



AGENDA

Submissions Subcommittee Meeting

Date: Friday, 24 April 2026

Time: 9:30 am

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

Members: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith – Chair
Cr Liz Stolwyk – Deputy Chair
Cr Chris Hughes
Cr Warren Maher
Cr Garry Reymer

Alternate: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Submissions Subcommittee

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere | Terms of Reference

1. *Mana ā-Ture* | **Status**

This is a subcommittee of the Strategy and Policy Committee, and was established by Council under clause 30(1)(a) of [Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002](#). It is a discretionary committee that can be created or disestablished by Council resolution or Strategy and Policy Committee resolution.

2. *Kawenga* | **Responsibilities**

This Subcommittee is responsible for:

- a. Considering and approving submissions on statutory documents, where deadlines cannot be met within the Strategy and Policy Committee or Council meeting schedule
- b. Providing climate leadership through timely and strategic submission-making

3. *Ngā Apatono* | **Powers**

The Committee has the following powers required to carry out its responsibilities:

- a. Approving submissions on statutory documents consistent with Council policy when deadlines fall outside the Strategy and Policy Committee or Council meeting schedule
- b. Reporting back to the Strategy and Policy Committee or Council on submissions approved by the Subcommittee.

4. *Ngā Tūranga* | **Membership**

4.1 *Ngā Mema* | **Members**

The Subcommittee has five members:

- a. Chair and Deputy-Chair of the Strategy and Policy Committee
- b. Two councillors selected from the Strategy and Policy Committee members, appointed by Council
- c. Chair of Council

4.2 *Ngā Kairīwhi* | **Alternates**

The Deputy-Chair of Council is the alternate for the Chair of Council on this Subcommittee, unless otherwise appointed.

4.3 *Ūpoko me te Ūpoko Tuarua* | **Chair and Deputy-Chair**

The Chair and Deputy-Chair of the Subcommittee are the Chair and Deputy-Chair of the Strategy and Policy Committee respectively.

5. *Tokamatua* | **Quorum**

Two members. Refer clause 23(3)(b) of [Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002](#).

6. *Ngā Tikanga Pōti* | **Voting**

- a. Decisions are made by majority vote of members present.
- b. If votes are equal, the Chair has a deliberative and casting vote.

Refer clause 24 of [Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002](#).

7. *Ngā Hui i te Tau* | **Frequency of meetings**

As required, where the meeting content is outside of the Strategy and Policy Committee cycle.

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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 APOLOGIES**3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA****4 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.

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 SUBMISSIONS TO THE 2026/27 ANNUAL PLAN CONSULTATIONS OF WAITOMO DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THAMES COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rā Date:	12 April 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Annika Hamilton, Senior Corporate Planner
Kaituku Authoriser:	Janine Becker, Director, Customer and Corporate Services
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Sub-committee has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. This report seeks approval from the Submissions Sub Committee on the content, and subsequent lodgement of Waikato Regional Council's (the council's) submissions to:
 - (a) Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan, and
 - (b) Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Waitomo District Council and Thames Coromandel District Council are consulting on their 2026/27 Annual Plans. Staff have prepared submissions in response to each of these consultations.
3. The draft submissions recognise the collaboration between our councils and highlight the importance of continued partnership as we navigate through a period of legislative change.
4. The submissions include feedback on community resilience, biodiversity, water compliance, Coastcare and regional spatial strategies.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Submissions to the 2026/27 Annual Plan consultations of Waitomo District Council and Thames Coromandel District Council* (Submissions Subcommittee, 24 April 2026) be received.
2. That the Submissions Subcommittee approves the submission to Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan and the submission to Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan; or
3. That the Submissions Subcommittee delegates the Chair of Strategy and Policy Committee (Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith) and the Director of Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker) approval for lodgement of the submissions (Submissions Subcommittee, 24 April 2026), subject to amendments identified in discussions had at the Subcommittee meeting.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

5. Staff review annual plan and long-term plan consultations from Waikato territorial authorities and neighbouring councils between March and May each year.
6. All councils must consult on their long term plans but are only required to consult on an annual plan if it includes significant or material differences from the content of the long term plan. This means that not all councils will consult on their Annual Plans in 2026.
7. If consultations open, staff review the consultation document to determine if there are topics of interest to Waikato Regional Council, or if the proposals will impact on our roles and responsibilities. Subject matter experts provide feedback for a submission, if relevant topics are identified.

TE TAKE | ISSUE**Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan***Consultation*

8. Waitomo District Council are consulting on their draft 2026/27 Annual Plan and are proposing a rates revenue increase of 3.79 per cent.
9. Their Consultation Document includes only one key proposal about moving the Awakino Transfer Station to Mōkau.
10. However, the Consultation Document also includes information about several key activities occurring in 2026/27, including the transition of their water and wastewater activities to Waikato Waters Limited on 1 July 2026.
11. The other four 'Annual Plan updates' covered in the Consultation Document include:
 - (a) the removal of the district wide benefit rates for water and wastewater,
 - (b) Te Kūiti stormwater investment,
 - (c) changes to the Piopio Retirement Village remission funding, and
 - (d) the Waitomo District Council landfill.

Draft submission

12. Whilst many of the topics in the consultation document are focussed on district related matters, we are using this consultation as an opportunity to highlight the importance of investing in community resilience as we continue to experience the impacts of frequent and extreme weather events.
13. The draft submission also encourages Waitomo District Council to set aside sufficient budget and resourcing for a smooth transition to Waikato Waters Ltd to ensure that a continuous programme of wastewater compliance is maintained.
14. The submission also references collaboration through regional spatial strategies and Coastcare.

Thames Coromandel District Council's Annual Plan*Consultation*

15. Thames Coromandel District Council are consulting on their draft 2026/27 Annual Plan and are proposing changes that could reduce the average forecast increase from around 13.4 per cent to 3.77 per cent.
16. The proposals include:
 - (a) reducing mowing and garden maintenance,
 - (b) reducing opening hours at Coromandel, Matarangi, and Pāuanui Refuse and Recycling Transfer Stations,
 - (c) increasing fees and introducing new charges, and
 - (d) reducing some rates remissions.

Draft submission

17. Our draft submission highlights the collaborative work of TCDC and WRC to restore coastal habitats and encourages TCDC to consider any unintended consequences that reduced levels of service may have on habitat connectivity, particularly in areas adjacent to important biodiversity value.
18. The submission also highlights the importance of investing in community resilience, as we continue to experience the impacts of frequent and extreme weather events.

Timeframes

19. The consultation timeframes are listed below:
 - (a) Waitomo District Council – consultation closes on 30 April 2026.
 - (i) Waitomo District Council hearings are being held between 12 - 13 May 2026.
 - (b) Thames Coromandel District Council – consultation closes on 28 April 2026.
 - (i) Thames Coromandel District Council hearings are being held on Thursday 7 May 2026.
20. Staff request that the Subcommittee advise if they would like to attend these hearings in support of the submission so that this can be indicated at the time of lodgement.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

21. This decision will have 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

22. This decision is likely to have no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

23. The draft submissions highlight the pressures of a changing climate and encourage collaboration to respond to these challenges.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

24. 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

25. Annual Plans are one of a suite of statutory documents required under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). Section 95(1) of the LGA requires a local authority to adopt an annual plan for each financial year.
26. If an annual plan identifies significant or material differences from the content of a long-term plan, a local authority is required to consult on their annual plan (section 95(2A) of the LGA).

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

27. The preferred option is that Council endorses the draft submissions for lodgement.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

28. 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

29. 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. To the best of the writer's knowledge, the decision sought in this report will not impact Council's obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

30. The Council has the opportunity to provide feedback to Waitomo District Council and Thames Coromandel District Council on their proposed 2026/27 Annual Plans.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

31. Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan Consultation Document: [annual-plan-2026-cd-digital.pdf](#)
32. Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan website: [Annual Plan 2026-2027 - Waitomo District Council](#)

33. Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan Consultation Document: [final-annual-plan-2026-consultation-document.pdf](#)
34. Thames Coromandel District Council's Annual Plan website: [Tough choices for lower rates | TCDC](#)

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Submission from Waikato Regional Council to Waitomo District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan consultation - (Doc # 35405555)** [↓](#)
2. **Submission from Waikato Regional Council to Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026/27 Annual Plan consultation - (Doc # 35406944)** [↓](#)

File No: 01 12 26S
Document No: 35405555
Enquiries to: Annika Hamilton

28 April 2026

Waitomo District Council
160 Rora Street,
Te Kūiti

Email: haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz



Dear Sir/Madam

Waikato Regional Council Submission to Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan. Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's submission regarding the consultation document. The submission was formally endorsed by the Submissions Subcommittee on **24 April 2026**.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Annika Hamilton, Senior Corporate Planner, directly on (07) 859 0990 or by email Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

Warren Maher
Chair

Chris McLay
Chief Executive

HE TAIAO MAUIRORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Submission from Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on the Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Introduction

1. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission on Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan and acknowledge the collegial relationships between our councils.
2. We recognise that local government is currently managing the cumulative impacts of multiple reforms, and we understand the importance of continued partnership as we navigate through this period of change.
3. Our Council endorsed the statements outlined in the Mayoral Forum letter to central government on the reform proposals. We acknowledge that each council in the region is diverse and has challenges unique to their communities, however at the core is the need to individually and collectively serve our combined Waikato ratepayers well.
4. With this in mind, we have focussed our feedback on topics that highlight the importance of continued collaboration.

Community resilience

5. Over the past few months, the Waikato region has experienced four extreme weather events, with impacts across the region. We also recognise the impacts of previous storm events in your district, which caused significant damage to roading networks and communities.
6. These increasingly frequent weather events highlight the importance of investing in community resilience as we continue to experience the impact of natural hazards.
7. We acknowledge your investment in stormwater modelling for Te Kūiti to improve the resilience of the stormwater network. We encourage you to continue identifying and planning for how your assets, communities and delivery of council services will be impacted by a changing climate.
8. We also encourage the proactive identification of communities that would benefit from long term adaptive planning within your district. We encourage territorial authorities to fund these adaptation planning activities, with technical support and collaboration from WRC when appropriate, to understand, manage and reduce your district's natural hazard risk.
9. To guide how WRC prioritises its activities and resources in response to natural hazard risk and how we work with others on this, we are developing a Framework and Plan for Resilience to Natural Hazard Risk. When the Framework's prioritisation approach is implemented, it is also intended to support the identification of priority locations for adaptation, anticipated by the resource management system reforms.
10. We encourage you to consider our Framework and Plan which is expected to be publicly available later in the year to understand our approach and to know what information and support can be expected from Waikato Regional Council.

Data

11. WRC is committed to a programme of work to support understanding and adapting to natural hazards in the region. This includes region-wide flood modelling that will improve the understanding of flood risk, low flows, droughts, and catchment performance. This work aims to support proactive decision making, land use planning and regional resilience for both the current and future climate.
12. We rely on the data sets held by territorial authorities to inform this important work. This includes information relating to infrastructure assets, stormwater and flooding events. We also note that territorial authorities have a critical role in communicating natural hazards information to

communities through land information memoranda (LIM). We therefore encourage Waitomo District Council to continue to maintain and invest in this data.

Waters

13. We emphasise the importance of prioritising infrastructure alongside growth, to progressively improve wastewater compliance.
14. Acknowledging that your council will be transitioning its wastewater and drinking water functions to Waikato Waters Ltd, we encourage you to set aside sufficient budget and resourcing to ensure a smooth transition to this new entity and to ensure that a continuous programme for wastewater compliance is maintained.

Regional spatial strategies

15. Through our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, we made a commitment to invest in the future of spatial planning; to drive the efficient provision of infrastructure and services needed for growth in the region. In 2025 we completed a [regional spatial inventory](#) and framework. The inventory provides a snapshot of the information currently held by WRC, other local authorities in the region, and key stakeholders. The framework sets out a potential roadmap for the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Waikato Region.
16. Since then, the government has introduced the new Planning Bill to Parliament. We are supportive of the proposed requirement for territorial authorities to jointly make and maintain a spatial plan for the region. We look forward to working together on this, following the establishment of a Regional Spatial Planning Committee.

Coastcare

17. WRC leads the Coastcare programme in the Waikato region. Restoring dunes and other coastal ecosystems has a multitude of benefits, increasing both community resilience and biodiversity values and strengthening community connections to place.
18. Restoration of coastal ecosystems is supported by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010) as a natural defense against coastal hazards. Sand dunes provide habitat for many threatened flora and fauna species, and act as both a reservoir of sand for the beach and a buffer for property and infrastructure.
19. Coastcare works across both coasts of the Waikato and relies significantly on communities and volunteers to deliver much of the work programme on the ground. We encourage territorial authorities to work with Coastcare to restore and protect coastlines in their regions. With more partners, resources and funding, we can deliver more work in your communities and throughout the region.

Submitter details

Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Contact person:

Annika Hamilton
Senior Corporate Planner
Email: Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz
Phone: (07) 859 0990

File No: 01 12 26S
Document No: 35406944
Enquiries to: Annika Hamilton



28 April 2026

Thames Coromandel District Council
515 Mackay Street,
Thames

Email: consultation@tcdc.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Waikato Regional Council Submission to Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan. Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's submission regarding the consultation document. The submission was formally endorsed by the Submissions Subcommittee on **24 April 2026**.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Annika Hamilton, Senior Corporate Planner, directly on (07) 859 0990 or by email Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

Warren Maher
Chair

Chris McLay
Chief Executive

HE TAIAO MAUIRORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Submission from Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Introduction

1. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission on Thames Coromandel District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan and acknowledge the collegial relationships between our councils.
2. We recognise that local government is currently managing the cumulative impacts of multiple reforms, and we understand the importance of continued partnership as we navigate through this period of change.
3. Our Council endorsed the statements outlined in the Mayoral Forum letter to central government on the reform proposals. We acknowledge that each council in the region is diverse and has challenges unique to their communities, however at the core is the need to individually and collectively serve our combined Waikato ratepayers well.
4. With this in mind, we have focussed our feedback on topics that highlight the importance of continued collaboration and have responded to topics that are relevant to our critical functions at a regional level.

Proposal 1: Reducing mowing and garden maintenance

5. Thames Coromandel District Council (TCDC) and WRC work collaboratively to restore coastal habitats throughout the Coromandel, support our threatened species and ensure requirements such as those under the Wildlife Act are met. We acknowledge that tough choices are being made to keep rates down and that reduced mowing and garden maintenance will reduce costs to TCDC ratepayers. However, we encourage TCDC to consider any unintended consequences that these reduced levels of service may have on habitat connectivity and native species such as lizards, particularly in areas adjacent to important biodiversity value. For example, from a biodiversity perspective, the permanent cessation of mowing is generally preferable to the cessation of mowing during winter months only, for maintaining newly created habitat that lizards are likely to colonise when mowing is stopped. This has the added benefit of reducing costs to ratepayers.

Coastcare

6. WRC leads the Coastcare programme in the Waikato region. Restoring dunes and other coastal ecosystems has a multitude of benefits, increasing both community resilience and biodiversity values and strengthening community connections to place.
7. Restoration of coastal ecosystems is supported by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010) as a natural defense against coastal hazards. Sand dunes provide habitat for many threatened flora and fauna species, and act as both a reservoir of sand for the beach and a buffer for property and infrastructure.
8. Coastcare works across both coasts of the Waikato and relies significantly on communities and volunteers to deliver much of the work programme on the ground. We value the investment and collaborative relationship WRC has with TCDC and would like to see this continue to restore and protect coastlines in the region. With partners such as TCDC, resources and funding, we can deliver more work in communities throughout the region.

Kauri Protection

9. We support the continued protection of our remaining kauri through the Kauri Protection Programme, recognising their ecological and cultural significance. We also encourage TCDC to ensure there is sufficient resourcing to implement the district plan rules relating to kauri protection.

Community Resilience

10. Over the past few months, the Waikato region has experienced four extreme weather events, with impacts across the region. We recognise that these events have had a significant impact on your district, with parts of the Coromandel receiving over 400% of its normal January rainfall, and rainfall events exceeding 1- in -100-year thresholds.
11. These increasingly frequent weather events highlight the importance of investing in community resilience as we continue to experience the impacts of natural hazards. We recognise and support your continued investment in in-house staff, and projects that will ensure more resilient communities and infrastructure.
12. We also acknowledge the significant community adaptation work undertaken through your Shoreline Management Pathways Project. We encourage you to continue identifying and planning for how your assets, communities and delivery of council services will be impacted by a changing climate.
13. We encourage territorial authorities to fund these adaptation planning activities, with technical support and collaboration from WRC when appropriate, to understand, manage and reduce your district's natural hazard risk.
14. To guide how WRC prioritises its activities and resources in response to natural hazard risk and how we work with others on this, we are developing a Framework and Plan for Resilience to Natural Hazard Risk. When the Framework's prioritisation approach is implemented, it is also intended to support the identification of priority locations for adaptation, anticipated by the resource management system reforms.
15. We encourage you to consider our Framework and Plan which is expected to be publicly available later in the year to understand our approach and to know what information and support can be expected from Waikato Regional Council.

Data

16. WRC is committed to a programme of work to support understanding and adapting to natural hazards in the region. This includes region-wide flood modelling that will improve the understanding of flood risk, low flows, droughts, and catchment performance. This work aims to support proactive decision making, land use planning and regional resilience for both the current and future climate.
17. We rely on the data sets held by territorial authorities to inform this important work. This includes information relating to infrastructure assets (for example, stormwater assets associated with coastal streams such as the Tohetea Stream), stormwater and flooding events. We also note that territorial authorities have a critical role in communicating natural hazards information to communities through land information memoranda (LIM). We therefore encourage TCDC to continue to maintain and invest in this data.

Regional Spatial Strategies

18. Through our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, we made a commitment to invest in the future of spatial planning; to drive the efficient provision of infrastructure and services needed for growth in the region. In 2025 we completed a [regional spatial inventory](#) and framework. The inventory provides a snapshot of the information currently held by WRC, other local authorities in the region, and key stakeholders. The framework sets out a potential roadmap for the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Waikato Region.
19. Since then, the government has introduced the new Planning Bill to Parliament. We are supportive of the proposed requirement for territorial authorities to jointly make and maintain a spatial plan for the region. We look forward to working together on this, following the establishment of a Regional Spatial Planning Committee.

Waters

20. We emphasise the importance of prioritising infrastructure alongside growth, to progressively improve wastewater compliance.
21. We encourage you to set aside sufficient budget and resourcing to ensure that a continuous programme for wastewater compliance is maintained.

Submitter details

Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Contact person:

Annika Hamilton
Senior Corporate Planner
Email: Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz
Phone: (07) 859 0990

7 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!