

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group

Joint Committee Workshop
15 May 2026



WE ARE ALL CIVIL DEFENCE



WAIKATO REGION
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

GROUP

Workshop outline

The Joint Committee governs system risk by setting direction, testing assumptions, and assuring capability.

Today is about

- Governing system-level risk and resilience.
- Testing whether proposed investment areas provide sufficient assurance.
- Assessing tolerance for system failure.

Today is not about

- Making decisions (must occur in public Joint Committee meeting).
- Operational delivery models.
- Staffing structures or reporting lines.



Strategic Group Plan 2025-2030

Vision

A disaster resilient Waikato | Waikato Manawaroa

Goals

1. Managing risks, through ongoing hazard research, hazard awareness, understanding risk and undertaking risk reduction.
2. Effective response to and recovery from emergencies.
3. Enabling, empowering and supporting community resilience.



Proposed Investment Areas - Addressing System Risk

1. Response surge and sustainability capability.
2. Core operational systems and platforms.
3. Statutory roles, assurance capacity.
4. Community engagement and empowerment.
5. Hazard and risk research (knowledge and uncertainty reduction).
6. Financial resilience (direct costs and contingency).

Each investment area addresses a system risk and supports the delivery of the Strategic Group Plan objectives and outcomes.

Each area will be explored through:

- Identifying system risk.
- Proposals to address system risk.
- Assurance required by Governance.



Response Surge and Sustainable Capability

System risk

Inability to sustain response capability during prolonged or concurrent events; leads to workforce exhaustion and compromised outcomes.

Problem statement

The Waikato CDEM Group lacks sufficient local response capacity, with existing agencies often under pressure, which can lead to delays and unmet community needs during emergencies.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 2 – Effective response and recovery, particularly the workforce capability objective.



Response Surge and Sustainable Capability

Proposed - New Zealand Response Team (NZRT)

NZRT is not a statutory requirement - it is a deliberate system resilience choice.

- Provides scalable surge capacity beyond local resources.
- Supports sustained response over prolonged events.
- Reduces reliance on already stretched local staff and volunteers.
- Addresses identified gaps from recent event learnings.



Response Surge and Sustainable Capability

Assurance

What assurance is required to be confident that the system can sustain surge demand without exhausting people or compromising outcomes?

Discussion

- What is sufficient surge capacity?
- What are the implications if we do not invest?
- Are we meeting our obligations to support the wider sector?



Operational Systems

System risk

Fragmented or unreliable operational coordination under stress.

Problem statement

The Waikato CDEM Group operate a fragmented and incompatible operational response system across multiple agencies which limits situational awareness, slows decision-making, and reduces the effectiveness of coordinated emergency responses.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 2 – Effective response, particularly systems and processes.



Operational Systems

Proposed - Operational Response System (software package)

- Improves consistency and interoperability (regionally and nationally).
- Reduces fragmentation across agencies.
- Enables coordinated response under pressure.
- Supports delivery of future Group Plan Actions.



Operational Systems

Assurance

What assurance is required to be confident the system will operate cohesively and reliably under stress?

Discussion

- Is the current level of interoperability amongst Waikato Councils acceptable?
- Staff trained in CIMS, not on other Council systems – when deployed as surge staff.
- Interoperability when supporting the wider sector.
- Is the current system future proofed for 5 years and beyond?



Community Engagement and Empowerment

System risk

Communities are not sufficiently prepared, connected, or supported, leading to inequitable outcomes during emergencies.

Problem statement

- Engagement capability isn't keeping pace with growing complexity, especially for iwi and Māori partnerships.
- This limits trust, readiness, and equitable outcomes, weakening long-term community resilience.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 3 – Community resilience, particularly community empowerment.



Community Engagement and Empowerment

Proposed - Additional staff

- Improves reach, trust, and engagement quality.
- Supports culturally appropriate and equitable outcomes.
- Enables stronger community-led response capability.
- Aligns with emerging legislative and equity expectations.



Community Engagement and Empowerment

Assurance

What assurance is required to be confident that communities are sufficiently prepared and supported to achieve equitable outcomes?

Discussion

- EM Bill expectations – vulnerable communities.
- Current preparedness levels.
- Is this future proofing in alignment with Strategic Group Plan?



Research (hazard and risk knowledge)

System risk

Decisions are made with incomplete or outdated knowledge, increasing uncertainty and risk exposure.

Problem statement

Gaps in hazard, risk, and consequence knowledge limit the ability to make informed, evidence-based decisions, and to effectively undertake strategic planning and resource prioritisation.

This reduces the system's ability to manage risk across all 4 Rs of emergency management.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 1 – Managing risk, particularly hazard information and risk reduction.



Research (hazard and risk knowledge)

Proposed – Risk-based hazard research programme

- Addresses known knowledge gaps.
- Improves understanding of exposure and emerging risks.
- Reduces uncertainty in planning and decision-making.
- Supports prioritisation of risk reduction investment.



Research (hazard and risk knowledge)

Assurance

What assurance is required to be confident that system decisions are based on robust and current risk information?

Discussion

- How much uncertainty is acceptable?
- Will this provide confidence that risk decisions are based on robust and current information?



Statutory / Strategic Capacity

System risk

Insufficient capacity to meet statutory obligations and provide robust governance assurance, particularly under pressure.

Problem statement

Increasing legislative expectations and system complexity place pressure on existing statutory roles, assurance and business support capacity.

When the system is under stress, obligations, role continuity, and governance visibility may start to slip.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 1 – Managing risk, particularly governance.



Statutory / Strategic Capacity

Proposed – Additional staffing (indicative)

- Strengthens system-level assurance and governance reporting (oversight, accountability, timely information to the Joint Committee).
- Improves leadership resilience and continuity of statutory functions during business-as-usual and response conditions.
- Enable delivery of new legislative requirements, including support for iwi and rural representation.



Statutory / Strategic Capacity

Assurance

Confidence in statutory roles and obligations being sustained, along with governance oversight remaining effective, under both business-as-usual and response conditions.

Discussion

- What assurance is required?
- What risks exist if capacity is not strengthened?



Financial Resilience

System risk

Financial shocks from emergencies disrupt planned investment and put delivery of the Strategic Group Plan at risk.

Problem statement

Unbudgeted response and recovery costs create volatility and divert funding away from agreed work programmes.

This limits the system's ability to deliver planned activities and sustain progress against Strategic Group Plan objectives.

This directly impacts delivery of Goal 1 – Managing risk, particularly risk reduction and planning.



Financial Resilience

Proposed – Contingency emergency fund

- Stabilises financial performance under stress:
 - Smooths response and recovery costs.
 - Reduces unbudgeted shocks that disrupt work programmes.
 - Improves predictability across years.
- Covers unavoidable system costs:
 - Ensures the system can meet post-event obligations, including after action review / coronial processes.
- Reduces compounding financial pressure:
 - Reduces the need for over-budget spending.
 - Avoids additional interest costs.
- Regional ring-fenced targeted rate.



Financial Resilience

Assurance

What assurance is required to be confident the system can absorb financial shocks without putting delivery of the Strategic Group Plan at risk?

Discussion

- Is this level of financial resilience sufficient?
- What level of financial risk is acceptable?



From Assurance to Investment

The Strategic Group Plan sets the direction and expected outcomes for the system.

The role of the Joint Committee is to determine whether the system has sufficient capability to deliver those outcomes under stress.

The risk of not investing now to achieve that level of assurance; the system is more likely to require reactive investment later - under pressure, with greater cost and risk.



Investment and rates – aligned to risk and assurance

Does the proposed level of system investment:

- Provide sufficient assurance that the system can manage its most significant risks?
- Align with the Joint Committee's tolerance for system risk and failure?

Operational solutions to address identified system gaps will be considered by CEG. The resulting CEG endorsed solutions to address system-level risk will be returned to the Joint Committee in June for decision - including the associated rating implications.

