. This decision is likely to result in a small reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for those attendees who would have driven and instead travel via public transport bus or a shuttle rail service.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

33. Encouraging visitors to attend events using public transport is aligned with the Regional Public Transport Plan, demonstrates leadership and increases awareness of services and their positive impacts.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

34. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the LGA and Council's *Significance and Engagement Policy*, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision making requirements contained in Part Six of the LGA and that the decision making requirements of the LGA have been met.

TE HOROPAKI Ā-TURE | LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

35. No impacts

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

36. The preferred bus option is to enhance existing Route 21 services with a stop at the event entrance, running a weekday timetable on the Saturday, and operating double decker's for some trips on the Saturday. It is recommended that the Committee supports Council consideration of funding either 50% or 100% of these costs.
37. Approving the use of Te Huia carriages for a shuttle service (subject to National Timetable Committee approval) is recommended.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHĒRE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

38. To the best of the writer's knowledge, this decision is not significantly inconsistent with, nor is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with any policy adopted by Council or any plan required by the LGA or any other enactment.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

39. This decision supports whakahoahoa / partnership by working with Māori groups and communities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

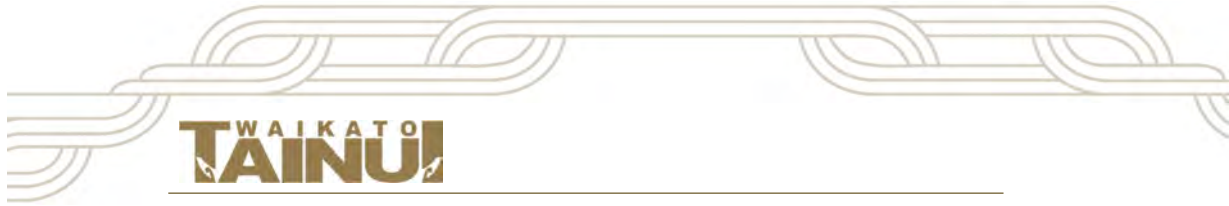
40. Te Matatini in February 2027 will be a large and significant national event.
41. Development and successful delivery of an integrated transport plan for the event across multiple partners is critical to the experience of attendees.
42. This report considers what role Waikato Regional Council might have in providing bus services to the event and asks Council to approve the use of Te Huia carriages for use by the event organisers as a shuttle service.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

43. None

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Formal Te Huia Request received from Waikato-Tainui June 2026 (doc id: 37782389) [↓](#)



**Formal Request for Consideration of Te Huia Services for
Taakiri Tuu Te Matatini 2027**

Purpose

Waikato-Tainui respectfully requests that Waikato Regional Council consider the use of Te Huia rail services to support transport to and from Taakiri Tuu Te Matatini 2027. An early indication of this intention was provided to the Waikato Regional Council at the 8 April JMA (Joint Management Agreement) hui. Initial engagements have been had with KiwiRail leadership who indicated their full support of the opportunity to partner with us and WRC to deliver a fit for purpose service that supports the broader logistics plan for Taakiri Tuu Te Matatini 2027.

Background – Te Matatini 2027 (Waikato Tainui)

Te Matatini is Aotearoa's premier kapa haka festival, drawing performers and spectators from across the motu and Australia. Hosting the event at Hopuhopu reflects both the cultural significance of the site and the leadership role of Waikato-Tainui under the time-honoured mantle of the Kiingitanga.

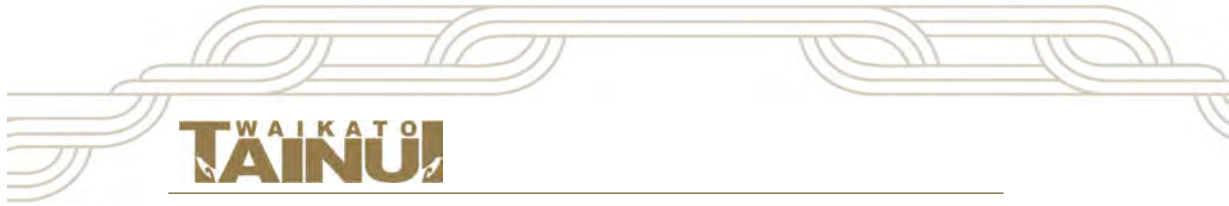
Event Details

- Poowhiri, Monday 22 February 2027, 6,000 invited guests only (Tuurangawaewae Marae)
- Preliminary Competition, Tuesday 23 – 26 February, anticipating 20,000 people each day (Hopuhopu Tribal Complex)
- Finals and Prizegiving, 27 February, anticipating 20,000 people (Hopuhopu Tribal Complex).

Regional Scale and Impact

Last held in the Waikato more than two decades ago, the festival is forecast to attract up to 100,000 attendees across five main days, showcasing 55 of the top kapa haka teams from Aotearoa and Australia. Its scale delivers significant regional economic and social benefits, activating multiple town centres, businesses and community organisations throughout the Tainui waka region. The event generates strong flow-on impacts for hospitality, transport, tourism, retail and the wider events sector, while also boosting local employment, supplier engagement, domestic visitation and repeat travel. There is strong strategic alignment with regional and national priorities by strengthening regional economic development and destination promotion, enhancing community wellbeing and cultural inclusion, upholding Maaori outcomes, partnership and Te Tiriti commitments,





expanding workforce development and volunteer activation, ensuring the delivery of safe, well-managed large-scale events, and advancing long-term, sustainable strategies rather than one-off benefits.

Ticket Sales and Patronage Considerations (Waikato Tainui)

100,000 people over five days, expected at Hopuhopu

A comprehensive transport network plan is essential to ensure safety, efficiency and cultural integrity. Past events at the site have resulted in severe congestion and queueing onto Great South Road, creating unacceptable risks for pedestrians, drivers and emergency access. Traffic modelling shows that unmanaged congestion would cause extensive delays across Great South Road and surrounding roads, whereas a controlled closure with detours via the Waikato Expressway maintains network efficiency and predictable event flows. As the tribal headquarters of Waikato-Tainui, ensuring safe and dignified access for attendees is a cultural obligation, and Te Matatini's national significance demands infrastructure that reflects its scale and mana. Historical evidence from previous events confirms the network's limitations, including repeated queueing, local gridlock and slowed emergency response times, reinforcing the need for a managed, well-designed transport solution.

Shuttle Service Considerations

Coupled with wider bus and van park and ride facilities, train services are proposed, which includes shuttle services operating on the hour (preferred) or every two hours between Frankton and Hopuhopu. As we are proposing public transport services only with public parking on site restricted to disability accessibility, kaumaatua, VIP, and Te Matatini event staff, the efficient movement of 20,000 people per day is critical for a successful event.

- Operational hours of event 0700-1900
- Te Huia consist = 1 locomotive + 4 carriages
- Shuttle = a consist running between Frankton and Hopuhopu
- A consist can accommodate up to 277 people (147 seated and 130 standing)
- 12 shuttle services = potential to move 3,300 per day
- 6 shuttle services = potential to move 1,150 per day
- Attendance from Wednesday to Friday is expected to be approximately 20,000 people per day.
- Attendance on Saturday is expected to exceed 45,000 people, with increased numbers anticipated due to the competition finals.

Note:

All costs will be integrated with ticketing at the time of purchase / registration.



**Primary Recommendation:**

Hourly Shuttle Service: Tuesday to Friday - Frankton–Hopuhopu/Huntly

- This would require 2x Te Huia consists
- For Te Huia services 1302 and 1304 = scheduled stop at Hopuhopu would require earlier departure ex Frankton
- Allowing between 5–15 minutes for passengers to disembark and embark at a temporary Hopuhopu stop
- Passengers wishing to return to Frankton from the event would board a shuttle service at Hopuhopu
- There are two considerations under review for shuttles to either run direct to/from Hopuhopu or through Huntly then return to Frankton.



8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

HE TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION:

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 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 30 July 2026	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons 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 - Public Excluded Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 4 August 2026	s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) s7(2)(j) of the Act - To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	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
8.3 - Proposed increase to vessel build project budget to accommodate additional project management	s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information 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

8.4 - Chief Executive's End of Year Performance and Remuneration Review FY26	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, QLG Advisory (Paul Loof) remains in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of his knowledge of the Chief Executive's End of Year Performance and Remuneration Review FY26. 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.		

9 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Unuhia, unuhia

Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui

kia wātea, kia māmā,

te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,

i te ara takatū

Koia rā e Rongo

e whakairia ake ki runga

kia tina! TINA!

Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!

Draw on, draw on,

Draw on to the supreme sacredness

To clear, to free

our heart, body and soul

Our pathway prepared

Lo, there is peace

suspended high above

manifest!

draw together!

Affirm!