



WORKSHOP AGENDA

Date: Thursday, 3 September 2026

Time: 9.30am

Location: Council Chambers

Waikato Regional Council

Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Workshop Details: Council Workshop: Long Term Plan

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1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atakura
He tio
He Huka
He hau hū
Tīhei mauri ora!

Cease o winds from the west
Cease o winds from the south
Bring calm breezes over the land
Bring calm breezes over the sea
And let the red-tipped dawn come
With a touch of frost
A sharpened air
And promise of a glorious day
Behold we live

2 WORKSHOP PAPER(S)

2.1 2027 - 2037 LONG TERM PLAN - LEVELS OF SERVICE REVIEW

Rā | Date: 20 August 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Janine Becker, Director, Customer and Corporate Services

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this workshop is to present the work that staff have been undertaking over the last two month to review Council's current levels of service, utilising the structured approach of Enterprise Work Management.
2. Based on direction provided across the areas of review undertaken by staff and any others identified by elected members, staff will commence detailed budgeting, along with the development of Investment Cases to support recommended changes to current levels of service.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. To guide Council's consideration of the composition of the 2027 – 2037 Long Term Plan (LTP) work programme and associated budget requirements, staff have been working over the last two months to identify opportunities for budget savings as well as key shifts that are indicated in response to legislative change.
4. This work has been guided by the prioritisation of Council's current portfolio of work, utilising the recently implemented Enterprise Work Management model.
5. Key information presented for Council's consideration includes:
 - (a) A summary of all investment proposals submitted through the development of the 2024 – 2034 LTP, and commentary on how these have been incorporated into planning and decision-making processes, or where they are deemed to no longer be required
 - (b) The status of investment cases approved as part of the 2024 – 2034 LTP. This work acknowledges the new areas of investment that Council has previously approved that form part of the starting position for the development of the 2027 – 2037 LTP
 - (c) A review of baseline expenditure to budgets for current levels of service to identify where budget savings are available
 - (d) Identification of opportunities for changes to the current investments made by Council. This work is informed in a number of ways:
 - (i) Portfolio prioritisation to identify those services / activities which are discretionary. Additional deep dives have been conducted in some key area of expenditure that are not mandated

- (ii) An early estimation of additional costs that will result from the transition to a new resource management system
 - (e) An estimation of the impact of known baseline budget drivers such as salary and wage growth, infrastructure asset depreciation, addressing the funding deficit from the 2026/27 annual plan as a result of the release of prior year surplus funds to offset the general rate revenue requirement.
- 6. Alongside the work that staff have been undertaking towards the development of the 2027 – 2037 LTP, councillors have also been receiving “deep dive” information into key council services through the relevant committees. These deep dives have provided an opportunity to seek further information on the rationale for current service delivery and to understand current cost structures that support the delivery of these services. To the extent that any feedback on changes to current levels of service has been derived from these discussions, this has been reflected in the work undertaken by ELT in preparation for this meeting.
- 7. In total, the budget drivers and changes presented in this report result in an estimated increase in rates revenue in 2027/28 of 6.1 per cent. Staff note that this is a very early estimation only – it does not reflect all budget changes (such as inflation) that can be expected to be identified through the detailed budgeting work that staff will commence in September 2026. It is noted to support feedback from Council on the setting of priorities for the LTP, and appetite for increases in rate revenue, noting the need to work towards the proposed rate caps by 1 July 2029.

BACKGROUND

- 8. As discussed with Council as part of the 2027 - 2037 Long Term Plan initiation workshop in June 2026, a key activity in the development process is the review of current levels of service.
- 9. This review enables Council to confirm the services it wishes to propose are included in the 2027 – 2037 Long Term Plan, having considered matters such as:
 - (a) Alignment to *Te Pae Tawhiti*
 - (b) Legislative requirements, reflecting changes through new / proposed legislation
 - (c) Affordability
- 10. To help guide this process, staff are utilising the recently implemented Enterprise Work Management (eWM) model to support the prioritisation of current and planned investments.
- 11. eWM serves to provide improved visibility of work across portfolios, programmes, projects and business as usual activities, allowing all investments (expenditure) made by Council to be assessed on a common basis to enable comparison across the whole portfolio (everything that Council does).
- 12. For each activity that Council undertakes, an assessment of “Attractiveness” and “Achievability” is undertaken:
 - (a) Attractiveness = how strongly the work aligns with Council’s strategic priorities set through *Te Pae Tawhiti*
 - (b) Achievability = how realistic it is to deliver the work, considering things like complexity of work, skill and resource requirements, and dependencies with other work. It is

assumed that all work within Council's current portfolio is "achievable" – however this may change as new investment choices are added, or work is removed.

13. In parallel, each initiative is classified according to the degree of legislative or policy mandate so that work can be distinguished between mandatory activity, activity where Council has limited discretion in delivery, and those that are discretionary.
14. Legislative alignment is considered against the following criteria:

Legislative alignment	
Not mandatory	Discretionary
Optional actions are available to Council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken	
Optional actions are available to Council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	
It is not required under legislation but is a Council directive or a contractual obligation.	Limited discretion
Compliance required in accordance with Council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	
Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction. Requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to how and / or when compliance actions are undertaken.	Mandatory
Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction. Requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified	

15. The outputs from this analysis are intended to guide, not replace staff and elected member judgements. Rather it provides a consistent basis against which this judgement can be applied.
16. These portfolio prioritisation results have been the starting point for the level of service process that has been undertaken by staff since the Council workshop in June.
17. This report provides the outcomes from the work that has been done, with proposals developed for where Council may wish to consider a change to current levels of services. Decisions from this workshop will provide the guidance to staff on those investments that should proceed through the LTP process, including where Investment Cases need to be developed (for higher value or more complex changes) alongside the commencement of detailed LTP budgeting.
18. It remains important to note that a high degree of uncertainty continues to exist within Council's operating environment while this LTP is being prepared. Staff are taking a balanced approach to this – reflecting known changes (or those reasonably expected to be in place when the LTP is adopted) but not trying to anticipate / provide for those with a high degree of uncertainty.
19. A significant source of uncertainty is the signalled deferral of consenting and farm plan requirements associated with Plan Change 1, combined with the costs that will arise because of the need to transition to a new resource management policy system. Cost estimates for the transition to the new policy system have been developed by staff, while direction on

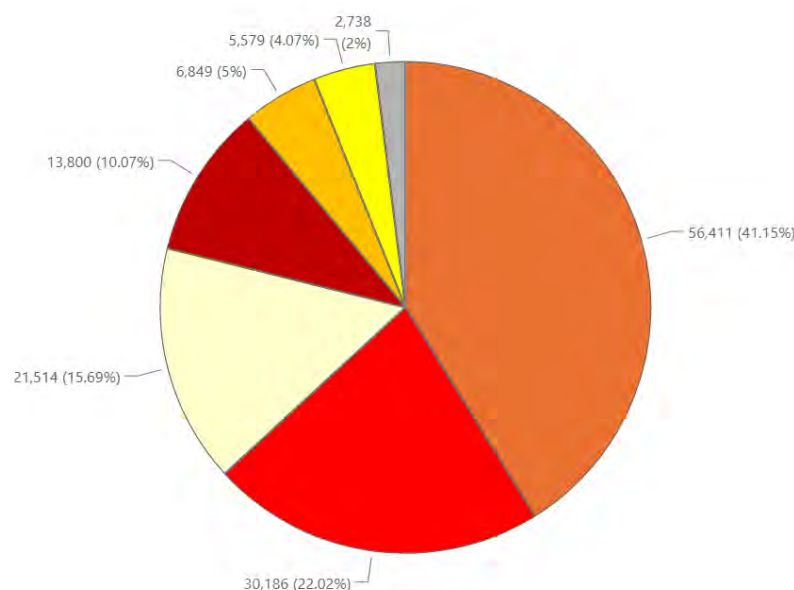
Council's response to the government's decision regarding Plan Change 1 (such as the addition of new non-regulatory support activities) is sought.

20. With the level of uncertainty that currently prevails, some decisions and assumptions made in the early development of the LTP will need to be revisited as the Plan evolves. A position will need to be confirmed as Council considers the final adoption of the Plan in May / June 2027.
21. It is noted that Council goes into the development of the 2027 – 2037 LTP in a deficit funding position, having utilised prior year surplus funds (\$2.549 million) to reduce the rates revenue assessed for 2026/27. This starting point, along with a Chief Executive KPI requiring the identification of operating savings, is likely to add additional tension into the prioritisation of work that Council wishes to propose for inclusion in the LTP

CURRENT PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

22. To provide context to the levels of service review, the following information provides an overview of the assessment of Council's current portfolio of work, from the perspectives of:
 - (a) Legislative alignment
 - (b) Alignment to Strategic direction
23. The basis of this analysis is the direct cost budget included in the 2026/27 Annual Plan. It should be acknowledged that by looking only at expenditure, this will not be a direct correlation with the funding and rating impacts that result from this expenditure.
24. Staff note that the current portfolio was constructed in response to Council's previous Strategic Direction and as a result, some currently prioritised work may not be as well aligned to the key priorities of *Te Pae Tawhiti* as it was to previous strategies. The purpose of the LTP process is to ensure that this alignment to strategy is strengthened through the prioritisation of all work currently undertaken.
25. The below shows Council's current portfolio as it aligns to legislation.

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - All Directorates
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$2,738	33
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$21,514	58
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$5,579	26
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$6,849	7
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$56,411	6
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$30,186	106
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$13,800	31
Total		\$137,079	267

26. A Directorate view of the prioritised portfolio of work currently undertaken by Council is provided in **Attachment One**. These schedules provide the information for Council to be able to enquire into any of the activities undertaken by Council and identify further areas of change that have not been included in this report.

LEVELS OF SERVICE REVIEW STEPS

27. Council's current programme of work is determined based on past decisions made by Council over time. To inform this level of service review, in addition to new proposals for change, staff have also reviewed some of the decisions made by Council through the last LTP to provide an update on the status of these. These decision review points are in two parts:
- (a) A review of the status / progress of Investment Cases approved by Council for inclusion in the 2024 – 2034 LTP
 - (b) In line with councillor requests, a review of the investment proposals that did not progress. It is noted that, in general, if the core issue that these investment proposals sought to address was still present as we are developing the 2027 LTP a fresh investment proposal should have been provided through this process.
28. Staff have also undertaken a review of historic spend to Annual Plan budgets over the last three financial years. The intent of this work is to test that current budgets are "right sized" for the work that is required to be delivered through current levels of service, before any changes to either budget or level of service are considered.
29. The Executive Leadership Team have undertaken a detailed review of current levels of service and where changes may be required. Key drivers for change in investment include:
- (a) Estimated costs for the transition to a new planning system as a result of the new resource management legislation
 - (b) The expected change to the purpose of local government included in the Local Government Act
 - (c) Expenditure that has been assessed as "Discretionary"

PROGRESS UPDATES ON 2024 – 2034 INVESTMENT CASES

30. New investment into the 2024 – 2034 LTP was largely informed by a series of business cases. A number of these projects have been completed or are scheduled for completion prior to 30 June 2027. The remaining have been approved as multi-year investments that are scheduled to continue into the next LTP period.
31. A health check on these cases is provided below – showing how each is tracking against time, scope and budget. Further detail is provided in **Attachment Two**.
32. A new investment case is proposed to address the options identified through the review of funding for flood management and drainage services.

Business case name and purpose	Current Status			Commentary
	Time	Scope	Budget	
Healthy waterways (freshwater implementation) This is the continuation of an integrated work programme, approved through the 2021 – 2031 LTP, to undertake our freshwater roles and responsibilities.				Work has been paused due to the changes in resource management legislation (the new Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill). Environmental monitoring work started as planned and will continue, with some savings.
Development of the Water Security Management Plan This work will identify options to increase water security and enable sustainable growth in the Waikato region. Funded through Prior Year Surplus funds due to the strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.				The Plan has been completed and approved by Council.
Options for rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland The development of a Catchment Action Plan for the rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland. Funded through prior year surplus funds due to strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.				The draft Plan has been workshopped and is undergoing further engagement due to concerns from some stakeholders. The draft Plan is scheduled to be presented at the September meeting of the Strategy and Policy Committee.
Biosecurity and Biodiversity This programme builds on work funded through the 2021 – 2031 LTP to improve biodiversity and biosecurity outcomes and ensure sustainable change in the region.				This programme of work is on track, noting that this is a complex business case, with many component parts, and a large programme of cross-directorate work.
Supporting the takutai moana coastal and marine strategic priority The Coastal and Marine Business Case supports coastal plan implementation, Firth of Thames monitoring, evidence-based decision-making, aquaculture, marine biodiversity, and ecosystem health.				Coastal programme capability has expanded since July 2024, supported by new staff and the research vessel Kohi Whika. Continued investment will maintain service levels, support water quality standards, and improve marine spatial planning and biodiversity knowledge.
Review of Funding for Flood Management and Drainage To review the current funding models for WRC's flood management, river control works, and drainage services, as well as substitutes for these, and to develop and test alternative funding models that considers affordability issues for ratepayers and ensure sustainable investment in infrastructure.				Phase 1 of the review is complete and has informed a redesign/rescope of Phase 2. A new investment case is proposed for implementation through the 2027 – 2037 LTP, to address the options identified through the Review. Council may wish to consider the level of additional investment they are prepared to make to review the funding system when a change would ultimately be required through any new local government structures.

Business case name and purpose	Current Status			Commentary
	Time	Scope	Budget	
Understanding and adapting to natural hazard risk This is a continuation of the 2021 – 2031 LTP business case for regional resilience outcomes, to provide a strategic foundation for the council to support communities to understand and adapt to a variety of natural hazard risks.				This work programme gives effect to legislative requirements, and has progressed well in most key projects. Changes to legislation, and significant weather events have led to rescoping and resource pressures.
Metro spatial plan – transport programme Provision for the ongoing investment in the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan and support significant projected growth in the sub-region.				Significant progress achieved on three of the four corridor studies. Southern Links remains a focus. Future planning is underway to further align with partner councils.
Public transport rebranding Review of the council's public transport brand strategy and corporate image, and implementation across digital and printed channels.				The project has moved from the development stage and moved into implementation.
A strategic and spatial focus A project to guide the region in preparing a regional spatial strategy and plan. Funded through Prior Year Surplus funds due to strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.				A regional spatial inventory and a development framework have both been completed. The focus now is on writing the plan, with the intention of keeping in line with the changes to resource management legislation proposed by central government.
Sustainable Peatlands This programme builds on work funded through the 2021-2031 LTP to address peat subsidence and associated greenhouse gas emissions.				Minor delays, due to the technical nature of the projects, have occurred but should not impact the overall delivery of the programme.
Other 2024-2034 LTP business cases				
Increase capacity for Maritime services	Recruitment is complete			
Te Ao Māori	Recruitment is complete			
Te Huia passenger rail service enhancements	Implementation scheduled from 2027/28			
Te Huia passenger rail renewal of rolling stock	Implementation scheduled from 2027/28.			

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROPOSALS NOT PROGRESSED THROUGH THE 2024 – 2034 LTP

33. Councillors have requested a review of strategic investment proposals (SIPs) raised through the 2024 – 2034 LTP process that were not funded through the LTP. A full list of those proposals is provided in **Attachment Three**, with the majority of these either subsequently resolved or no longer required. Seven of the 104 SIPs have been highlighted as still relevant, with most of these matters coming through as new SIPs for 2027.
- (a) SIP 5042 Flood assets on private land – 2027 SIP raised to assess options
 - (b) SIP 5046 WRC Emergency Management improvements – currently not a SIP, but investment needs to be considered following an independent review
 - (c) SIP 5038 Lower Waikato operations additional resource – SIP for additional Lower Waikato resourcing
 - (d) SIP 702 Te Huia Rolling Stock replacement – SIP raised for new business case to be developed
 - (e) SIP 7020 Cease funding for public transport for special events – SIP for a strategic approach to public transport for special events
 - (f) SIP 709 Travel demand management programme – not a SIP but still relevant
 - (g) SIP 708 Te Huia funding assistance rate – linked to service permanence and consultation topic through the LTP.

BASELINE BUDGET REVIEW

34. Before considering any potential changes in funding resulting from the level of service review, staff have undertaken a review of historic expenditure to budgets to ensure that current budgets are “right sized” for the delivery of current levels of service. This ensures that we have a clear financial basis from which to consider any proposals for changes to levels of service.
35. As a result of this review baseline savings of \$744,000 have been identified across the organisation. Offsetting this are additional costs of \$378,000 associated with Total Mobility services (\$348,000) and Transport Policy activities (\$30,000). When NZTA funding is considered in relation to the Transport activities, the net impact of this review has been a reduction in required rates revenue of \$571,000.

Group of Activities	Activity	Proposed change (\$000)	Estimated rates funding impact (\$000)
Corporate	Internal and corporate communications	(15)	(15)
	Customer services	(12)	(12)
	Rates collection	(57)	(57)
Customer, community and services	Governance	(10)	(10)
Flood protection and control works	Flood protection	(24)	(24)
Integrated catchment management	Catchment planning and management	(263)	(263)
Regional transport connections	Transport policy	(74)	(74)
Science, policy and information	Environmental monitoring	(95)	(75)
	Social and economic sciences	(70)	(80)
	Spatial information	(20)	(20)
	Strategic policy implementation	(100)	(100)
	Library	(5)	5
Baseline budget savings identified		(744)	(725)
Regional transport connections	Transport policy	30	15
	Urban and rural transport	348	139
	Baseline budget increases identified	378	154
Total change in baseline budgets		(367)	(571)

36. Of the baseline budget savings identified, it is estimated that \$594,000 of this would also be able to be realised in the 2026/27 financial year. Staff will work with budget managers to reflect these changes into the first quarter forecast for 2026/27.

KNOWN BUDGET DRIVERS

37. There are certain cost drivers that Council is exposed to, irrespective of the decisions that it makes on the services to be delivered. For the purposes of the level of service review, staff have made some early estimations of these key expenditure items so that they can be considered at the outset of the level of service review process as they will commit funding:
- Addressing the funding deficit arising from the Council decision to apply accumulated prior year surplus funds (\$2.549 million) to offset the general rate revenue required for the 2026/27 Annual Plan.
 - Staff remuneration – market and performance provisions. Staff will take independent advice on projected market movements through the budget development process utilising both Strategic Pay (for short-term projections) as well as Business and Economic Research Ltd (BERL) for longer-range estimates. As a starting point, staff have assumed a two per cent uplift in remuneration per annum in line with the provision included in the 2026/27 Annual Plan. This equates to an increase in expenditure of \$1.5 million per annum.
 - Asset depreciation – Council is required to complete revaluations of key assets (in particular, infrastructure) to ensure that their value is fairly reflected in the financial statements. The impact of this revaluation process is to reassess the depreciation expense that Council funds to meet the costs of asset renewals and replacements. The last full infrastructure asset revaluation was undertaken this year, with effect from 31

December 2025. The outcome from this revaluation is an increase in budgeted infrastructure depreciation from the 2026/27 Annual Plan of \$1.366 million.

- (d) Continuation of the Te Huia interregional rail service beyond the current trial. Staff are expecting that this topic will need to be considered through the LTP, including community consultation. Currently, the trial receives an Enhanced Funding Assistance Rate of 60 per cent. Should the service continue, it would be expected that this would reduce to 51 per cent. This is estimated to result in a reduction in NZTA subsidy (and an increase in rates) of \$794,000.
 - (e) Recontracting of public transport services is currently underway. Following completion of this procurement process, Council will be able to ascertain any changes to current service costs.
38. At its meeting on 22nd June 2026, the Joint Committee of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group made a recommendation for the inclusion of additional funding into Council's 2027 – 2037 LTP of:
- (i) \$147,000 increase in baseline expenditures
 - (ii) \$1.945 million in year one, and
 - (iii) \$2.184 million for each subsequent year.
39. Staff are including these matters into the development of the LTP budget.

2027 – 2037 LEVEL OF SERVICE REVIEW PROPOSALS

40. As discussed earlier in this report, staff have been working over the last two months to identify where changes to the current level of service provided by Council need to be considered through the 2027 – 2037 LTP.
41. Information on level of service change options was considered by the Executive Leadership Team against agreed prioritisation criteria, with Strategic Investment Proposals requested from staff to inform recommendations to Council.
42. Through these discussions three areas have been identified where further work is required to determine any recommended changes in level of service, and so are not reflected in the information provided in this report:
- **Emergency Management capability and capacity** – The Executive Leadership Team have recommended that an external review is undertaken into the changes that may be required to achieve a sustainable resourcing and operating model for Council's role in Emergency Management.
 - **Regional Resilience** – Council has recently adopted the Framework for Resilience to Natural Hazard Risk. This provides a whole-of-organisation approach for embedding natural hazard risk reduction and adaptation into a range of Council activities, including how Council supports territorial authorities to undertake community adaptation planning. When considering this framework, Council indicated an interest in what can be achieved within existing resources, the risk to planned resilience work programmes due to emergency response deployment, and whether an improvement in programme delivery could be achieved through further investment in resilience resources. While a SIP has not been provided for this area of work, direction is sought from Council on whether an Investment Case should be developed to consider these options.

- **Whangamarino Action Plan** – pending the outcome of Council’s direction in September any requirement for additional investment will be addressed through the LTP process. No provision is currently assumed.

43. Activities that have been identified as “Discretionary” have been subject to further review. This reflects Council’s direction that the organisation is primarily focussed on legislated activities, with a lower appetite for work that falls outside of these requirements.

Mandatory investment under proposed Planning Act and Natural Environment Act

44. A significant driver for new investment needs through the 2027 – 2037 LTP is the new resource management system. In September 2026 the coalition government is expected to pass legislation that repeals the present resource management system. The passing of the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill into law will repeal the Resource Management Act 1991.

45. A reset of the planning and environmental management system means significant change. Fundamental to the change will be the planning and policy framework going forward – this lays the framework for future delivery of the government’s system objectives. Planning for this new approach has begun - understanding the new planning and policy framework, the instruments within the framework, how these instruments knit together, and who has responsibility for what – are all matters that staff are turning their minds to.

46. At the time of writing this report the cogency of the two Bills remains fragmented and there are several Amendment Papers (some simple, some complex) that may or may not form part of the final legislation. Only once the two Bills have progressed through the final stages of reading will there be absolute certainty of the task ahead. Further, a substantial amount of the new national direction to support the new system is still to come - the passing of the legislation is part of the puzzle but by no means the full picture.

47. In light of this, staff have undertaken a preliminary assessment of the major components of the policy programme going forward. Previous LTPs included a policy programme that centred on the Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plan and Regional Coastal Plan, or on council approved Plan Changes to these documents. The process for reviewing these documents, along with Joint Management Agreements that run in tandem with RMA processes, was well known. With the system reset that includes substantially different plan development processes and frameworks forward scoping is less certain.

48. As with any new system there is a transition period, with responsibilities under present legislation (RMA) continuing until such time as the new system expunges the provisions of that legislation. Existing work programmes related to plan changes, plan reviews (and the plan reviews of other entities), all still remain. Council’s, not insignificant, statutory responsibilities for the Fast-Track Approvals legislation also remain.

49. The first three years of the 2027 – 2037 LTP will be an intense transition phase moving from the RMA framework and moving into the Planning and Natural Environment system. As with any transition process, particularly where multiple processes run at the same time, additional costs will be incurred. In submitting on the new system council identified the new elements of our work programme and the additional costs that would collectively fall on the region’s ratepayers. No remedy nor funding was provided by central government to local government in this regard. This submission point was reiterated in other submissions made, specifically to local government reform and rates capping proposals, again no allowance for

the additional costs incurred in transitioning to the new system have been made in any of the government announcements.

50. In order to assist councillors, staff have attempted to provide a high level overview of the anticipated policy programme ahead, to link this to the timelines stated in legislation, and to identify where present budget allocations can be repurposed. The following overviews the new approach to be undertaken and attempts to provide a picture of an integrated programme going forward. The table identifies the policy components of the new system and highlights where similar existing policy processes exist. However, none of the new planning instruments are replacing like with like - each has new parameters and new processes associated with its development.

Planning instrument	Responsible entity	Funding entity	Initial cost estimate	Existing budget able to be repurposed*	New work	AP (26/27)	Year 1 (27/28)	Year 2 (28/29)	Year 3 (29/30)	Year 4+ (29/30)
Regional Combined Plan (New planning instrument)	Regional	WRC	L	Nil	Yes					
Regional Spatial Plan process (New process)	All councils	All councils	M	Some*	Yes					
Regional Spatial Plan (~Regional Policy Statement)	All councils	All councils	H	Some*	Yes					
Natural Environment Plan (~ Regional and Regional Coastal Plan)	Regional	WRC	H	Some*	Some					
Land use Plans (each TA) (~District Plans)	Territorial authority	Each TA	H	Some*	N/A					
Land Use Plan (coastal marine area) (New planning instrument)	Regional	WRC	M	Nil	Yes					

51. The regional spatial plan, natural environment plan, and land use plans are the most pressing documents to focus on. The regional combined plan, whilst important, is the plan that 'falls out' of the process once the spatial plan, natural environment plan, and land use plans are completed. This is a matter that will likely be addressed in further detail in the next LTP.
52. The regional spatial plan is new way of working and must be undertaken in accordance with a heavily prescribed statutory process, the genesis of which is the establishment of a region wide spatial planning committee. The committee has responsibility for the oversight of plan development and is supported by a Secretariat. The Committee and the Secretariat make decisions and develop the spatial plan for the entire region, each local authority is represented on the committee and has an equal say in the development of the regional spatial plan.

Cost sharing and funding

53. Cost sharing and funding arrangements for the regional spatial plan process and development of a regional spatial plan are a matter that will be determined in the near future. Decisions on budgets and funding will be needed in order to inform all Waikato councils' LTP processes.
54. WRC will incur the following costs:
- Regional combined plan 100%
 - Regional spatial plan process Agreed contribution
 - Regional spatial plan Agreed contribution
 - Natural environment plan 100%
 - Land use plan (CMA) 100%

55. As noted above there is budget allocation within the existing LTP for a forward policy programme, this will need to be repurposed going forward with the funding and resource gap identified to inform the LTP process.

Policy programme requirements

56. A series of Strategic Investment Proposals (SIPs) have been prepared as a first attempt to quantify the level of funding that Council is likely to need to inject into this transition programme. In order to best understand the forward policy programme it helps if they are read and thought of in the following order



57. A further workshop with council will be held to go into the policy components of the new system in more detail. At this stage this information is provided to raise awareness of the key pieces of work that will be required and to inform the 2027 – 2037 LTP context.

SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF SERVICE CHANGE PROPOSALS

58. The following table provides a summary of all level of service change proposals considered by the Executive Leadership Team, including:
- (a) those required in response to the proposed Planning Act and Natural Environment Act
 - (b) changes proposed to address other service, operational, or strategic matters.
59. Full proposals are provided in **Attachment Four**. Staff seek feedback from councillors on which of these proposals should progress for inclusion in the LTP process. Where Council has supported the inclusion of the proposed changes into the draft LTP budget, full Investment Cases will be developed for investment greater than \$100,000 per annum. This information, combined with the outcomes from detailed budgeting will be reported to Council in summary in December 2026 ahead of detailed consideration and decision-making in January / February 2027.

Directorate	Project Name	Description	Legislative Alignment	Future fit organisation	Productivity and prosperity	Building regional resilience	Sustaining natural resources	Optimised transport system	Risk of not proceeding	2026/27 Direct Costs	Do more	Do less	Do different	ELT recommendation
Science, Policy and Information	Regional Combined Plan	New legislation is requiring each region, by 2031, to change its planning to a regional combined plan. The opportunity is for WRC to lead coordination of the combined plan, to ensure consistency and alignment across the region.	6	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High		\$726,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Regional Spatial Plan Process	New planning legislation will require all Waikato councils to jointly prepare a Regional Spatial Plan. This investment establishes the governance, secretariat (which is a statutory requirement), programme management, and coordination functions needed to lead the process, meet statutory timeframes, and ensure a consistent regional approach to future growth and development	6	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High		\$533,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Regional Spatial Plan	New legislation is requiring each region, by 2031, to change its planning to a regional combined plan. The opportunity is for WRC to lead coordination of the combined plan, to ensure consistency and alignment across the region.	6	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High		\$914,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Land Use Plan - Coastal Marine Area	To prepare a Land Use Plan - coastal marine area within the timeframe and requirements directed in the Planning Bill, expected to become law by late 2026.	6	High	High	Moderate	High	Low	High		\$616,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Natural Environment Plan and Transition Policies	To prepare a Natural Environments Plan within the timeframe and requirements directed in the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. The Bills are expected to become law by late 2026.	6	High	High	High	Extreme	Low	High		\$742,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Geothermal	The Waikato region contains over 70% of New Zealand's geothermal resources, making it central to renewable energy development and the transition to a low-emissions economy. Growing energy demand, outdated geothermal policy settings, and upcoming regulatory changes create a need for updated Science to inform planning, including a Natural Environment Plan and sustainable resource limits. With central government actively supporting geothermal expansion and innovation, local government has a key role in enabling future geothermal development while ensuring long-term resource sustainability and protecting other important benefits, such as tourism and cultural values.	5	Low	High	High	High	None	High		\$330,000			Investment case developed to test options
Science, Policy and Information	Hydro Lakes water quality investigation	The Waikato hydro lakes support hydro-electric generation, recreation, drinking water supplies, cultural values, biodiversity, and community wellbeing. Increasingly frequent and complex algal blooms, including toxic blooms, are creating growing risks to public health and lake health. Improved lake-based monitoring is needed to better understand causes, inform management responses, and protect these important values.	2	None	None	None	Extreme	None	High	\$891,755	\$435,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Chief Executive's Office	Regional Economic Development	This proposal requests ongoing funding to position WRC to lead implementation of the Regional Economic Development Strategy, attract investment, deliver the regional energy strategy, monitor outcomes, and support long-term economic planning.	3	High	Extreme	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	\$302,000	\$215,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Integrated Catchment Management	Management of flood protection infrastructure on private land	WRC has \$1.13 billion of flood protection assets, many of which are on private land and vulnerable to landowner and third-party activities, restricted access, damage, and modification. These issues compromise asset integrity, increase flood risk, reduce levels of service, and can result in costly, time-consuming investigations, remediation, and potential consequences for communities, property, and livestock. A bylaw would allow for a more proactive and best practice approach.	5	None	None	Low	None	None	None		\$250,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Integrated Catchment Management	Consent Management Operational Savings	Environmental Oversight monitoring for consent compliance in the Lower Waikato (Whangamarino and Motukaraka catchments) is currently undertaken by a contracted resource costing approximately \$200,000 per annum. There is an opportunity to bring this work inhouse and save approximately \$100,000 per year.	5	None	None	None	None	None	None				(\$48,000)	To be included in draft LTP budget if progressed
Integrated Catchment Management	Lower Waikato Resourcing	The Lower Waikato zone covers 283,757 hectares at the downstream end of the Waikato River catchment, receiving the cumulative impacts of activities across the Lake Taupō, Upper Waikato, Waipā and Central Waikato zones. The area is also a key transport and infrastructure corridor, containing nationally significant assets including major state highways, the North Island Main Trunk Railway, electricity transmission lines, and the main gas pipeline to Auckland, all of which require careful management and protection.	1	Low	None	Low	Low	None	High	\$2,348,966			\$121,000	If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Integrated Catchment Management	Waihou Resourcing	The Waihou Valley Scheme is a catchment-wide flood protection and drainage network developed during the 1980s and 1990s. It includes 177 km of stopbanks, 75 floodgates and 20 pump stations that protect urban and rural communities from tidal and river flooding. Ongoing investment supports 24/7 management, asset maintenance, flood response and recovery, consenting and compliance	4	Low	None	Low	Low	None	High	\$1,437,782			\$0	To be included in draft LTP budget if progressed

Directorate	Project Name	Description	Legislative Alignment	Future fit organisation	Productivity and prosperity	Building regional resilience	Sustaining natural resources	Optimised transport system	Risk of not proceeding	2026/27 Direct Costs	Do more	Do less	Do different	ELT recommendation
		requirements, depreciation, debt repayment, and continuous improvement planning. A key challenge is understanding asset condition and performance, which requires complex and often high-cost investigations to ensure the scheme remains effective and resilient.												
Regional Transport Connections	How we resource public events	Council is being asked to support more significant regional and national events and has no dedicated event resource and no available budget beyond existing commitments. Event expectations extend beyond transport into relationships, politics, tourism, economic development, communications and whole-of-council risk.	2	None	High	None	None	High	Low		\$100,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	MSP rapid transit corridors	The Hamilton Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan (HWMSP) was developed by the FutureProof partnership and approved by each council and the NZTA Board in 2022. Significant population and employment growth in the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Area will increase demand on the transport network and require enhanced public transport services. This project will develop a Detailed Business Case to support future investment in rapid transit and higher-frequency bus services, helping to secure funding and deliver the growth, connectivity, and public transport outcomes identified in the Metro Spatial Plan and Regional Public Transport Plan.	0	None	None	None	None	High	Low		\$123,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	Zero Emission Bus Depots - next phase	Government policy requires all newly imported public transport buses to be zero-emission from July 2025, with a target of a fully zero-emission bus fleet by 2035. WRC's current contracts place responsibility for buses, charging infrastructure, depots, and energy supply on operators. As WRC's public transport contracts are renewed over the coming decade this approach will need to be reviewed to ensure Council is able to maintain and operate a zero-emission fleet that meets central government's transport decarbonisation objectives.	2	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate		\$0			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	Te Huia rolling stock business case	Te Huia's current rolling stock consists of refurbished 1970's assets that were originally intended as a transitional solution. While the need to plan for replacement rolling stock has been recognised for some time, previous council consideration of this work concluded that a detailed rolling stock business case should be deferred until greater certainty existed regarding the long-term future of the Te Huia service. Since then, the Te Huia trial has been extended, and further work has progressed through the Te Huia Future Services SSBC to better understand future demand, service patterns and growth opportunities. This work will provide a stronger evidence base for determining future rolling stock requirements and investment needs.	0	None	Moderate	None	None	High	Extreme		\$245,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	Additional Transport Planning Resource	This SIP considers how to add new resources into teams to deliver existing and future workload pressure. The aim is to achieve this by converting consultancy and contracted services budget into salary, resulting in potentially no new cost to council.	0	High	None	None	None	High	Moderate				\$0	To be included in draft LTP budget if progressed
Regional Transport Connections	Trial - Pōkeno - Drury	Pōkeno is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Waikato and has strong travel links with South Auckland for employment, education and access to the wider rail network. However, there is currently no direct public transport connection between Pōkeno and the emerging Drury transport hub. This proposal supports the RPTP objective of delivering an integrated public transport network that enhances accessibility and provides attractive alternatives to private vehicle travel, while improving cross-boundary connectivity between Waikato and Auckland.	0	None	None	None	None	High	None		\$0			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	Trial - Cambridge local	Cambridge is one of the Waikato region's fastest-growing communities, with the population expected to increase from around 22,000 residents today to approximately 31,000 by 2037. While Route 20 provides a successful and growing connection between Cambridge and Hamilton, public transport coverage within Cambridge remains limited, particularly in northern growth areas. This creates an opportunity to improve access to employment, education, services and community destinations while supporting planned growth and increasing transport choice.	0	None	None	None	None	High	None		\$172,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required
Regional Transport Connections	Trial - Taumarunui to Hamilton	The cessation of the publicly accessible Taumarunui health shuttle has left Taumarunui and surrounding communities with limited public transport options to access Hamilton, employment, education, specialist health services and regional connections. This presents an opportunity for WRC and Horizons Regional Council to work together to establish a new cross-boundary public transport service that improves access, connectivity and transport equity for rural communities. The proposal aligns with Regional Public Transport Plan objectives to provide access to essential services, improve regional public transport connections, and support communities that have limited transport choices.	0	None	None	None	None	High	None		\$74,000			If progressed, an investment case to test options will be required

Directorate	Project Name	Description	Legislative Alignment	Future fit organisation	Productivity and prosperity	Building regional resilience	Sustaining natural resources	Optimised transport system	Risk of not proceeding	2026/27 Direct Costs	Do more	Do less	Do different	ELT recommendation
Resource Use	Maritime Services	Current staff resourcing levels are deficient for the scale of the Maritime activities in the region meaning we cannot meet community expectations of proactive presence and response to incidents and have insufficient resources to monitor our compliance activity as it relates to Temporary Maritime Events (TME).	5	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	High	\$649,666	\$100,000			To be included in draft LTP budget if progressed

0	Not Mandatory
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

DISCRETIONARY EXPENDITURE

60. Through the application of the prioritisation framework, Council is able to identify those activities that are deemed to be “Discretionary”. For the purposes of prioritisation, classification as Discretionary reflects the following categories of expenditure:
 - (a) Optional actions are available to Council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken
 - (b) Optional actions are available to Council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken
 - (c) Not mandatory
61. A summary of all current cost centres and costs that have been assessed as Discretionary is provided in **Attachment Five**. In total, these cost centres reflect budgeted expenditure of \$15.167 million in the 2026/27 Annual Plan.
62. Through this analysis the Executive Leadership Team have identified two specific areas within Council’s portfolio that have a low alignment to legislation. These areas are also impacted by the proposed changes to the purpose of local government through the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill.
 - (a) Discretionary funding / community grants
 - (b) Education
63. The analysis demonstrates that these programmes exist for valid and well-considered reasons that support Council’s regulatory functions and environmental outcomes for the region. However, staff consider that Council’s expenditure in these areas warrants discussion, with an opportunity to review the decisions, assumptions and priorities that have shaped the existing arrangements and determine whether they remain the right fit for the future.
64. To best understand this background and rationale, Strategic Investment Proposals (SIPs) have been developed so that this information, and the impacts of any reductions, can be considered comprehensively by Council.

Discretionary / community grant funds

65. Council's discretionary funding and community grants cover a range of functions which have been established over time - often to support outcomes and behaviours that cannot be achieved by Council acting alone. These activities leverage external resources, enable community-led delivery, and build and maintain partnerships that support regional outcomes.
66. The following table summarises the activities that currently reflect the provision of discretionary / community grant funding and a summary of the rationale for provision.

Directorate	Project Name	Description	Legislative Alignment	Future fit organisation	Productivity and prosperity	Building regional resilience	Sustaining natural resources	Optimised transport system	Risk of not proceeding	2026/27 Direct Costs	Rationale for current service provision
CCS	Community Partnerships	This cost centre consolidates sponsorship and funding support provided by Council in line with its Funding Policy (reviewed December 2023). Included within this is:- Rural Support Trust- Farm Environment Awards- Enviroschools- University scholarships - (Dr Stella Francis, Roger Harris, Te Arikiniui Dame Atairangikaahu)- Water Science Prize - Waikato University - NIWA Water Science Fair. The refocusing of the purpose of the local government amendment bill, and Council's signalled direction to focusing on expenditure that is legislatively required only, provides an opportunity to reconsider this fund and discontinue some, or all, of the discretionary funding, reduce expenditure by up to \$147,000 per annum and reduce staff administration. There may be relationship risks with the discontinuation of some funding, particularly those of long duration and undertaken in partnership.	0	None	None	None	None	None	Low	\$148,000	Scholarships, sponsorships and grant funds provide support for Council's work through the promotion of excellence in tertiary study, recognition of on-farm performance and innovation, and promotion of Council's role through grants.
CCS	Regional Services Fund	This cost centre manages the distribution of funds under the Regional Emergency Service Fund. Funding deeds are currently in place with recipient organisations through to June 2027. The current Regional Emergency Services Funding deeds expire at the end of the 2026/27 financial year, meaning that a review through the Long Term Plan process is required to inform any new funding deeds that Council wishes to enter into. The refocusing of the purpose of the local government amendment bill provides an opportunity to reconsider this fund and discontinue the provision of funding and reduce expenditure by \$730,000 to \$780,000 per annum. There may be relationship risks with the discontinuation of funding, particularly around negative perception from emergency services fund recipients and community.	0	None	None	None	None	None	Moderate	\$727,000	Current recipients (Surf Lifesaving NZ, NZ Coastguard, Coromandel Rescue Helicopter, Phillip's Search and Rescue, NZ Land Search and Rescue) would no longer have access to Council funding. There may be relationship risks associated with this decision – in particular in relation to the funding for Surf Lifesaving NZ which has been centralised with WRC on behalf of councils in the region in order to simplify administration and support clarity of funding.
ICM	Biodiversity work programme	The Biodiversity work programme: - takes a collaborative approach through partnerships to support others to deliver biodiversity outcomes - provides technical advice and support (including incentives) to landowners, community groups - delivers collaborative restoration projects at site - maintains minimum lake levels as required in the Waikato Regional Plan.	3	None	Low	Low	High	None	Moderate	\$646,000	The historic and ongoing decline of biodiversity in our region is well documented, and the biodiversity work programme takes a non-regulatory approach to deliver biodiversity and associated outcomes (e.g. soil conservation and erosion control) designed to halt this decline. Together with the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme, this programme is part of an integrated approach that relies on investment in each part of the system if we are to have any chance of reversing the decline of biodiversity in our region.
ICM	Natural heritage partnership programme	Community restoration funds provided through the Natural Heritage Fund (NHF), Environmental Initiatives Fund (EIF) and the Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund (SSCIF) are utilised to fund and co-fund biodiversity projects led by community groups and landowners.	1	None	Low	Low	High	None	Moderate	\$2,658,000	The Natural Heritage Partnership Programme contributes to meeting our obligations under legislation and the Regional Policy Statement. It will also help to deliver outcomes described in the draft Waikato Biodiversity Strategy.
ICM	Catchment new works; Hill country erosion programme; WRA	WRC's catchment management programmes are the Council's primary non-regulatory mechanism for delivering environmental outcomes at a catchment scale. Through incentives, partnerships, engagement and on-the-ground works this investment supports erosion control, riparian fencing and planting, wetland restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and advisory support for landowners and communities to improve catchment outcomes.	3	None	Moderate	Moderate	High	None	High	\$995,000	Investment is needed now because the policy and legislative landscape is increasingly reliant on voluntary catchment action to achieve environmental outcomes. Proposed replacement resource management legislation, including the Natural Environment Bill, creates a clear expectation that councils will consider and apply non-regulatory mechanisms such as incentives, partnerships, and education alongside regulation.
RTC	Community Transport	Council wishes to review all discretionary funding. The future of all grant funds are to be considered from this perspective, to determine whether this is essential work for council.	3	None	None	None	None	Moderate	Low	\$520,000	The Community Transport Grant Fund has grown from \$200k in 2022 to \$500k from 2025. Every year the fund is over-subscribed. Customer feedback and council support have been very strong, resulting in the fund growing over previous years.
TRW	External iwi capacity and capability funding	This proposal seeks to continue the external iwi capacity and capability funding mechanism through the 2027 LTP. The mechanism supports iwi participation in Council work where participation is appropriate, proportionate and mutually beneficial. It is a discretionary allocation within the existing operating budget, not a request for new funding.	1	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	High	\$304,000	Continuing this funding mechanism supports Council to work more effectively with iwi partners where participation is appropriate, proportionate and mutually beneficial. It helps address an enduring capacity gap, gives greater certainty to Council work programmes, and supports earlier, more consistent iwi input into planning, policy, science, monitoring, operational and partnership activity.

67. Strategic Investment Proposals included in **Attachment Six** present consideration of these funds for Council direction, taking account of:
- (a) Proposed changes to the purpose of local government through the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill. These changes remove reference to wellbeings and provide focus on “good quality, cost-effective, and local infrastructure, public services, and performance of regulatory functions; and to support local economic growth and development”.
 - (b) Existing relationships / partnerships that sit behind the establishment of the funds

Education

68. As for community grant funds, staff have considered those activities currently undertaken by Council in relation to education services. Council’s education programmes are a key front-end tool for influencing behaviours, building community capability and supporting long-term environmental and safety outcomes. They provide a mechanism for working with schools, communities and partner organisations to achieve outcomes that may be difficult to deliver through regulatory approaches alone.
69. The following table summarises the activities that currently reflect the provision of education services / activities, and a summary of the rationale for provision.
70. Strategic Investment Proposals present consideration of these activities for Council direction (refer **Attachment Seven**).

Directorate	Project Name	Description	Legislative Alignment	Future fit organisation	Productivity and prosperity	Building regional resilience	Sustaining natural resources	Optimised transport system	Risk of not proceeding	2026/27 Direct Costs	Rationale for current service provision
Regional Transport Connections	Road Safety	Road safety risks remain a significant challenge across the region, particularly for high-risk groups such as young drivers, motorcyclists, and vulnerable road users. There is an opportunity to strengthen education, awareness, and coordinated action through a more integrated and regionally aligned road safety approach.	2	None	High	High	None	High	Extreme	\$462,000	Without continued investment in regional coordination and leadership, there is a risk that road safety efforts become fragmented across the region, reducing collaboration, limiting knowledge sharing, weakening regional advocacy, and diminishing the ability to deliver consistent education and behaviour change initiatives. This may result in missed opportunities to influence regional safety outcomes and support implementation of the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy and Regional Land Transport Plan priorities.
Resource Use	Education and Promotion for Non-Complying Airsheds	Funding support provided to low income households for dry wood fuel to reduce emissions in non complying airsheds. Due to being below financial thresholds, this project has not required a SIP.	3	None	None	None	None	None	Low	\$35,000	This project represents a relatively small investment to address an air quality issue. One of the functions of a Regional Council (as set out in s30 of the RMA) relates to air quality and the discharge of contaminants into the air. This particular piece of work is discretionary as there is no requirement to have such subsidy schemes or to undertake promotion of good practice. Staff are seeking a decision from Council to decide if it wishes to remove the funding.
Resource Use	Formal education	WRC's formal education programmes are a cost-effective way to build environmental literacy, stewardship, leadership and community capability among young people. Through Enviroschools, Kura Waiti ki Kura Waitā and youth engagement programmes, WRC influences environmental behaviours early and leverages partnerships with schools, iwi, communities and co-funders to support long-term improvements in water quality, biodiversity, biosecurity, waste minimisation, climate resilience and sustainable resource management. The programme also supports delivery of environmental education priorities across the organisation, reducing reliance on more expensive regulatory and remediation interventions.	1	None	None	None	Low	None	Moderate	\$720,000	This investment develops environmentally informed, capable and resilient communities that contribute to improved environmental outcomes across the Waikato. Independent evaluations have demonstrated strong environmental, cultural and community outcomes, with benefits including increased environmental literacy, stronger stewardship and community action, development of future environmental leaders and workforce capability, support for Te Tiriti-based partnerships and Te Ture Whaimana commitments, and successful delivery of environmental education priorities across the organisation. The programme delivers significant value through collaborative funding models and proactive behaviour change, reducing long-term environmental and compliance costs.

AREAS OF REVIEW NOT IDENTIFIED BY STAFF

71. While this report sets out the proposed changes and considerations identified by staff, the workshop provides the opportunity for elected members to provide direction on any other areas of interest that they wish to see considered. This may include how Council wishes to address the deferral of requirement for Farm Environment Plans anticipated as part of Plan change 1. See commentary below.
72. Depending on direction received from Council on areas for further review, additional workshop time may be required with Council to consider these additional areas.

PLAN CHANGE 1

73. On 19th August 2026, the Government announced that it intends to enact legislation and make regulations that will directly affect Plan Change 1 (PC1). If enacted as proposed this will mean Farm Environment Plan (FEP) and consent requirements that are triggered by PC1 will be deferred until 31 December 2032.
74. During this period, farmers and growers currently operating lawfully under PC1's permitted activity rules will continue to do so without needing to prepare and implement a PC1 FEP or obtain a PC1 resource consent. The regulatory obligation to have a certified FEP, and to complete the actions specified in the FEP, has been a cornerstone to the methods identified in PC1 to achieve the water quality outcomes required to achieve Te Ture Whaimana.
75. The government has also foreshadowed that the national Freshwater Farm Plan (FWFP) regulations are likely to be "turned on" in the middle of 2027 across the country. Government has also advised that it is likely to set a five-year period within which those landowners that require a FWFP must have one prepared.
76. If the legislation passes as currently anticipated and the FWFP regulations proceed as described, there will be no regulatory obligation to have a farm plan for many years, unless a future government amends the legislation.
77. Whilst the regulatory obligation is removed, the water quality issue remains. Industry and sector groups are already reaching out to see how we might continue to assist farmers and growers to continue to make environmental enhancements, despite the proposed legislation relaxing the timing of obligations.
78. Work programmes have been developed for the purpose of implementing the obligations contained in PC1, as well as the obligations as they were expressed in national FWFP regulations before the more recent amendments. Should Council want to continue to seek options to improve water quality over the coming years whilst the new regulatory system is developed, staff will begin preparing a range of options for non-regulatory actions that could be undertaken for consideration. These would be reported back to Council through a future workshop.

SUMMARY

79. Through a detailed and structured review of the Council's current portfolio of work, staff have presented information to Council on:

- (a) A review of the status of Investment Cases approved through the 2024 LTP
 - (b) Information on those requests for additional funding that did not proceed through the 2024 LTP
 - (c) A review of baseline budget performance against current levels of service
 - (d) An early assessment of the requirements for Council to transition to the new resource management policy framework
 - (e) A detailed review of Council's current portfolio of work, considering alignment to legislation and *Te Pae Tawhiti*. This work has identified options to Do More, Do Less or Do Different with an early estimate of the financial impacts of each of these being provided.
80. In total, the identified changes in investment noted equate to an estimated increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers of 6.1 per cent. It is noted that this does not include all budget change that can be anticipated as detailed budgeting is completed by staff.
81. Decisions from this workshop will provide direction to staff who will begin detailed budgeting in September 2026.
82. Where Council has supported the inclusion of the proposed changes into the draft LTP budget, full Investment Cases will be developed for investment greater than \$100,000 per annum. These Investment Cases will be written alongside the detailed budgeting process with this information and the detailed budgeting outcomes reported to Council in December 2026, ahead of the LTP budget meeting in January / February 2027 where the content of the 2027 – 2037 Draft LTP will be confirmed, alongside identification of topics for consultation.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

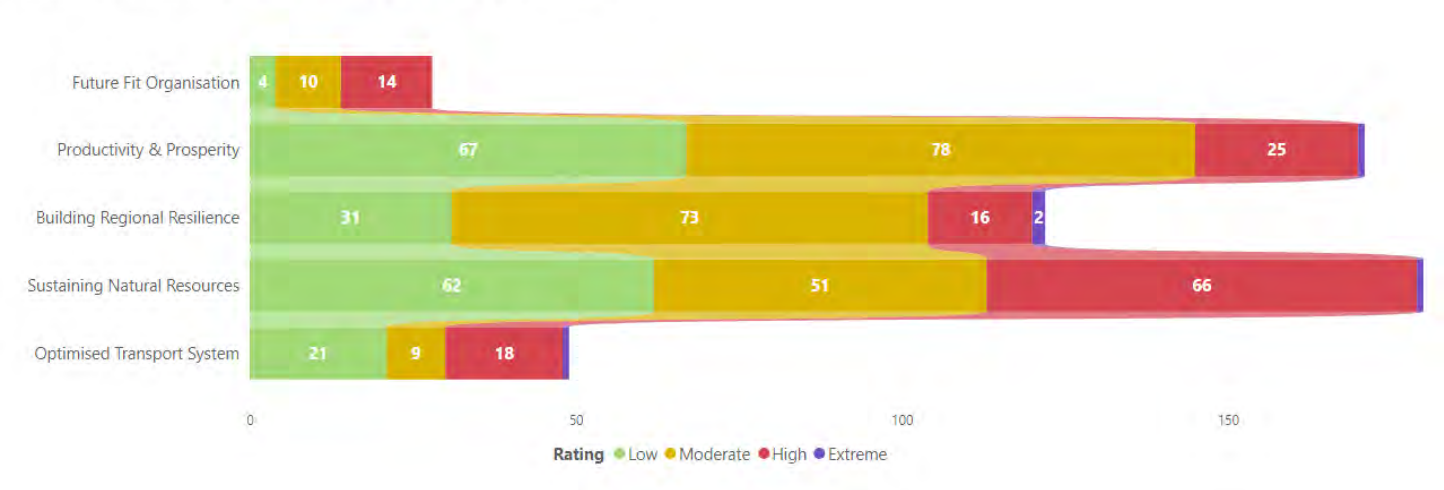
1. Directorate view of prioritised portfolio of Council's current work (Doc # 38520209) [↓](#)
2. Strategic Investment Proposal updates from 2024-2034 LTP (Doc # 38434289) [↓](#)
3. 2024-2034 LTP Investment Case updates (Doc # 38244355) [↓](#)
4. Strategic Investment Proposals - Levels of Service changes (Doc # 38504710) [↓](#)
5. Discretionary Activities (Doc # 38512977) [↓](#)
6. Strategic Investment Proposals - Discretionary Funding and Community Grants (Doc # 38521512) [↓](#)
7. Strategic Investment Proposals - Education (Doc # 38493364) [↓](#)

Directorate Analysis

Current Portfolio

Strategic alignment

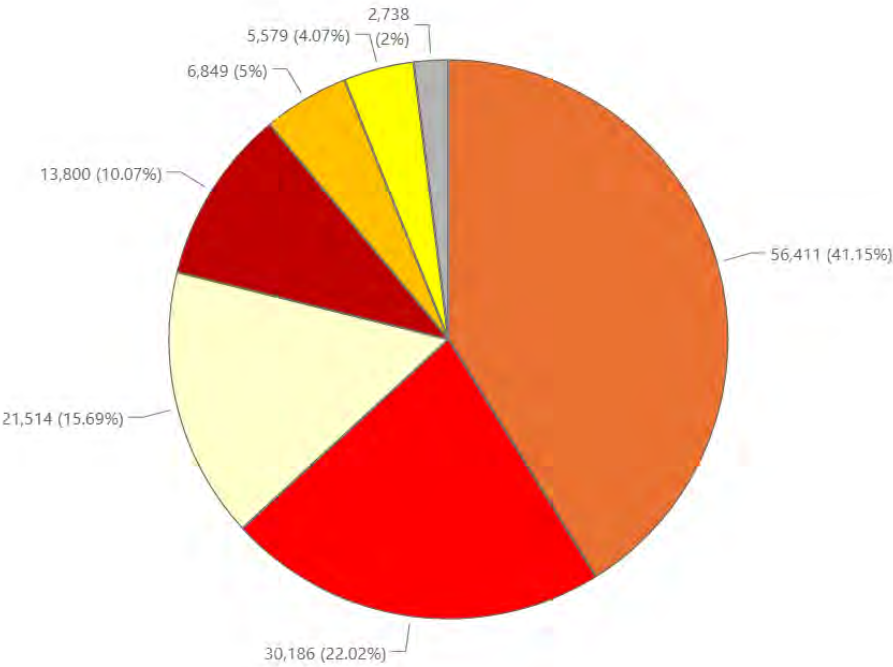
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for All Directorates



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$2,738	33
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$21,514	58
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$5,579	26
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$6,849	7
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$56,411	6
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$30,186	106
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$13,800	31
Total		\$137,079	267

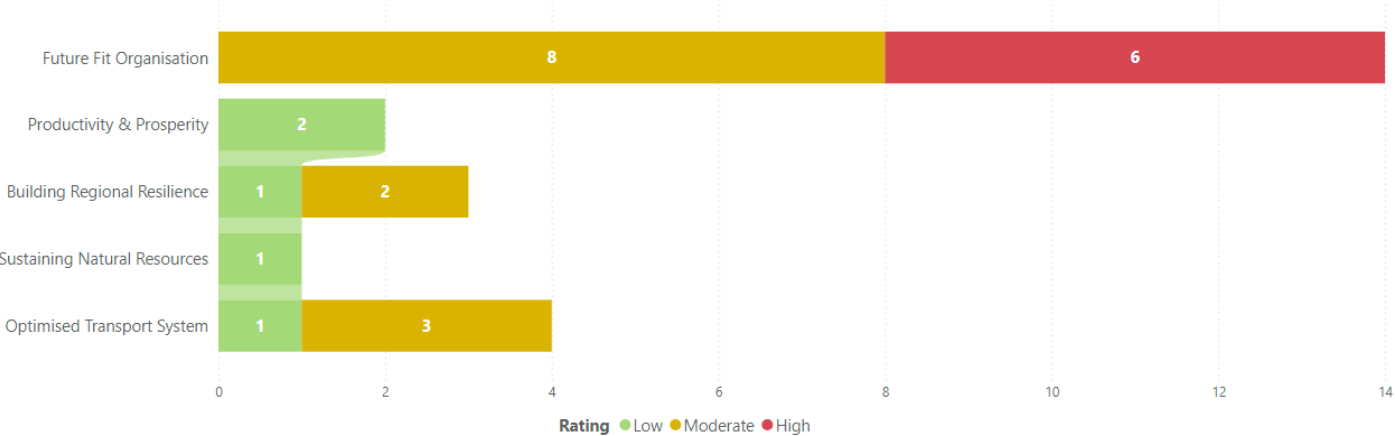
Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - All Directorates
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Customer and Corporate Services (CCS)

Strategic alignment

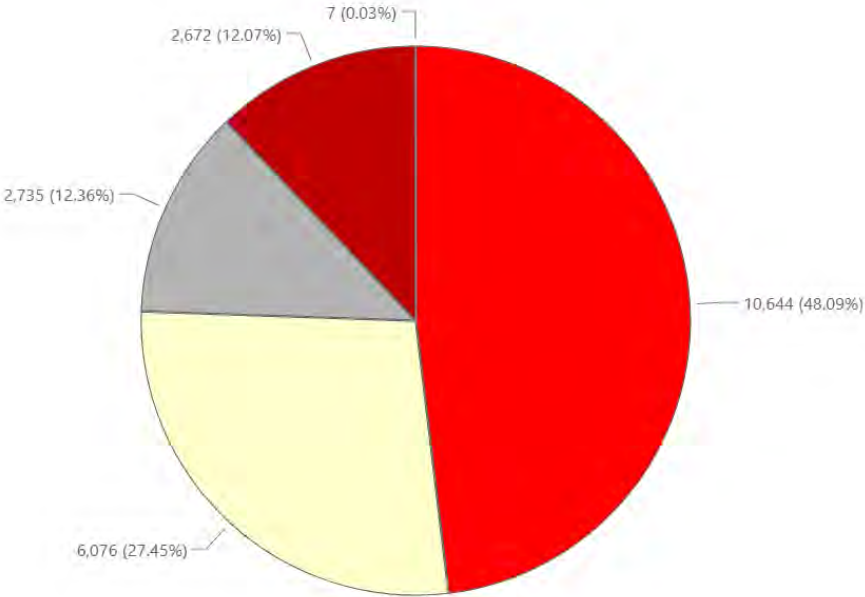
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Customer and Corporate Services (CCS) Directorate



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$2,735	16
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$6,076	13
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$7	1
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$10,644	5
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$2,672	4
Total		\$22,134	39

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Customer and Corporate Services (CCS) Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
CCS	Business Advisory Services	Cycling Centre of Excellence	This cost centre captures the repayment of the loan associated with the grant for the development of the Velodrome. The loan is currently in place until 2031/32	11	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Waikato Regional Theatre	This cost centre captures the repayment of the loan associated with the grant for the development of the Waikato Regional Theatre. The loan is currently in place until 2040/41	11	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Community Partnerships	This cost centre consolidates sponsorship and funding support provided by Council in line with its Funding Policy (reviewed December 2023). Included within this is: - Rural Support Trust-Farm Environment Awards- Enviroschools-University scholarships - (Dr Stella Francis, Roger Harris, Te Arikiniui Dame Atairangikaahu)- Water Science Prize - Waikato University - NIWA Water Science Fair	7	0	None	None	None	None	None	\$148	Yes
CCS		Regional Services Fund	This cost centre manages the distribution of grant funds under the Regional Emergency Service Fund. Funding deeds are currently in place with recipient organisations through to June 2027	7	0	None	None	None	None	None	\$727	Yes
CCS	Corporate Communications	Internal & Corporate Communications	This cost centre captures the staff costs for the delivery of all corporate communication services. The direct cost budget of \$25,000 provides for annual staff events	36	0	Moderate	None	Moderate	None	None	\$25	
CCS		Regional Communications	This cost centre reflects costs for the maintenance of Council's website, organisation advertising and promotion (including public notices)	32	0	Moderate	None	Moderate	None	None	\$223	
CCS	Corporate Planning	LTP and Annual Plan development	These cost centres capture the costs of the development of Council's statutory planning and reporting processes, including requirements for the completion of external audits	21	6	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$415	
CCS		Annual Report and LTP performance monitoring	These cost centres capture the costs of the development of Council's statutory planning and reporting processes, including requirements for the completion of external audits	14	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$344	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
CCS	Corporate Services - Finance	Internal Audit & Risk	This cost centre holds the funding and resourcing for the delivery of Council's internal audit and risk function, including the externally delivered internal audit programme.	14	0	None	None	None	None	None	\$164	
CCS	Corporate Services - Special Projects	Corporate Info System Replacement	This cost centre captures the repayment of the loan associated with the implementation of Council's enterprise system for Finance, asset management and HR. The loan is currently in place until 2036/37	11	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS	Customer Experience Transformation Programme	Customer Experience Transformation Programme	The Customer Experience Transformation Programme seeks to address the question of "How might we innovate and improve on our customers' experience based on their needs and expectations, while aligning with our strategic direction and corporate goals?".	29	0	High	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Centralisation-Experience Centre	The Customer Experience Transformation Programme seeks to address the question of "How might we innovate and improve on our customers' experience based on their needs and expectations, while aligning with our strategic direction and corporate goals?".	25	0	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Customer Portal (starts 2026)	The Customer Experience Transformation Programme seeks to address the question of "How might we innovate and improve on our customers' experience based on their needs and expectations, while aligning with our strategic direction and corporate goals?".	25	0	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Self-Service (starts 2026)	The Customer Experience Transformation Programme seeks to address the question of "How might we innovate and improve on our customers' experience based on their needs and expectations, while aligning with our strategic direction and corporate goals?".	25	0	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS	Customer Services	Customer Services	This cost centre includes total direct costs of \$160,000 predominantly representing the centralised (organisation) budgets printing and stationery (\$28,000); postage and courier (\$56,000); Yellow / White Pages listing costs (\$4,000); After hours call centre (\$40,000)	21	0	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$160	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
CCS	Enterprise Data Strategy Project	Data Catalogue - Phase 1 (Enterprise Data - Horizon 1)	This project sits as part of the enablers for Horizon 1 of the Enterprise Data Strategy	39	0	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	\$0	
CCS		Data Asset Register (Enterprise Data - Horizon 1)	This project sits as part of the enablers for Horizon 1 of the Enterprise Data Strategy	32	0	High	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS		Data Strategy, Roadmap & Plan (Enterprise Data - Horizon 1)	This project sits as part of the enablers for Horizon 1 of the Enterprise Data Strategy	32	0	High	None	None	None	None	\$0	
CCS	Finance Management	CS - Information Services	This cost centre amalgamates the delivery of all Information Systems and Management costs on behalf of the organisation. It supports the delivery of BAU activities as well as key areas of improvement across: - Business process management - Information management - Enterprise Data Strategy - Cyber Security - Information technology (licences / subscription costs) - Information services (service desk etc)	39	5	High	Low	None	None	None	\$9,787	
CCS		Portfolio Management	Through the Enterprise Portfolio Office, oversight, reporting and guidance is provided to the organisation on good practice project, programme and portfolio management. These disciplines aim to ensure that investment made by Council are well managed and aligned with key strategies and priorities.	32	0	High	None	None	None	None	\$32	
CCS		Business Advisory Services	This cost centre captures the costs associated with the provision of management of the Fleet and Property team, legal services team, risk management team and direct costs for the provision of procurement services, funding services and insurance to the organisation.	21	0	None	None	None	None	None	\$12	
CCS		FIN - Financial Services	This cost centre includes budget and staffing for the delivery of core financial service to Council, including Payroll, operational asset accounting, Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable	11	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$251	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
CCS		Financial Planning and Reporting	This cost centre reflects the costs associated with the provision of financial planning and reporting services to the organisation. This includes the provision of monthly financial performance reporting, quarterly forecasting and reporting to ELT and Council Committees	11	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$28	
CCS	Financial Planning & Reporting	LTP/Ann Plan Production Finance	These cost centres capture the costs of the development of Council's statutory planning and reporting processes, including requirements for the completion of external audits	21	6	Moderate	None	None	None	None	\$30	
CCS	Financial Services	Ann Report Production Finance	These cost centres capture the costs of the development of Council's statutory planning and reporting processes, including requirements for the completion of external audits	21	6	None	None	None	None	None	\$49	
CCS		Financial/Rates	This cost centre reflects the costs associated with the invoicing and collection of Council's rates revenue. It includes costs that Council is required to contribute to territorial authorities for the maintenance of district valuation rolls, as well as remissions granted in accordance with Council's Rates Remission and Postponement Policies.	14	6	None	None	None	None	None	\$2,178	
CCS		Treasury	This cost centre provides the oversight and administration of Council's treasury function, including the management of cashflow, specialist advice on the management of Council's investment fund and borrowing programme.	11	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$235	
CCS	Property	Property - Kihikihi EV Bus Depot	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Kihikihi EV depot (Exp Dec 2058 - lease with Waipa DC \$1 nominal annual lease fee)	21	1	None	None	None	None	Moderate	\$7	
CCS		Property - Leamington EV Bus Depot	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Leamington EV depot (Exp Dec 2058 - lease with Waipa DC \$1 nominal annual lease fee)	21	4	None	None	None	None	Moderate	\$7	
CCS		Property - Transport Centre	This cost centre relates to leasing and management of the Transport Centre (Nov 2027 renewal, exp Oct 2033 lease with HCC)	21	1	None	None	None	None	Moderate	\$77	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
CCS		Property - 160 Ward Street	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of 160 Ward Street, Hamilton (renewal May 2036, exp May 2056)	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$4,940	
CCS		Property - Kerepehi Depot	This cost centre relates to the ownership and management of the Kerepehi depot	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$29	
CCS		Property - Northgate Depot	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Northgate depot (Dec 2032 renewal, Nov 2044 exp)	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$300	
CCS		Property - Paeroa Depot	This cost centre relates to the ownership and management of the Paeroa depot	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$104	
CCS		Property - Pokeno Depot	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Pokeno depot (April 2028 Renewal, exp Dec 2037)	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$133	
CCS		Property - Taupo Town Office	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Taupo office (renewal Dec 2028, Exp Dec 2034)	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$228	
CCS		Property - Te Aroha Depot	This cost centre relates to the ownership and management of the Te Aroha depot	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$58	
CCS		Property - Whitianga	This cost centre relates to the leasing and management of the Whitianga office (renewal Jul 2030, exp Jul 2048)	14	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$199	
CCS	Vehicles	Vehicles - General	This cost centre relates to the costs associated with the management and operation of Council's vehicle fleet	11	0	None	None	None	None	None	\$1,245	
				Ave.: 20							\$22,134	

Chief Executive Office (CEO)

Strategic alignment

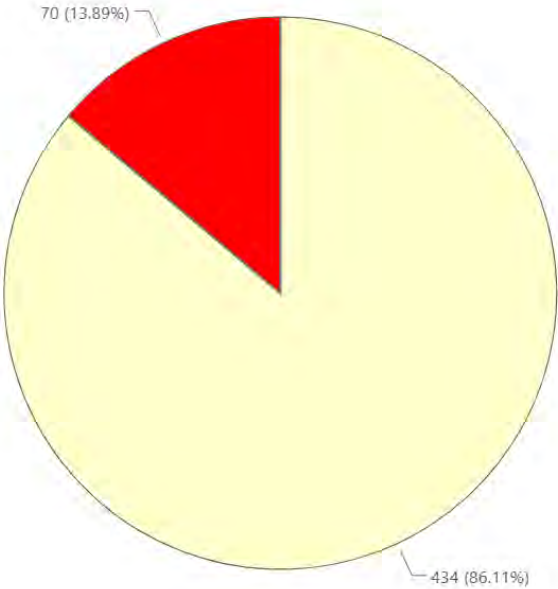
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for CE Office Directorate



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$434	3
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$70	1
Total		\$504	4

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - CE Office Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s

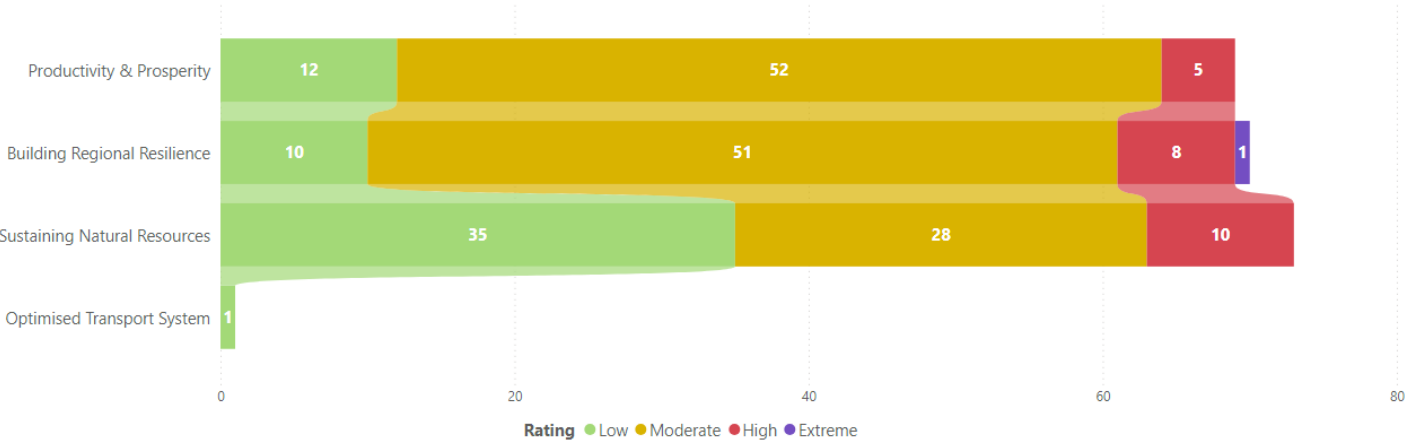


Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$'000)	SIP Due
CEO	Corporate Services - CE	Climate Change Mitigation & Resilience	Support implementation of regional resilience work programmes, embedding climate adaptation and mitigation actions into external facing projects and partnerships	50	5	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	\$70	
CEO		Regional Economic Development	Lead and coordinate regional economic development activities.	39	1	Low	High	Moderate	None	Low	\$302	Yes
CEO		Business & Organisational Sustainability	Council's core climate and sustainability performance programme, focused on efficiency, risk reduction and informed decision making. This includes leading the Organisational Climate Change Risk Assessment, Energy and Emissions Efficiency Reduction Plan, and Waste reduction.	36	1	Moderate	Low	None	None	Low	\$90	
CEO		Strategic Development	Facilitate development of the council's strategic direction, stakeholder surveys, foresight and insights	32	1	None	Low	Low	Low	Low	\$42	
				Ave.: 39							\$504	

Integrated Catchment Management (ICM)

Strategic alignment

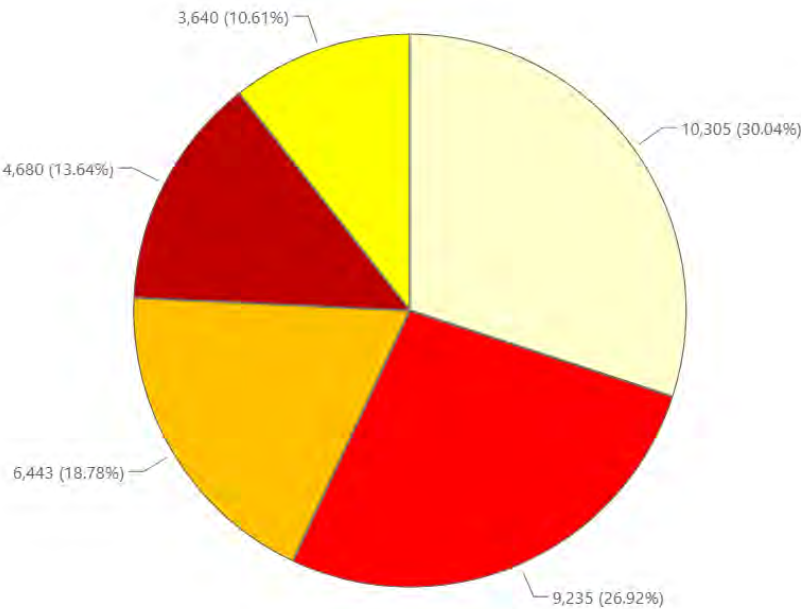
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Directorate



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$0	3
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$10,305	24
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$3,640	7
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$6,443	2
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$9,235	41
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$4,680	5
Total		\$34,304	82

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Biodiversity	NHPP	Contestable funding for community groups and landowners to undertake activities related to biodiversity.	32	2	None	Low	None	High	None	\$2,658	Yes
ICM		Regional Priority Biodiversity Sites	PBS: Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative restoration work at priority biodiversity sites, delivered via landowner and multi-partner projects to meet agreed outputs and deliver biodiversity outcomes. Coastcare: Deliver collaborative, community focussed and innovative coastal dune restoration, delivered via Beachcare groups to meet agreed outputs and deliver biodiversity, more resilient coastal ecosystems and community participation.	21	2	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$646	Yes
ICM		Advocacy and Partnership	Provide advice, support and guidance to community groups, facilitate events. Operational costs for Kete Taiao Waikato. Operational support to science initiatives to that will help deliver biodiversity outcomes. Delivery of Collective Impact Initiative.	18	2	None	Low	None	Low	None	\$336	
ICM		Mana Koiora Mana Whenua - Protecting Biodiversity on shared Mana Whenua	Through the 2024 LTP discussion staff proposed a new contestable fund to support ecological restoration on maori land. This proposal did not go forward, instead a project was scoped and delivered that outlined options and recommendations to support owners of shared Māori whenua in preserving and restoring biodiversity on this land. The work for this project was undertaken in parallel to the catchment management framework and biodiversity strategy and all three pieces of work complimented each other.	18	3	None	None	None	High	None	\$2,026	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Biosecurity	Corbicula Planning and Preparedness	The Waikato Region faces significant ecological, economic, and operational risks following the discovery of the invasive freshwater clam (Corbicula fluminea) in May 2023. This invasive species threatens water quality, biodiversity, and key infrastructure such as energy plants, agricultural irrigation systems, and flood management assets. This project responds to the critical need for the comprehensive implementation of Check Clean Dry (CCD) protocols across WRC operations to prevent the further spread of corbicula. It supports WRC's regional leadership responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 1993, aligns with the Ministry for Primary Industries' Controlled Area Notice (CAN), and addresses iwi and community expectations. Addressing this challenge aligns with Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) priorities in biodiversity, biosecurity, and sustainable water management.	36	6	None	Low	Moderate	High	None	\$0	
ICM	Biosecurity	Regional Priority Possum Control	Direct control implemented under the RPMP. Areas formally designated under the RPMP 2022 - 2032 and make control in PPCA's mandatory on all landowners.	36	3	None	High	None	High	None	\$4,417	
ICM		Animal Pests	Programme includes RPMP and Non-RPMP pests with outcomes protecting conservation and catchment values alongside impacts on primary production. Regional Goat control - Increased investment in goat control to align with the Waikato/Hauraki/Thames Valley ungulate control strategy. With a focus on eradication on the Coromandel and Pirongia. Exotic Pet Trade - Implementation of the exotic pet trade within the Waikato region. Could include localised eradication of small populations of birds or reptiles.	32	6	None	None	Low	High	None	\$1,519	
ICM		Biosecurity Compliance	Biosecurity compliance programme supports a range of activities for WRC's biosecurity programme including legal advice, updating compliance and enforcement training modules, compliance and enforcement policy, supporting The Uru Kahika best practice work.	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$12	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Pest Plants	The Waikato RPMP Biosecurity Pest Plant Programme, addressing wilding pines and high-risk aquatic and terrestrial species, is critical to protecting Waikato's \$4 billion primary sector and 22,600 jobs. Control of aquatic pests such as alligator weed supports water security and flood management, which underpin reliable water supply for agriculture, industry, energy, and urban use, and enable high value utilisation of the Waikato River. Targeted management of arable pest plants, including velvetleaf, noogoora bur, broomcorn millet, and alligator weed, also safeguards a \$1.5 billion national arable sector; without intervention, these species could reduce productivity by up to 30%, equating to \$500 million in annual losses and placing more than 7,000 FTE jobs at risk. The programme positions Waikato Regional Council at the frontline nationally, delivering essential biosecurity outcomes that protect regional, biodiversity, productivity and strengthen the resilience of New Zealand's arable sector. This programme is supported nationally and interregional via funding and in-kind collaboration.	32	6	None	Low	Low	High	None	\$2,877	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Wilding Conifers	The Wilding Pine Programme is fundamentally focused on protecting New Zealand's land, water, ecosystems, and economic assets from the impacts of invasive conifer species. National cost-benefit analyses consistently demonstrate exceptionally high returns on investment, estimated at approximately 20:1. In contrast, a "do nothing" approach is projected to result in significant national losses, estimated at around \$3.6-\$3.8 billion over a 50-year period. Within the Waikato region, the programme primarily targets two key areas: the Coromandel Peninsula and the Central North Island. In the Coromandel, efforts are concentrated on safeguarding threatened ecosystems, particularly coastal forests that support, or have the potential to support, kauri. In the Central North Island, the programme focuses on protecting the integrity of iconic national park landscapes from the spread of invasive conifers. This includes preserving highly sensitive and rare ecosystems, such as frost flats and geothermal environments, which are especially vulnerable to ecological disruption. This work builds on a strong foundation of more than 70 years of community-led management and stewardship.	32	2	None	High	None	Moderate	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Pest Plants	The Waikato Kauri Protection Programme national programme to protect kauri trees by supporting communities who grow kauri (including the nursery industry), and those who own or use land with kauri, to meet the Tiakina lead National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) biosecurity requirements. Waikato Regional Council supports Waikato community through education, community engagement, and practical actions, combining wide reaching awareness via Plant Pass, schools, events, media, and digital tools with management measures such as surveillance, phosphite treatment, and animal vector control. The programme also supports research, monitoring, and partnerships with iwi, DOC, and community groups, taking an integrated, community focused approach to reduce the spread and impact of kauri dieback and meet the NPMP rules across the Waikato region.	29	6	None	Low	None	High	None	\$255	
ICM		Biosecurity Pathway Management	A focus on managing the spread of pests in the marine and freshwater environments by targeting pathways of spread, combined with greater investment in advocacy and behaviour change	25	1	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$421	
ICM		LINZ Projects	Budget code for external LINZ funding to contribute to collaborative pest plant management	25	2	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
ICM		MPI NIPR Projects	The National Interest Pest Response (NIPR) programme is funded by Biosecurity New Zealand and implemented by Department of Conservation and Regional Councils. Each year we receive funding to progressively contain & eradicate a number of pest plant infestations in the Waikato region as part of this programme.	25	1	None	None	Low	Moderate	None	\$106	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Plant Pass	Plant Pass began in 2022, when WRC became a signatory and committed to improving biosecurity practices across the regional plant supply chain. Although the project has been paused three times due to resourcing gaps, the budget has remained in place and the need for action has continued to grow. Nursery pathways remain a key vector for pests and pathogens that threaten taonga species (including kauri), ecosystems, and primary production. With staffing restored, the project can now proceed.	18	1	None	None	Low	Moderate	None	\$0	
ICM		National Corbicula Programme	In order to support the management of corbicula two-year fixed term roles are in place that are funded 50:50 with BNZ. WRC contribution is coming from the biosecurity reserve – there is no baseline budget for corbicula. These roles are to do the following: 1. Assist shape a long-term pathway management programme to reduce the risk of corbicula spread. For the Waikato it's about protecting Taupo and Waihou/Piako catchments and reducing the potential spread out of the Waikato 2. Support a more cohesive comms and engagement programme building off the CCD programme and including support to water users/industry on impacts. 3. Liaising with national/regional stakeholders. Our baseline FW biosecurity programme is more generic focused on pathway management given there are so few tools for site management e.g., koi at a particular location. Corbicula is just one of the invasive species we are trying to contain i.e., pathway focused.	0	2	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Catchment Planning and Management	Development of Regional Catchment Management Framework	The overarching objective of this project is to complete a Regional Catchment Management Framework by March 2026. The framework will be in the form of an internal report with the target audience being WRC staff and governors. The purpose of the framework is to provide guidance in the future planning and delivery of impactful, collaborative catchment and river management programmes informed by robust science and aligned to Council policy and associated programmes. The intent is that the framework will provide regional direction and recommendations but allow for local flexibility as it becomes integrated into zone plans and catchment plans	39	0	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$0	
ICM		Central Waikato Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$439	
ICM		CM Operations	Lake restoration: deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative restoration work at shallow lakes, delivered via landowner and multi-partner projects to meet agreed outputs and deliver biodiversity outcomes. Lake level management: maintain minimum lake levels as required by the regional plan	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$614	
ICM		Coromandel Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$464	
ICM		Lake Taupo Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$171	
ICM		Lower Waikato Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$1,466	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Piako Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$271	
ICM		Upper Waikato Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$561	
ICM		Waihou Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$533	
ICM		Waipa Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$1,571	
ICM		West Coast Catchment Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative catchment management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs.	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$1,006	
ICM	Environmental Monitoring	Tranche 2 Hydrology Monitoring Flood Resilience	Kānoa has provided funding for a national project to install early warning flood infrastructure across ten councils nationwide (referred to as "Tranche 2"). The main funding agreement is between Kānoa and Canterbury Regional Council (CRC), with CRC issuing sub-contract agreements with each of the ten councils, including the Waikato Regional Council (WRC). WRC's early flood warning infrastructure improvement project has a total \$1.650 million budget to upgrade flood hydrology monitoring sites (rivers and rainfall) to ensure data is available during flood events. This has gained prominence after the failing of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council telemetry system during cyclone Gabrielle.	39	5	None	Moderate	Extreme	None	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Flood Protection	LOWER WAIKATO	The Lower Waikato zone covers an area of 283,757 hectares. It occupies a position at the lower end of the Waikato River catchment, and is the destination of all waters flowing into the Waikato River catchment, thus is heavily influenced by activities that occur higher in the catchment within each of the other four zones – Lake Taupō, Upper Waikato, Waipā and Central Waikato. Nationally important infrastructure traverses through the zone, including State Highway 1, 1B, 2, 22 and 39, the North Island Main Trunk Railway, the national electricity grid transmission lines and the main natural gas pipeline to Auckland. All which need to be managed and protected.	43	5	None	High	High	Low	None	\$2,349	Yes
ICM		PIAKO	The Piako River Scheme was constructed in the 1960-70. The combined Piako Waitoa (major tributary) catchment area of 159,000ha has more than 100,000ha classed as low-lying and affected by flooding and includes the urban areas of Ngatea and Pipiroa. The scheme protects against tidal and river flooding along with providing drainage outlets. The scheme comprises 59 floodgates, 32 pumpstations, 166km stopbanks, and spillways for flood storage ponding areas. All of this requires 24/7 management and ongoing maintenance. This code invests in the long-term practical asset maintenance costs, consenting and compliance costs including offsets, land management, flood management (pre, during and post) scheme recovery up to 5year event. It also holds the annual asset depreciation costs and the investment in planning for continuous improvement; it also captures any debt repayment. Major challenges: The environment that the scheme is built in, and the soil being marine mud.	43	5	None	High	High	Low	None	\$1,105	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		WAIHOU	The Waihou Valley Scheme was constructed in the 1980's and 90's is a modern whole of catchment scheme incorporating the rivers and streams of the eastern ranges. The scheme protects against tidal and river flooding along with providing drainage outlets. The scheme consists of 177km of stopbanks, 75 floodgates, 20 pumpstations protecting both urban and rural properties. All of this requires 24/7 management and ongoing maintenance. This code invests in the long-term practical asset maintenance costs, consenting and compliance costs including offsets, land management, flood management (pre, during and post) scheme recovery up to 5year event. It also holds the annual asset depreciation costs and the investment in planning for continuous improvement; it also captures any debt repayment. The greatest challenge is knowledge. Investigations are required to understand asset condition and performance; these tasks can be dangerous and therefore rightfully carry a high cost.	43	5	None	High	High	Low	None	\$1,438	Yes
ICM		WAIPA	The Waipā zone covers an area of 306,569 hectares. The Waipā River is the single largest tributary to the Waikato River and is the largest part of the Waikato catchment area that is not affected by hydro-electric power generation activities. There has been flood protection works carried out to protect the townships of Te Kuiti and Ōtorohanga. The stopbanks and three pumpstations associated with the Ōtorohanga scheme are owned by the Ōtorohanga District Council and Waikato Regional Council assists with the management via a service level agreement.	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$256	
ICM		COROMANDEL Flood Protection	Operate, maintain and renew flood protection infrastructure within the Coromandel Zone, including Te Puru, Waiomu, Tapu, Coromandel Town and Grahams Creek schemes.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$140	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		FLOOD OTHER	The flood other codes are used for developing the long-term strategies, maintenance and capital plans, and completing investigations into what needs to occur across the flood and drainage asset bases. They are also used to maintain the asset information and systems that information is stored in.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$426	
ICM		LAKE TAUPO Flood Protection	Operate, maintain and renew flood protection infrastructure within the Lake Taupō Zone, including the Tongariro and Tauranga-Taupo schemes.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$221	
ICM		Vessel operational project	The Vessel Operational Project will enable the Vessel to operate in the river, undertaking works such as channel improvements, maintenance of river structures, erosion control, removal of obstructions and construction of in river engineering structures.	29	1	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
ICM		Infrastructure Asset Revaluation Jan 2026	A full revaluation of all infrastructure assets is mandatory every three years. This three-year period is due 1st January 2026.Challenge: What is meant to be a 6-month process, last time took nearly 18 months. The opportunity this time it's to do things differently, so we cut down the pain on the internal teams on delivering the revaluation.Opportunity:1) Understand what asset attribute data that is required for revaluations, and improve it to enable more accurate results.2) Develop internal unit rates to be applied.3) Use same auditor of the fair value movement assessments, so they already know our data, and use their external knowledge to check our unit rates against other local councils.4) Develop simple means to pull information out of INFOR to increase repeatability of task5) work out way to test and upload back into INFOR	18	5	None	None	Moderate	None	None	\$228	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Hauraki Coromandel Catchments Work Activity	Coromandel Comprehensive Consents Renewal Project	The Coromandel Peninsula was one of the first areas in the Waikato region to obtain comprehensive consents for its catchment management activities. These consents are due to expire on a rolling basis between 13 April 2025 (Coastal deposition consents) and between 30 June 2027 and 2033 for the 7 area-based consents. This project has the objective of renewing these resource consents with conditions that are workable from an operational perspective.	25	2	None	None	Low	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Restoration of Kauaeranga and Kirikiri Catchments	Catchment wide restoration works to improve the water quality in the Kauaeranga River and Kirikiri Stream.	21	1	None	None	Low	Moderate	None	\$0	
ICM	Land Drainage	Drainage Consents General	Manage and sustain the resource consents necessary to undertake the land drainage activity.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Drainage Franklin Waikato	Area includes 49 subdivisions and 5 Sa's. Land Drainage LOS is to remove ponded water off pasture with 3 days for the 10-year storm. This support farming and agricultural community and provides strong regional and nation economic benefits. LOS has routinely been achieved for last 2 financial years. Effective land drainage aims to spray drain at least once per year (follow-up) as required and machine clean 10% of the network as required. Obstruction removal as required across the subdivisions. Sinking gravity drainage system provide longer term challenge for service delivery.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$292	Yes
ICM		Drainage Mangawara River Scheme	Operate and maintain the land drainage infrastructure, including inspections, spraying and mechanical cleaning, to maintain the agreed level of service.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Drainage Tauhei Scheme Improvement	Operate and maintain the land drainage infrastructure, including inspections, spraying and mechanical cleaning, to maintain the agreed level of service.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Drainage Te Rapa General	Operate and maintain the land drainage infrastructure, including inspections, spraying and mechanical cleaning, to maintain the agreed level of service.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato	Drainage Thames Valley	Area includes 9 subdivisions and 4 SRA's. Land Drainage LOS is to remove ponded water off pasture with 3 days for the 10-year storm. This support farming and agricultural community and provides strong regional and nation economic benefits. LOS has routinely been achieved for last 2 financial years. Effective land drainage aims to spray drain at least once per year (follow-up) as required and machine clean 10% of the network as required. Obstruction removal as required across the subdivisions. Sinking gravity drainage system provide longer term challenge for service delivery.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$566	Yes
ICM		Drainage Waikato Central	Area includes 28 subdivisions and 1 Sa's. Land Drainage LOS is to remove ponded water off pasture with 3 days for the 10-year storm. This support farming and agricultural community and provides strong regional and nation economic benefits. LOS has routinely been achieved for last 2 financial years. Effective land drainage aims to spray drain at least once per year (follow-up) as required and machine clean 10% of the network as required. Obstruction removal as required across the subdivisions. Sinking gravity drainage system provide longer term challenge for service delivery.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$650	Yes
ICM		Drainage Waikato North General	Operate and maintain the land drainage infrastructure, including inspections, spraying and mechanical cleaning, to maintain the agreed level of service.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		LOWER WAIKATO	This programme has been set up to support the planning and oversight of the Lower Waikato Flood Scheme capital project requirements in line with the LTP funding.	43	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		LW Stopbank Stage 2	Stage 2a is currently nearing the tender evaluation meetings booked for 12/11/25 and 14/11/25. Five tenders have been received for Package 1 (Tuakau West) and Six for Package 2 (Te Kohanga). Challenge this reporting period will be agreeing on best candidates, negotiating with contractors and advising the Tenders Board of the findings.	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	

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ICM		Churchill East Secondary Pump station	This project aims to address long-standing issues at the pump station identified since 2019, including leaking outlet pipes, an undersized inlet bay, and a switchboard beyond its serviceable life. Although the pumps remain operational, the inlet layout poses health and safety risks and complicates maintenance, particularly during weed clearing. The upgrade will replace one non-fish-friendly pump with a fish-friendly model already owned by WRC and modernize the switchboard to enable smart coordination with the recently upgraded Churchill East pump station downstream. This integration will improve flood response and system efficiency across the catchment. In addition, the works support ecological objectives by enhancing fish passage upstream, contributing to the overall resilience and sustainability of the drainage network while reducing maintenance hazards for operational staff.	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Island Block PS Upgrade	The Island Block Pump Station replacement has been investigated since 2018. During that period the validity of replacing one or more pumps, altering how the catchment worked and whether an alternative pump design was reviewed. The Project is currently in the execution (design and consenting) phase, has secured external funding for Construction (scope covered by this PMP), and will implement the previously approved recommendation to proceed with "Option 2" – pump station upgrade with Archimedes pump was approved on 6/09/2022. The decision is recorded in Doc ID 24675350 (Decision Record of SCWID Approval). The driver for this project is the delivery of the 2024-34 LTP is Design and Construction of the Island Block Pump Station Upgrade, amalgamating two sub-catchments into one and ultimately removing five (5) pumps and replacing with one next Enclosed Archimedes Screw Pump (EASP).	36	5	None	Moderate	Low	Low	None	\$0	

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ICM		Lower Waikato Operations Capital Programme	This is the operations led capital renewals programme. The priorities in this programme are driven by condition and performance assessment information and information gathered throughout the year of assets that need renewals due to their condition, failure or risk. This work is delivered by the Operations Teams for Lower Waikato	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Mangatawhiri Comp 2 PS Upgrade	Mangatawhiri Compartment 2 has experienced ongoing flooding from its own catchment due to several factors, including limited drainage capacity, low pumping levels, peat-related land subsidence, inadequate secondary pump capacity, ineffective gravity drainage, and a low access track bund. The compartment includes a main pump station and a secondary submersible pump station serving a subsided area. Three options are being considered to address these issues: (1) short-term upgrades to both pump inlets to improve mechanical weed cleaning; (2) a bolt-on upgrade with a new drainage pump (1.2 m³/s at 7–7.5 m head), full switchboard renewal, and decommissioning of the internal pump; or (3) full replacement with a new fish-friendly pump station using two 1.2 m³/s Archimedes screw pumps, reducing weed clearing by about 90%. Final decision rests with the landowners and WRC.	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	

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ICM		Swan Road Pumpstation	The Swan Road project, located in Te Kauwhata on the edge of the Pungarehu Canal, provides an interim solution to maintain drainage performance and address health and safety issues at the existing pump station. The works aim to sustain the current level of service for the next five to ten years until a full pump station rebuild is undertaken. The existing bridge, which supports the primary screen, is structurally inadequate for machinery loads and contributes to poor drainage due to a raised sill acting as a weir. The proposed solution includes replacing the bridge with a precast structure, installing new screens, lowering the sill, and improving scour protection around the head pond. These upgrades will enable effective machine cleaning, eliminating most manual screen maintenance. The project will be delivered under a design-and-build contract, guided by a council-prepared concept design.	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Lower Waikato Floodgates (Kanoa)	In late 2024, the Waikato Regional Council (Council) entered into a funding agreement with MBIE to deliver a suite of projects, including the Lower Waikato Floodgate Project (LW Floodgate project) with a total budget of \$2 million. The flood schemes in the lower Waikato are some 50-60 years old and recent condition monitoring surveys are showing pipe connection failures, increasing concerns to the longevity and functionality of these structures, with increasing risk of sudden failure of the individual components. Annual condition inspections and CCTV surveys have confirmed this deterioration. This project will upgrade floodgate assets in the lower Waikato catchment, providing ongoing critical flood defence in the area and making them safer to operate in times of flood.	32	5	None	Moderate	Low	Low	None	\$0	

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ICM		Replacement Vessel	To scope, design, build and deliver a replacement vessel, (with tender), for the scrapped barge Tamahere. The vessel will be a self-propelled, 24m steel constructed, multi-purpose platform to meet the operational requirements of WRC. The barge will generally operate on the Waikato River, with considerations made to operate at other locations, and by other operators or charter parties. The vessel will be delivered fully operational as a turnkey project.	29	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM	Performance Assessment Programme Work Activity	Mangatawhiri Performance Assessment	This project aims to review the current performance levels of the Mangatawhiri River Catchment (MRC) Scheme, in line with the Integrated Catchment Management principles outlined in the Waikato Regional Asset Management Plan (RAM). A key focus is to contribute to the Waikato Regional Council's objective of developing a 'template' for system performance modelling applicable to several river schemes in the region, and to create a region-wide scale model that can be updated with new data such as LiDAR surveys, revised hydrology, and future climate change assumptions. The initial phase involves defining clear project objectives and measurable outcomes and beginning modelling in TUFLOW software. The goal is to determine high-level parameters of the Mangatawhiri model, such as manageable model resolution, which will guide the model resolution required for suitable modelling outcomes for the system performance of the Mangat...	36	5	None	Low	Moderate	High	None	\$365	

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ICM		Waihou SLR	Update of the Waihou main channel model and wider tributaries, including Ohinemuri, Te Aroha and others TBC. Project taking a phased approach 1) scoping, data collation, tender for suppliers 2) model update and stopbank performance assessment. Project to implement lessons learnt from previous model approaches, requires greater levels of stakeholder engagement internal and external, also spending additional effort in getting the scope and data correct before procurement to reduce issues during model build.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM	Resilient Development	Resilient Development	Resilient development involves the collection and provision of strategic information and advice to district councils, the Waikato CDEM Group, iwi, landowners and others on a range of hazards, on behalf of the regional community and stakeholders. The information is used to help identify areas of the region most at risk from hazard events, and to minimise risk and damage to people, homes, businesses, and infrastructure, both currently and with projected future climate change. This ensures communities can prepare for or avoid hazards; that risks are reduced over time, and that sound decisions are made about the future development of hazard prone areas. The challenges are that we need to carefully manage resources and expectations to undertake effective and efficient work to enhance regional resilience.	25	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	None	None	\$396	
ICM	River Management	PIAKO	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$219	
ICM		WAIHOU	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$478	

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ICM		West Coast River Management	Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative river management work, delivered via landowner and multi-partner river and catchment management programmes to meet agreed outputs. Effective river management includes improving the natural capacity and resilience of rivers, including erosion control and obstruction management.	39	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$163	
ICM		Central Waikato River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$1,068	
ICM		Coromandel River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$648	
ICM		Lake Taupo River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$186	
ICM		Lower Waikato River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$146	
ICM		Upper Waikato River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$53	
ICM		Waipa River Management	Effective river management includes improving natural capacity of rivers, erosion control and obstruction management, like tree removal which can be high risk work.	32	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$416	
ICM	Understanding and Adapting to Natural Hazard Risk	Understanding and Adapting to Natural Hazard Risk	The programme will focus on establishing important foundational work to address growing resilience and climate adaptation challenges over the long term.	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	None	Low	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		Waikato Regional Water Resource Modelling	As a council, we have an interest in understanding flood risks. At present, we are only able to provide this information where we have bespoke hydrological models. These are only at discrete locations (generally where there are flood schemes). Technology is now available to model the entire region that will thus lower response coordination complexity and resolve the region in a consistent manner. Stakeholders also require information about flood hazards outside of the stopbank protected areas. No information is currently held regarding flooding hazards within areas where there are no stopbanks. Thus, the goal of the present study is to ultimately have a validated and accurate hydrological model with which floods can be forecasted, and the land use impact be quantified. The scope will also investigate low-flow conditions (droughts), inform hazards related to potential land development and change or adaptation options analysis.	32	0	None	None	High	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Hauraki Plains Adaptation Planning - Risk Assessment	Delivery of the risk modelling and assessment for the Hauraki Plains Adaptation Project, with the pilot of new software platform to deliver this. The pilot of the Resilience Explorer tool will provide an opportunity to test the functionality of the software and assess the benefits it might provide to WRC, TAs and communities for adaptation planning. The software has been used by other NZ councils for community adaptation planning.	29	1	None	Low	Moderate	None	None	\$0	
ICM	Waihou Piako	Waihou Piako	This programme has been set up to support the planning and oversight of the Waihou and Piako Flood Scheme capital project requirements in line with the LTP funding.	43	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Lower Piako Right bank - Stopbank and Berm Upgrade	This project has been investigated and designed in a previous phase. Current phase is to obtain rights to occupy agreements, obtain land purchase agreements and purchase the required land and undertake works to address stopbank deficiencies on the Lower Piako Right Bank Stopbank from Pipiroa to Ngatea. This is a multiyear construction project with year 1 construction involving completion of enabling works.	36	5	None	Moderate	High	Low	None	\$0	

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ICM		Waihou Piako Operations Capital Programme	This is the operations led capital renewals programme. The priorities in this programme are driven by condition and performance assessment information and information gathered throughout the year of assets that need renewals due to their condition, failure or risk. This work is delivered by the Operations Teams for Waihou and Piako.	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Generators	The Waihou Scheme utilises generators as a key energy source to support the pump stations that are critical to the protection of Paeroa Town. This project is to purchase and install the power source option selected to replace the current generators for all 5 generator sites due to their age and condition.	32	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Cocks FG	Technical Investigation of the Cocks FG structure. Assessment of causes of Level of Service issues to inform potential design solutions. Catchment analysis from Resilience Team to access catchment size, runoff volumes and current discharge rates of current structure (if required.) Review of LIDAR to assess potential land subsidence. Identify/quantify any other changes (e.g., sea level rise, river elevation rise or river depth change) to inform design including current and projected for life of structure.	29	5	None	Moderate	Low	Low	None	\$0	
ICM		Alexanders Floodgate Automated Sluice Gate	This investment focuses on automating one of the (inlet side) sluice gates at the Alexanders floodgate to take over the primary drainage function, rather than relying solely on the downstream (outlet) wooden gravity flaps. By actively controlling the sluice gate, we can manage water flow more precisely through that pipe, improving hydraulic performance and enabling more fish friendly operation compared to the current passive system. Additional information can be found in Doc # 34615478	25	0	None	Moderate	Low	Low	None	\$0	

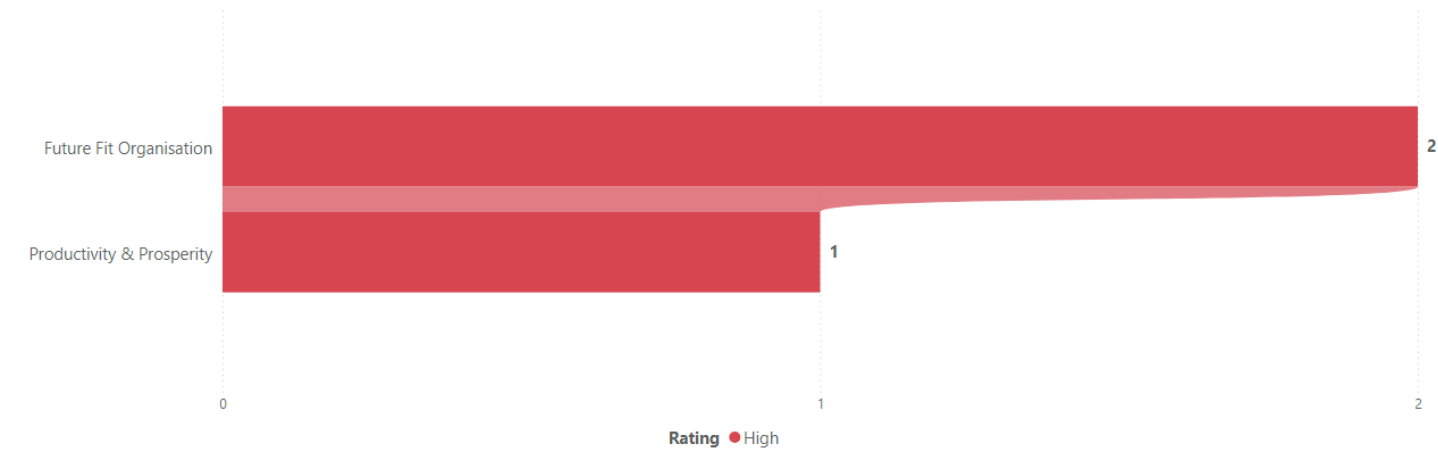
Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM	Waikato Regional Council Emergency Response	Marine Oil Spills	WRC currently has 3 qualified ROSC's and c.20 responders that require routine training and exercising. BAU workloads create competing demands that make organising and conducting exercises difficult. Additionally, MNZ audits have shown that WRC has gaps in providing physical resources especially related to vehicles available for exercising and response. We are also seeing a decline in the external funding available and also changes related to the types of oils coming into NZ which may require a different approach to handling spills. By exercising staff routinely, we are able to provide capability across other emergency responses.	46	6	None	None	High	High	None	\$28	
ICM		Flood Warning Management	WRC relies on a roster of voluntary participants from EMO and RR (ICM) and other directorates. There is a requirement to provide a minimum of 2 staff on call at all times and when flood activated relies on availability of SME staff and volunteers to deal with an event over a number of days. The number of rostered staff has diminished over time, and this is impacting WRC's ability to have adequately trained and exercised cover for major events. WRC also has a network of telemetry sites that has limited redundancy. There are a number of rivers without monitoring and there are few rain gauges. There is an opportunity to build greater capacity that will enable WRC to meet its legislative requirements.	36	5	None	None	High	None	None	\$95	
ICM		Emergency Management Response	The Emergency Management Office (EMO) of 3 staff leads WRC to become "response ready and capable at all times" and has an Emergency Response Framework (ERF) manual to guide the organisation through any emergency event. Training and exercising are a key component, so staff feel confident and competent during events. The EMO also leads out the 24/7 standby rosters for Flood response, Weather events, Tsunami alerts, Marine Oil Spill occurrences and the Emergency Management phone for any other responses/events that could impact WRC ability to execute its functions.	29	5	None	None	High	None	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
ICM		WRC Support to CDEM	The EMO provides the key point of contact and conduit for WRC to respond to any requests (24/7) from Civil Defence for staff to be deployed to the Group Emergency Management Office or across NZ. Termed "surge staff" WRC like any other Council can, and has, been called upon for staff and training to level 2/Intermediate is a key expectation of staff and a key component to be able to be deployed. Training and exercising to build staff confidence and competence a vital part of building WRC resilience and capacity.	21	1	None	None	Moderate	None	None	\$2	
ICM	Waikato, Waipa, West Coast and Coromandel Zones	Tranche 2 River Management Project	Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit (Kānoa) has agreed to contribute funding to WRC by way of a loan to fund works associated with erosion and sediment reduction by strengthening natural riverbanks and reducing sedimentation across catchments in the Coromandel, Waikato, Waipā and West Coast.	36	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	\$0	
				Ave.: 32							\$34,304	

People and Capability (P&C)

Strategic alignment

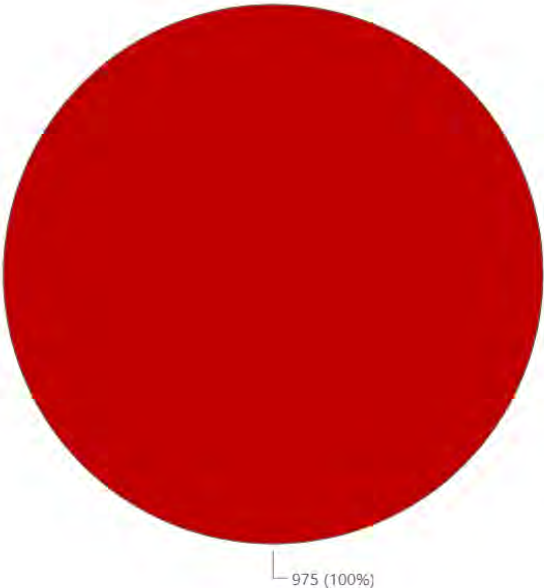
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for People and Capability



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$0	1
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$975	1
Total		\$975	2

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - People and Capability
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s

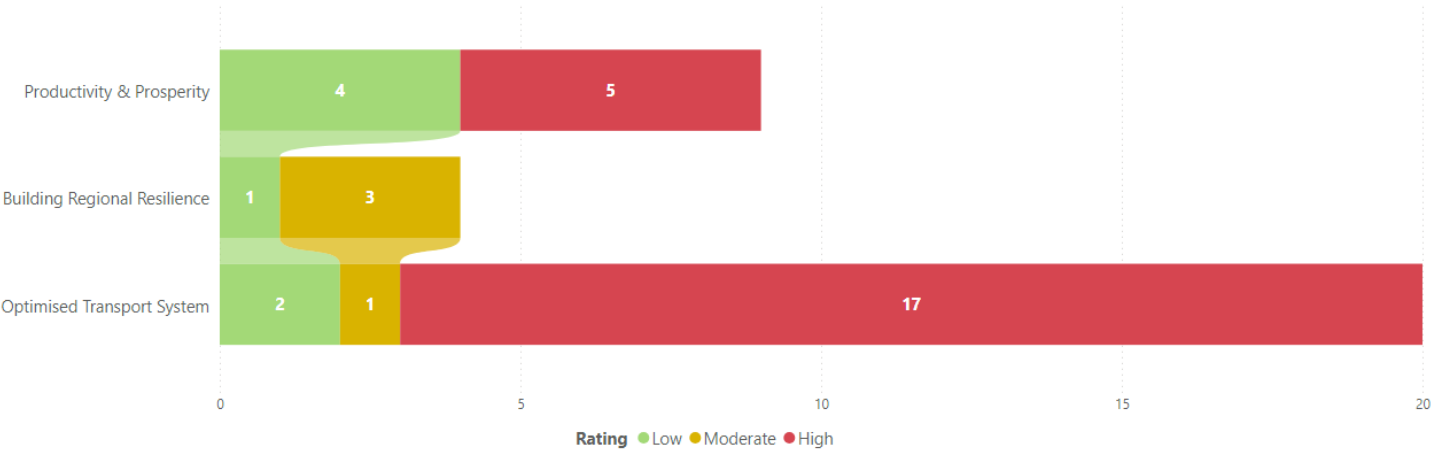


Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
P&C	Chief Executives Office	CS - People and Capability	People & Capability Function including Human Resources and Health, Safety and Wellbeing	43	6	High	High	None	None	None	\$975	
P&C		Leadership Development Programme Refresh	Secure a partner and co-develop/implement a refreshed Leadership Development Programme incorporating bespoke Design Principles, WRC Leadership Framework and Māori Cultural Competency Framework.	32	0	High	None	None	None	None	\$0	
				Ave.: 37							\$975	

Regional Transport Connections (RTC)

Strategic alignment

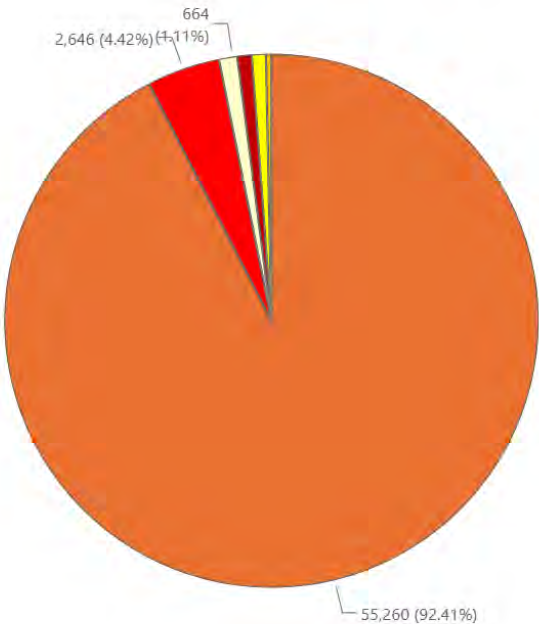
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Regional Transport Connections (RTC) Directorate



Legislative Alignment

	Legislative Alignment	2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$664	4
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$511	1
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$200	1
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$55,260	2
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$2,646	9
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$517	3
Total		\$59,797	20

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Regional Transport Connections (RTC) Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$'000)	SIP Due
RTC	Inter-Regional Rail	Inter-Regional Rail	This programme supports the delivery of inter-regional passenger rail services between Waikato and Auckland (Te Huia). It encompasses the management and operation of Te Huia services, including service delivery, rolling stock maintenance, customer information channels, and strategic planning to support future rail services and regional connectivity. The underlying assumption for the LTP period is that Te Huia transitions from a trial service to a permanent regional public transport service from 1 July 2027, with the service continuing to operate broadly at its current level of service of 15 return services per week. The total 2026/27 budget of approximately \$9.7M reflects the direct operating costs associated with delivering the current rail service and supporting activities. These costs are partially offset through fare revenue and NZTA co-funding (51%).	36	4	None	High	None	None	High	\$9,654	
RTC	Regional Rail Transport Programme	Te Huia Future Services Single Stage Business Case	The Future Services Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) will investigate and determine the future optimum train service pattern for Te Huia.	29	1	None	None	None	None	High	\$0	
RTC		Te Huia - Local Share for Permanent Service	The Future Services Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) will investigate and determine the future optimum train service pattern for Te Huia.	21	3	None	None	None	None	High	\$200	
RTC	RPTP Work Activity	Regional Public Transport Plan 2030	Required in accordance with LTMA if Council contracts PT services.	21	6	None	None	None	None	High	\$62	
RTC	Stock Truck Effluent	STE Implementation	Administration of STEDS (maintenance and removal of stock effluent) - WC121	14	1	None	None	None	None	Low	\$9	Yes
RTC		Stock Effluent Facilities Development	This budget supports delivery of new effluent disposal sites where a WRC contribution is necessary. Many recent sites have been funded by NZTA.	14	1	None	None	None	None	Low	\$135	
RTC	Transport Planning	Transport Planning	Maximise co-funding from NZTA from transport planning activities.	39	5	None	High	None	None	High	\$0	
RTC		Regional Land Transport Plan 2027 (RLTP 2030)	Requirement of the Land Transport Management Act	36	6	None	High	None	None	High	\$58	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$'000)	SIP Due
RTC		WRC Transport Model	The WRTM is a jointly funded programme with NZTA and partner councils under a formal funding agreement signed in 2025. WRC acts as the cash authority for the programme and is therefore responsible for: - Receiving all invoices from the delivery partner (Co-Lab) - Paying 100% of costs upfront - Recovering partner contributions in line with the funding agreement. Challenges - WRC carries cash flow risk as upfront payer - Complexity in coordinating: - Purchase orders (POs) across councils - Cost recovery timing - New funding agreement → processes still being established - Capex vs Opex treatment creates reporting inconsistency Opportunities - Strong regional collaboration across councils and NZTA - Ability to leverage: - NZTA co-funding (40% + additional 51% support on eligible costs) - Improve modelling capability to support: -MSP, RLTP and LTP Decisions	32	5	None	High	None	None	High	\$0	
RTC		Total Mobility - General	To subsidise fares of taxi services providing Total Mobility Trips for eligible cardholders (not using a wheelchair hoist) WC517 @ 60%FAR	29	5	None	Low	Moderate	None	High	\$2,421	
RTC		Total Mobility - Ridewise	Ridewise is the National Total Mobility database	29	5	None	Low	Moderate	None	High	\$0	
RTC		Total Mobility - Wheelchair Hoists	For the installation of hoist to provide taxi service under the TM scheme for cardholders who are confined to a wheelchair. WC519 @60%FAR	29	5	None	Low	Moderate	None	High	\$40	
RTC		Road Safety - General	Road safety risks remain a significant challenge across the region, particularly for high-risk groups such as young drivers, motorcyclists, and vulnerable road users. There is an opportunity to strengthen education, awareness, and coordinated action through a more integrated and regionally aligned road safety approach.	25	6	None	None	None	None	High	\$397	Yes

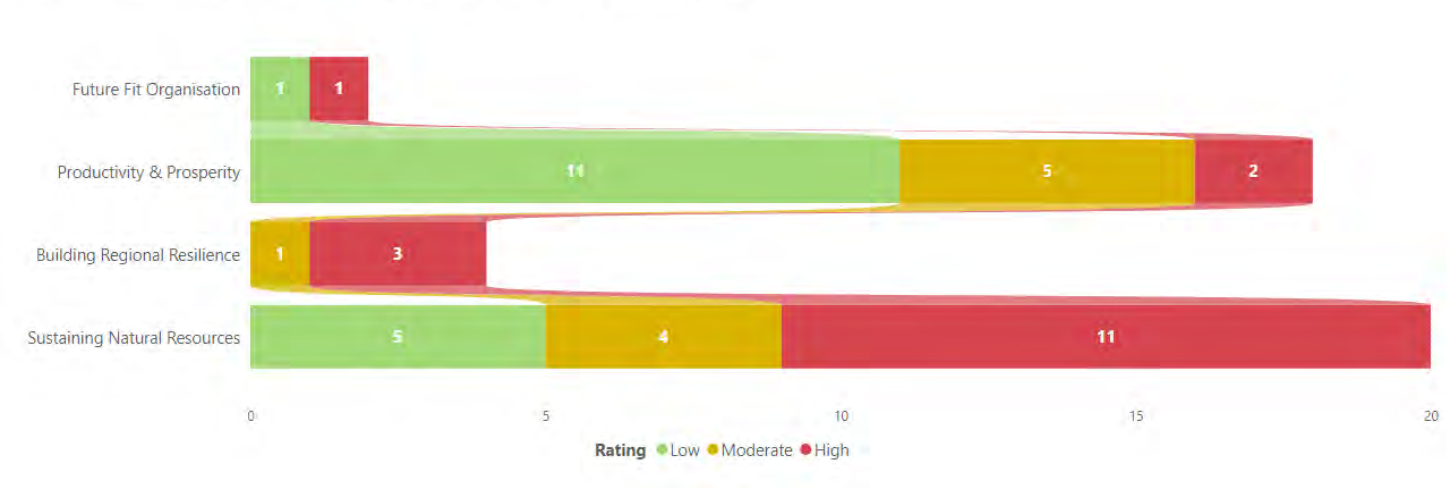
Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$'000)	SIP Due
RTC		Road Safety - Ruben	Young children are among the most vulnerable road users, and early education is critical to establishing safe behaviours. There is an opportunity to strengthen road safety awareness in primary schools and early childhood education (ECE) settings through targeted, age-appropriate programmes.	25	5	None	None	None	None	High	\$65	Yes
RTC		Metro Spatial Plan WRC Components	The Metro Spatial Plan aims to integrate land use and transport planning across the Waikato metropolitan area. The work supports stronger alignment between regional strategies (MSP, RLTP, RPTP) and future investment decisions. Enhanced public transport networks and mode shift outcomes, reducing reliance on private vehicles. Better evidence-based decision-making through modelling and scenario analysis.	21	2	None	None	None	None	High	\$511	
RTC		Total Mobility General Budget	Administration component of providing Total Mobility services	21	5	None	Low	None	None	High	\$120	
RTC		Community Transport	To support our communities by providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs. It often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people, or people with disabilities.	11	1	None	None	None	None	Moderate	\$520	Yes

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$'000)	SIP Due
RTC	Urban and Rural Transport Delivery	Passenger Transport	This programme represents the end-to-end operational delivery of public transport bus services across the region. It includes the procurement and management of bus service contracts, alongside all supporting activities required to enable effective service delivery. Supporting activities include marketing and communications (including call centre services), contract management, data collection and performance monitoring, and the provision and maintenance of enabling systems such as ticketing (including NTS and RITS), real-time information systems, network scheduling tools, and cloud-based data platforms. The total 2026/27 budget (direct cost) of approximately \$45.6M reflects the full direct cost of delivering the current level of service. This includes approximately \$38M (AP27) for bus service contracts, with the balance covering system support contracts, customer and operational services, and programme overheads. External funding sources partially offset this cost, with NZTA contributing approximately \$21M and fare revenue estimated at \$8M.	39	4	None	High	Low	None	High	\$45,606	
RTC	Urban and Rural Transport Delivery	National Ticketing System (NTS) Programme	Implementation of the National Ticketing Solution (NTS) across Waikato public transport services, replacing existing regional ticketing systems with a nationally consistent, integrated, and contactless payment platform.	29	5	None	None	None	None	High	\$0	
RTC		Total Mobility Regional Roll Out (Pokeno, Raglan, South Waikato, Otorohunga)	Total Mobility services are not currently available in all parts of the region, creating inequity in access to transport for eligible users. There is an opportunity to expand the programme into underserved areas such as Pokeno, Raglan, South Waikato, and Ōtorohunga to improve accessibility and inclusion.	21	5	None	None	None	None	High	\$0	
				Ave.: 26							\$59,797	

Resource Use (RUD)

Strategic alignment

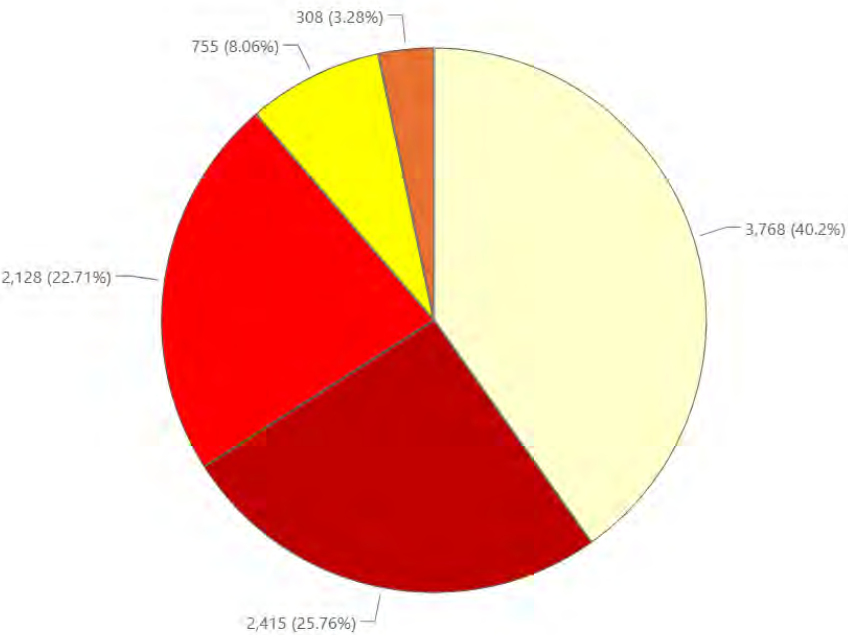
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Resource Use (RUD) Directorate



Legislative Alignment

	Legislative Alignment	2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
▲			
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$3,768	4
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$755	4
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$308	1
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$2,128	11
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$2,415	6
Total		\$9,373	26

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Resource Use (RUD) Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



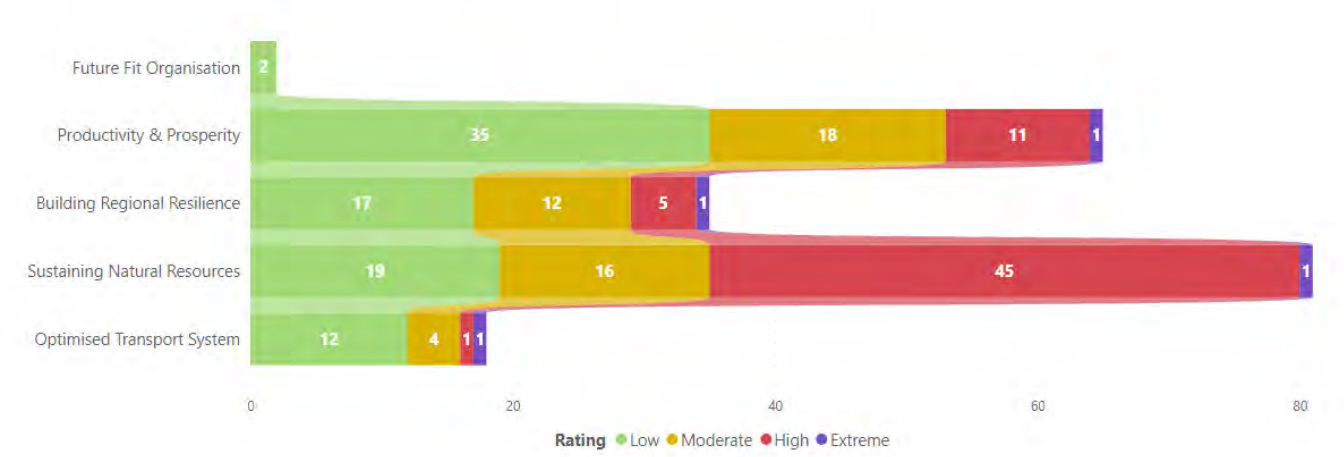
Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
RUD	Civil Defence	GEMO BAU	CDEM	25	5	None	None	High	None	None	\$401	
RUD		WLUG	CDEM	25	5	None	None	High	None	None	\$27	
RUD	Community Education	Waikato Waste & Resource Strategy	Delivers on Councils Waste Action Plan	29	4	None	Moderate	None	Low	None	\$308	Yes
RUD		Formal Education	Delivery of Enviroschools programme, youth & secondary programme and Kura Waihi ki Kura Waita programme. Significant support funding from third parties enables these programmes.	21	2	None	None	None	Low	None	\$720	Yes
RUD		Waikato and Bay of Plenty Cross regional waste strategy and infrastructure plan project	To support community wellbeing, reduce waste, reduce emissions and enable the transition to a circular economy through collaborative development of an infrastructure plan for the Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regions.	18	1	None	Low	None	Low	None	\$0	
RUD		Education/Promo-Non-Comp Airsheds	Funding supports a project providing education, and dry wood fuel to low-income households, to reduce emissions and improve air quality in non-complying airsheds.	4	2	None	None	None	None	None	\$35	
RUD		PC1 Digital Solutions	To provide necessary digital tools to support implementation of Plan Change 1	36	6	None	Low	None	High	None	\$0	
RUD	Farm Environment Plan Implementation	Farm Environment Plan Implementation	Implementation of the farm planning aspects of PC1 and FW-FP regulations	36	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$320	
RUD		Catchment Information	This project will create a resource for farmers that fulfils the intent of Freshwater Farm Plan's catchment context, challenges, and values information (CCCV): to ensure that the risk assessment process goes beyond the farm gate, and that on-farm actions contribute to improved environmental outcomes for freshwater. This requirement has since been included in Plan Change 1	29	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$0	
RUD		PC1 Information and Guidance	To provide information and guidance required to support landowners meet their PC1 obligations.	29	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$0	
RUD		Existing FEP Gap Analysis	Review of existing farm plan templates with PC1 and FW-FP requirements.	29	2	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
RUD		Farm Plan Integrity	The development of efficient approval systems and materials to deliver farm environment plans that meet regulatory requirements.	25	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$0	
RUD		IRIS NextGen	The introduction of a standard approach across Regional Councils in how we deliver activities supported by fit for purpose software.	36	1	High	None	None	None	None	\$3,537	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
RUD	Maritime services	Maritime Services	Maintaining compliance with Council's Navigation Safety Bylaw to ensure safe navigable waterways	29	5	None	Low	None	None	None	\$650	Yes
RUD		Disposal of Derelict Vessels	Recovery of derelict vessels from Waikato harbours	21	5	None	None	None	Low	None	\$0	
RUD	Primary Industry Engagement	Agricultural Engagement	Engagement with primary sector to support implementation of rules and regulations that impact on the primary sector (in particular PC1 and FW-FP regulations)	29	1	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$231	
RUD	Regional Compliance	Incident Response	Responding to reported environmental incidents	39	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$270	
RUD		Investigation	Investigating serious non-compliance and undertaking consequent enforcement actions	39	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$254	
RUD		Permitted Activity Monitoring	Monitoring compliance with selected permitted activity rules from Council's Plans	36	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$207	
RUD	Regional Consent Processing	RUD Fixed Charges	Delivery of consenting oversight functions, consent administrative processes, and consent processes for which a fixed charge applies	57	6	Low	High	High	High	None	\$343	
RUD		Resource Consent Processing	Processing of resource consent applications	43	6	None	High	None	High	None	\$979	
RUD		Dam Safety	Undertake Councils BCA functions in relation to large dams.	32	6	None	Low	Moderate	None	None	\$112	
RUD		Compliance Monitoring	Monitoring of resource consent compliance	29	6	None	None	None	High	None	\$881	
RUD		Appeals	Manages appeals to decision on consent applications	25	6	None	Low	None	Low	None	\$101	
RUD		General Information and Advice	Response to enquiries, LGOIMA and general regulatory matters from public	25	1	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
RUD		Lake Taupo Implementation	Advisory services for landowners in Lake Taupo catchment who are subject to Variation 5 to the Regional Plan	21	2	None	None	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
				Ave.: 29							\$9,373	

Science, Policy and Information (SPI)

Strategic alignment

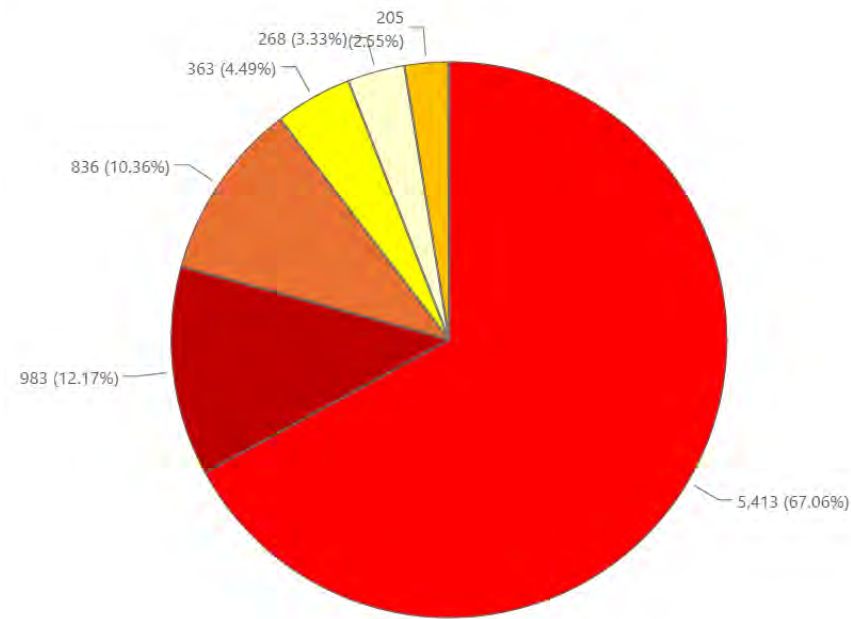
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Science, Policy and Information (SPI) Directorate



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
0	Not Mandatory	\$3	13
1	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation	\$268	10
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$363	12
3	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$205	4
4	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.	\$836	2
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$5,413	38
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$983	9
Total		\$8,071	88

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Science, Policy and Information (SPI) Directorate
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI	Environmental Monitoring	EM Flow Regimes SW	Climate change, land use change and allocation are changing the amount of rainfall and river flows. The hydrological data gathering programme will provide continuous quality assured data to enable the analysis and characterisation of the regions hydrological systems. The data will be used for a variety of purposes to assist the Waikato community to use the regions water resources in equitable and wise manner by having scientifically defensible knowledge on the quantum and temporal variations of the resource.	39	5	None	None	Moderate	High	None	\$188	
SPI		EM Lakes Quality	Climate change, land use change and allocation is changing the quality of our lakes. This activity is a function council is required to perform under the Resource Management Act 1991. This activity provides chemical and biological water quality data on a selection of lakes throughout the region which is used to determine the relative water quality state of the lake and what effect runoff from land into the lake may be having on the water quality.	32	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$218	
SPI		Flood Warning Network	Climate change, land use change and proximity of people to rivers is increasing the risk from intense rainfall events. This activity provides for flood warning notifications via the maintenance and improvement of a telemetered water level and rainfall monitoring network. The required outcome for the service is the provision of advice for sound decision making by the Duty Emergency Management Officer team. Timely and accurate information also assists stakeholders within the region to take preventative actions to minimise the effects of flooding on their respective activities or assets.	32	5	None	None	High	None	None	\$259	
SPI		EM Groundwater	Climate change, land use change and allocation are changing the amount of rainfall and groundwater levels and quality. This activity is a function council is required to perform under the Resource Management Act 1991. This activity provides data on the chemical and biological quality of regional groundwater systems. The results are used to indicate the suitability of groundwater for various uses.	29	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$93	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI	Environmental Monitoring Work Activity	WQ - Telemetered groundwater level monitoring	The upgrade will enable quantifying the resources needed to operate a small number of continuous telemetered water level sensors and determine if future growth in this approach is justified.	11	0	None	None	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
SPI	Environmental Science and Information	Geothermal Underground Resource	Supports delivery of effective decision making in resource consenting processes for geothermal energy consents.	50	5	Low	Extreme	None	High	None	\$30	Yes
SPI		Whangamarino Action Plan	Integrated capture of all actions to address declining environmental quality of Whangamarino Wetland and Lake Waikare Catchment. Action Plan to be completed in 2026 where, following council approval, we will move into the prioritised implementation of actions	50	5	None	Low	High	High	None	\$0	
SPI		Shoreline change & impact	Needed to inform state of the environment responsibilities and other statutory requirements (See LTP 2024-2034 Business Case). Also undertaking monitoring of the coastal marine area as required by national policy direction	50	5	None	Moderate	High	High	None	\$85	
SPI		Peatlands Programme	Programme to develop a robust evidence base to support on-land mitigations that enable the ongoing use of peatland in a sustainable manner	46	5	None	Moderate	Low	High	None	\$0	
SPI		S-Map Regional Mapping	Finalisation of region made S-Map mapping that will assist in implementing Plan Change 1	43	5	None	High	Low	High	None	\$0	
SPI		Soil and Land Management Solutions	Undertake investigations across the region to development sustainable land and soil management approaches	43	5	None	High	None	High	None	\$156	
SPI		Healthy Coastal Marine Area	Needed to inform state of the environment responsibilities and other statutory requirements (See LTP 2024-2034 Business Case). Also undertaking monitoring of council's regional plan as required by statute.	39	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$176	
SPI		Soil and Land Risks and Priorities	SOE monitoring (soil quality, riparian monitoring, erosion, PSO and Lidar)	39	5	None	Moderate	Low	High	None	\$148	
SPI		Coastal Matakauranga Maori	Undertake monitoring to comply with requirements of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement	36	3	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$60	
SPI		Contaminated Land Project	Supports delivery of RMA s30 function to 'investigate land for the purposes of identifying contaminated land'.	36	6	None	Low	None	High	None	\$117	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI		Coastal Biodiversity and Distribution	Information gaps on coastal biodiversity and the distribution and condition of coastal habitats have been highlighted as a strategic risk in the wider understanding of ecosystem health and environmental reporting. The need to fill these gaps has been highlighted in the State of the Environment Monitoring Report 2022 and reported to the EPC (27379974).	36	5	None	High	None	High	None	\$130	
SPI		Groundwater Quality Invest Targets	Statutory requirement to implement our own policy, as required by RMA	36	5	None	Low	Low	High	None	\$62	
SPI		Hydrological Regime low/flood	Statutory requirement to implement our own policy, as required by RMA	36	5	None	Low	Moderate	High	None	\$81	
SPI		Water Allocation Plan Imp	Implementation to support Council endorsed Water Allocation Plan	36	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$219	
SPI		Manage priority habitats	Supports delivery of the NPS-IB and RMA s35 requirements for state of the environment reporting.	32	6	None	Low	None	High	None	\$190	
SPI		Air Quality Monitoring Investigations	Supports delivery of RMA functions including state of the environment reporting and delivery requirements of National Environmental Standard Air Quality.	32	6	None	Low	None	High	None	\$267	
SPI		Biological Health of Estuaries	Monitoring of degraded waterbodies as identified in proposed regional coastal plan	32	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$169	
SPI		Coastal Water Quality	Monitoring of degraded waterbodies that have been identified (as required by national direction) in proposed regional coastal plan. Needed to inform state of the environment responsibilities and other statutory requirements (See LTP 2024-2034 Business Case)	32	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$888	
SPI		Fish and Fisheries Monitoring	Undertake statutory required monitoring of fish and fisheries as required to fulfil s35 state of the environment monitoring and NPSFM requirements for freshwater ecosystems and fisheries	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$90	
SPI		Geothermal Mon/Investigations	Supports effective decision making in policy delivery for protection of surface geothermal features and the Waikato Region tourism, and s35/SoE.	32	5	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$30	
SPI		HRWO Plan Effectiveness and Monitoring	Statutory requirement to monitor implementation of council's regional plan, as required by resource management legislation	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$85	
SPI		Lake Invest/New Mon Methods	Monitoring undertaken to fulfil statutory requirements in respect of NPSFM	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$177	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI		Manage the Marine Area	Needed to inform state of the environment responsibilities and other statutory requirements (See LTP 2024-2034 Business Case). Also undertaking monitoring of the coastal marine area as required by national policy direction	32	5	None	High	None	Moderate	None	\$80	
SPI		River & Stream Water Quality	Statutory requirement to undertake monitoring and science in regard to river and stream water quality	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$76	
SPI		Stream & River Ecological Health	Statutory requirement to undertake monitoring and science in regard to stream and river ecological health	32	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$86	
SPI		Lake Taupo SW GW Water Quality	Statutory requirement to monitor implementation of our own policy, as required by RMA	29	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$137	
SPI		Pressure Analysis	Statutory requirement to implement our own policy, as required by RMA, with specific focus on water usage information gathered from consent applicants	29	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$10	
SPI		Biodiversity Inventory	Supports delivery of the NPS-IB and RMA s35 duty to gather information. Will provide a foundation upon which other council functions (e.g. consenting) can ensure good decision making.	25	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$50	
SPI		Biodiversity Tools and Innovation	Identification of new ways of operating, new technology or methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness.	25	2	None	None	None	High	None	\$85	
SPI		Drinking Water NES Implement	Statutory requirement to implement our own policy, as required by RMA	25	6	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$14	Yes
SPI		SNA Identification	Supports delivery of the NPS-IB to support local authorities in the identification of areas of significant indigenous flora and fauna. Will provide a foundation upon which other council functions (e.g. consenting) can ensure good decision making.	25	6	None	None	None	High	None	\$15	
SPI		Terrestrial Biodiversity (Tier one) Monitoring	Supports delivery of the NPS-IB and RMA s35.	25	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$160	
SPI		Tier 3 Monitoring	Supports delivery of NPS-IB and RMA s35 requirements.	25	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$100	
SPI		Marine Biosecurity Research and Monitoring	Needed to inform state of the environment responsibilities and other statutory requirements (See LTP 2024-2034 Business Case). Also undertaking monitoring of the	18	5	None	None	None	High	None	\$55	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
			coastal marine area as required by national policy direction									
SPI		2028 State of the Environment Review and Reporting	State of Environment (SoE) monitoring and Reporting is legislatively required under the RMA and the environmental monitoring programmes that support this are already budgeted for as BAU. Regular SoE reporting not only updates our understanding of the state of our environment and emerging trends and impacts but also helps us identify the drivers and pressures and helps inform responses both regionally and nationally for improving our environment. Each cycle of reporting requires us to identify gaps in our monitoring so that future reporting can help improve our ability to respond more effectively to emerging issues and impacts. This current review was requested by the Environmental Performance Committee.	11	1	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	
SPI	Resource Management Policy	Appeals to Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan	RMA statutory process to give effect to RMA/NZCPS to support mandatory NZCPS/RMA requirement to have coastal plan and review it.	29	6	None	Moderate	None	High	None	\$251	
SPI		Healthy Rivers Plan for Change / Plan Change 1	Statutory process to progress Plan Change 1, presently before the Environment Court and High Court. Level of Service determined by response to appeals and Court direction	21	5	None	Low	None	Low	None	\$0	
SPI		RPS amendment-statutory acknowledgements	A statutory requirement to update the RPS with statutory acknowledgements	18	6	None	Low	None	Low	Low	\$0	
SPI		SS Policy Implementation	Service provided is advice on interpretation of policy and implementation of plans and attendance at forums. to support this activity is separate from policy development and is focused on implementing the plans	18	0	None	Low	Low	Moderate	None	\$0	
SPI		Aquaculture	Attend aquaculture forum, provide policy advice on aquaculture to support to provide for staff to attend the Aquaculture forum and provide policy advice to Council	11	0	None	Low	None	Low	None	\$2	
SPI		Business Planning and Compliance	To ensure Policy complies with all statutory obligations, and this work is planned out. to support to ensure Policy business is planned and meets all statutory obligations	11	0	None	Moderate	None	None	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI		Coastal Planning	Provide for policy advice on coastal issues, attendance at forums, e.g. Hauraki Gulf Marine Park forum meetings to support to assist with implementing the coastal plan and coastal related topics	11	0	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$1	
SPI		Private Plan Changes	Statutory requirement to respond to private plan change requests	4	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$0	
SPI	Social and Economic Science	Economic information and advice	Provide economic insights, analysis, data and tools to inform and support WRC's policy, planning and decision making in environmental management, regional development and other council priorities. Enables the ongoing development of tools and expertise to ensure decisions are informed by robust, evidence-based economic information	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	\$97	
SPI		Requests for Input into Policy and Strategy	Labour only, economic advice and input to policy and strategy to support legislation- RMA and LGA and others	32	0	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	\$0	
SPI		Waikato Economy	Economic advice to support organisational projects - WREDS, Energy Strategy, ICM, regional resilience, catchment management	25	1	None	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	\$50	
SPI		Economic Instruments	Development and support for the use of economic instruments across the work of the organisation	21	1	None	Moderate	Low	Low	None	\$0	
SPI		Citizen Research and Engagement	Supporting and providing engagement advice to WRC staff. Also covers community surveys and reporting on community perceptions of the environment, e.g. Waikato Region Environmental Perceptions Survey (WREPS). Considering reframing how to gauge and report on community perceptions and outcomes.	18	1	None	Low	None	Low	Low	\$71	
SPI		Stakeholder Coordination	Labour only, support for community engagement for WRC projects and programmes.	18	1	None	Low	Low	Low	Low	\$0	
SPI		Freshwater Ecosystems Services	Economic advice to support freshwater management policy programme, focus on alignment with science programme	11	1	None	None	None	Low	None	\$50	
SPI	Social and Economic Science Work Activity	Review of funding for flood management and drainage services	Research and investigation into understanding funding for flooding management and dragging infrastructure. A comprehensive programme to inform a more equitable funding distribution for council provided services	29	1	None	Low	Moderate	None	None	\$0	
SPI	Spatial Information	Spatial Analysis & Modelling	Design and implement spatial solutions to business challenges across the organisation	50	3	None	High	Moderate	High	Low	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI		Spatial Information & Data Management	Provide spatial information services, advice, and outputs to both internal and external clients. Property and Rating data maintenance. Data Management: Acquire, manage, and update spatial and non-spatial data sets. Respond to internal and external requests for data. Provision of data externally through the Waikato Data Portal and the WRC Data catalogue. Quality control and quality assurance of corporate datasets. Create and maintain metadata to Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) standards Property & Rating: Respond to enquiries relating to valuation data and properties, undertake rating scheme modelling, and maintain the regional property dataset Spatial Information & Analysis: Undertake requests for spatial information and provide various spatial outputs such as map production, visualisations and spatial analysis, internally and externally	50	2	None	High	Moderate	High	Low	\$58	
SPI		Spatial Systems & Technology	Provide robust systems to support all spatial information activities, optimise processes, and leverage new technology opportunities to benefit the business GIS Platform Maintenance: Managed Services - support and maintenance of core GIS platforms Spatial Analysis & Data Transformation: Data ETL, Integrations work, automation, and spatial analysis support Systems Administration & User Support: GIS system and content administration including user access and internal and external map websites. Provide GIS user support and training to staff. Identify new technical and process opportunities to improve efficiencies.	50	3	None	High	Moderate	High	Low	\$116	
SPI	Spatial Information Work Activity	CAPS 2025	Regional aerial imagery capture done at 4-5-year intervals. to support supports multiple areas of work and a significant regional & national dataset	36	1	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	\$0	
SPI		Geothermal Condition Metric from Lidar	Make use of Lidar to enable detection of geothermal conditions of regional resources, as a proof of concept	25	0	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
SPI		ET - Mapping Soil Erosion Project	Emerging Technology suite 'proofs of concept', where projects that deploy emerging	21	0	None	Low	Low	Moderate	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
			technology to assist increased efficiency and effectiveness of organisational BAU activities									
	SPI	ET - Assessing ESRI Velocity for Real-Time Operations	Emerging Technology suite 'proofs of concept', where projects that deploy emerging technology to assist increased efficiency and effectiveness of organisational BAU activities	18	0	None	None	Low	Low	Low	\$0	
	SPI	ET - Beam C Project	Emerging Technology suite 'proofs of concept', where projects that deploy emerging technology to assist increased efficiency and effectiveness of organisational BAU activities	14	0	None	None	None	Low	None	\$0	
	SPI	ET - Managing High Resolution UAV Survey for Bio Security	Emerging Technology suite 'proofs of concept', where projects that deploy emerging technology to assist increased efficiency and effectiveness of organisational BAU activities	14	0	None	None	None	Low	None	\$0	
	SPI	Freshwater Policy Review	RMA and NPSFM requirements for water management	11	4	None	None	None	High	None	\$836	
	SPI	Fish passage barriers	Emerging Technology suite 'proofs of concept', where projects that deploy emerging technology to assist increased efficiency and effectiveness of organisational BAU activities	7	0	None	None	None	Moderate	None	\$0	
	SPI	District Policy and Planning	Fulfilling council's statutory requirements to respond to district plan development and plan changes of territorial authorities	71	6	None	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme	\$82	
	SPI	RPS Implementation	Statutory requirement to implement WRC responsibilities in the Regional Policy Statement	50	5	None	High	High	High	Moderate	\$114	
	SPI	Adaptation Planning	Staff input to district-led adaptation planning for natural hazards, supporting regional resilience work programme, with a focus on regional policy statement requirements	39	1	None	Moderate	High	Moderate	None	\$0	
	SPI	Future Proof	Fulfilling statutory functions of integrated land use and infrastructure - administrative oversight of partnership	39	5	None	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate	\$962	
	SPI	Growth Mgmt. - General	Responding to growth management matters across the region - related to non-statutory and statutory processes	39	5	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	\$302	
	SPI	UNISA	Input and staff support to participate in Upper North Island Strategic Alliance of regions and main districts - coordination on infrastructure priorities and transport and biosecurity links in particular. Supports regional spatial planning. to support corporate decision on collaboration and advocacy	29	2	None	Low	Low	Low	High	\$20	

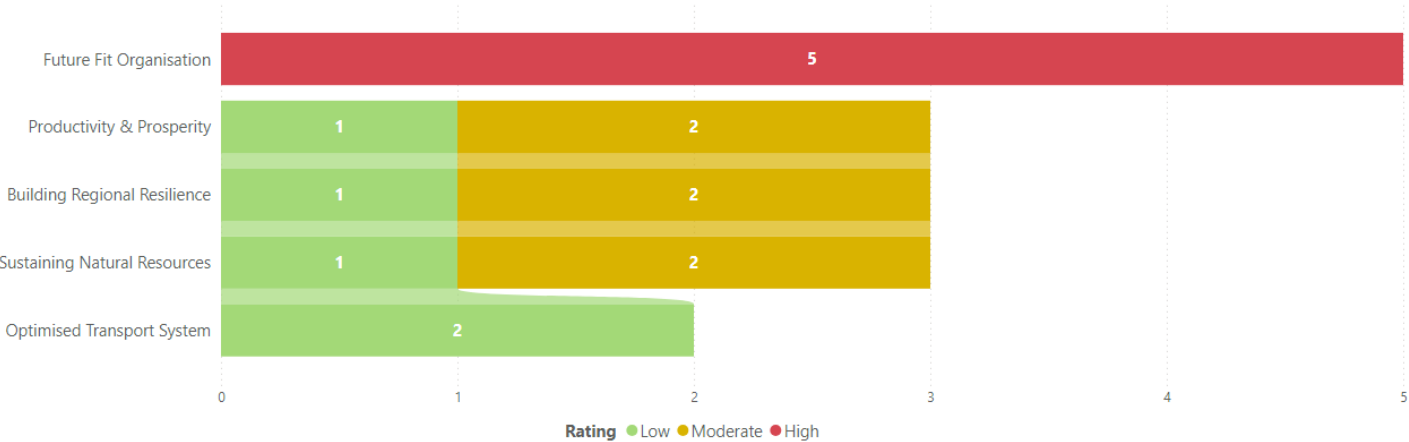
Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI		Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for the Waikato Region	Statutory requirement as required by national policy direction - NPSIB	25	5	None	Low	None	High	None	\$0	
SPI		Submission Coordination and Writing	Facilitating cross organisational input into formal submission and advocacy programme	25	2	None	Low	Low	Low	None	\$0	
SPI		Working with TAs for policy consistency	Coordination and maintenance of regional biodiversity strategy as required by national direction	25	3	None	Low	Low	Low	Low	\$30	
SPI		Central Govt Advocacy	Influencing consultations at a central government level, and also as an advocacy platform for WRC strategies	18	2	None	Low	None	None	None	\$7	
SPI		Hauraki Gulf Forum	Support provided to fulfil statutory responsibility as required by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2002	18	6	None	Low	None	Moderate	None	\$47	
SPI		Waikato Futures	Waikato Integrated Scenario Planning Tool - historically used as a tool to integrate population projections across the region to inform growth and infrastructure planning	14	2	None	Low	Low	Low	Low	\$131	
SPI		Land and Water Portfolio	Advisory funds to support numerous initiatives related to land and water management to support other work in the directorate and organisation	11	2	None	None	None	Low	None	\$33	
SPI		Library	Provision of library services- coordinating and distributing serials, online and physical subscriptions, and texts, and cataloguing and tracking these. Proactive environment scanning and connection to NZ libraries network for information trends and relevant new material and distributing to subject matter experts for most efficient use of time. Supports full organisation.	11	2	None	None	None	None	None	\$30	
SPI		Waikato Progress Indicators (WPI) and Wellbeing	Coordination of information to produce the annual Waikato Progress Indicators	11	2	None	Low	Low	Low	None	\$0	
SPI	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Mitigation testing	To be removed	29	2	None	High	None	High	None	\$0	
SPI	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Peat resource inventory and spatial index of vulnerability	Understand the spatial variability of peat throughout the region and to develop a monitoring programme to detect change over time	29	4	None	High	None	High	None	\$0	

Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
SPI	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Peatland roadmap development	Overarching approach to peat management throughout the region	29	2	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	\$0	
SPI	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Overarching peatlands research programme	29	2	None	Low	Moderate	High	None	\$0	
SPI	Sustainable Peatlands Programme	Provision of science to stakeholders	Where partnering or advice is sought by external stakeholders, our scientists provide independent advice on matters within council's responsibility	18	0	None	Low	Low	Low	None	\$0	
				Ave.: 28							\$8,071	

Tai-ranga-whenua and Democracy

Strategic alignment

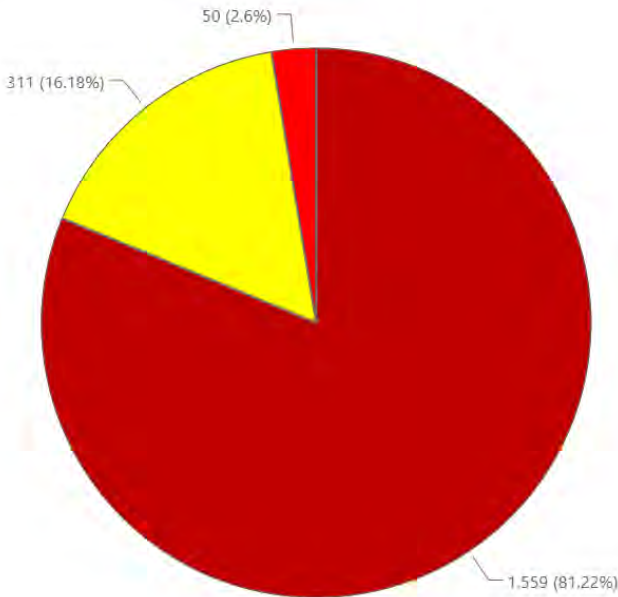
Current Portfolio Overview - No. of Council Activities for Tai-Ranga-Whenua and Democracy



Legislative Alignment

Legislative Alignment		2026/27 Direct Costs (000s)	No. of Council Activities
2	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.	\$311	2
5	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.	\$50	1
6	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.	\$1,559	3
Total		\$1,920	6

Legislative Alignment vs Spend (2026/27 Direct Costs \$000s) - Tai-Ranga-Whenua and Democracy
2026/27 Direct Costs in \$000s



Directorate	Activity Group	Activity Name	Description	Attractiveness Score	Legislative Alignment Value	Future Fit Organisation	Productivity & Prosperity	Building Regional Resilience	Sustaining Natural Resources	Optimised Transport System	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget (\$000)	SIP Due
TRW-D	Co-Management	Co-Management	Provides a stable, legislatively anchored platform for Treaty settlement obligations, Joint Management Agreements, co-management arrangements, co-managed land agreements, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe processes, and related governance and partner coordination.	43	6	High	Low	Low	Low	None	\$24	
TRW-D	Electoral Processes	Electoral Processes	Administers local body electoral processes, including representation reviews, pre-election, election-period, and post-election activity, in accordance with strict statutory requirements and oversight by the independent Electoral Officer.	36	6	High	None	None	None	None	\$0	
TRW-D	External Iwi Capacity and Support	External Iwi Capacity and Support	Supports iwi participation, capacity, and capability through relationship-based engagement, partnership work, administration of Iwi capacity funding, and consistent tracking and reporting of funded initiatives.	54	2	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	\$304	Yes
TRW-D	Governance	Governance	Provides governance advisory and administrative support, including elected member and Chair support, RMA hearing administration, LGOIMA and privacy oversight for complex or high-risk matters, elected member interests, governance policies, and compliance processes.	32	6	High	None	None	None	None	\$1,536	
TRW-D	Internal Development Iwi Maori	Internal Development Iwi Maori	Provides enterprise-wide Māori leadership, advice, cultural competency support, engagement coordination, ServiceNow request management, strategic Māori outcomes support, and assurance across Council through a business-partner model.	57	2	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	\$7	
TRW-D	Meeting Support	Meeting Support	Coordinates and enables council, committee, workshop, and hearing processes by scheduling meetings, preparing and publishing agendas and minutes, reviewing reports and governance documentation, and providing procedural and InfoCouncil system support.	29	5	None	None	None	None	None	\$50	
				Ave.: 42							\$1,920	

Strategic Investment Proposals (SIPs) from 2024-2034 LTP

SIP #	Strategic Idea Proposal	Status
424	Whangamarino options	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Update provided through Attachment Two
430	Policy development programme	Covered through LTP business case Update provided through Attachment Two
507	Coromandel comprehensive consents	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Project being delivered with zone reserve funding. Currently on hold pending RM reforms
6011	PC1 and FW-FP implementation	Resolved through the LTP
2031	Sustainability and climate change response unit	Resolved
421	Water security management plan	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work complete
203	Increase resourcing to meet growing demand for te au Māori expertise	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work complete
604	PC1 implementation	Resolved through LTP
202	Iwi capacity and capability programme	Investment Case approved and funded through the LTP Work complete
428	Building capacity for iwi, stakeholder and community engagement	Resolved through LTP
431	Regional spatial strategy preparedness	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Update provided through Attachment Two
5011	Marine biosecurity	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented
5012	Freshwater biosecurity	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented
502	Hauraki Coromandel catchments increase in LOS	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Work programme delivered within existing resources
416	Pushing fish up hill	No longer relevant
5019	Pest plant extended delivery	Expanded work programme delivery underway
5020	Natural Heritage Partnership Programme	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Allocation of increased grant funding in place
5010	Biodiversity support to multiple owned Māori land	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented
403	Healthy rivers	Continuation of 2021-2031 LTP investment case Update provided through Attachment Two
425	Peatlands programme	Continuation of 2021-2031 LTP investment case Update provided through Attachment Two
5022	Collective impact	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented
5013	Kauri Protection	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented

SIP #	Strategic Idea Proposal	Status
401	Cultural markers on the health of our natural resources	No longer relevant
2020	Kai Karere Lead role	Resolved
417	Enhancing CEM	No longer relevant
5037	ABCD Flaxblock Purchase	Implemented within existing budget
422	Improvements in coastal and marine monitoring	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Update provided through Attachment Two
5045	Principal Resilience Advisor	Delivered through re-prioritisation of existing budget
429	Policy - engagement support specialist	No longer relevant
703	Improvements for new PT contracts	Delivered through reprioritisation of existing budgets
420	Unlocking climate resilience through mātauranga Māori	No longer relevant
5014	Wilding Conifers	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work programme implemented
702	Te Huia rail rolling stock replacement	New SIP request raised for 2027 LTP
419	Terrestrial biodiversity	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Update provided through Attachment Two
509	Health and Safety compliance improvements	Work limited to what is achievable under existing budget
704	Enabling systems for zero emission bus fleet	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Delivered through reprioritisation of existing budgets
252	Kaiarahi Māori Advisor	CDEM request funded through LTP
5023	River and Catchment programme for Wharekawa Coast (Kaiaua)	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Resolved through the 2025/26 Annual Plan
701	Deliver additional passenger rail services after CRL opens	Business Case approved through the LTP with funding to commence from year four Still relevant, with service improvements to follow confirmation of permanent service
418	Geothermal	No longer relevant
602	Advancing Mātauranga Māori	Resolved through support from WRA and other partnerships
603	Maritime Services	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work complete
5018	Bringing PPOs in house	Implemented with transfer of roles complete
5042	Flood assets on private land	Still relevant and considered through new SIP
2012	Regional Sector Collaborative Solutions - IRIS NextGen	Resolved through LTP budget
504	Regional poplar and willow supply	Work limited to what is achievable under existing budget
5031	Environmental compliance	Resolved with additional planning role created through ICM Review

SIP #	Strategic Idea Proposal	Status
605	Mooring management under the new RCP	Resolved
5015	Pest animal biosecurity officers	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP
5016	Regional priority possum control (direct control)	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Resolved through s17A review: status quo recommendation with enhancements
5024	Fencing to comply with PC1 and NES-FW regulations	Work programme limited to what is achievable under existing budget
5034	Waipa Zone river maintenance	Work programme limited to what is achievable under existing budget
5046	WRC emergency management improvements	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Still relevant and to be considered by independent review
204	Customer Experience Transformation Programme	Resolved
5044	Rain gauge and river telemetry sites	Work programme implemented through Kānoa funded work programme
5026	Purchase of critical assets	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
5035	Waikato and West Coast river management resourcing	Work programme limited to what is achievable under existing budget
405	Environmental data management system and reporting	Resolved
423	Future proof project coordinator	No longer relevant
601	Enviroschools expansion	Resolved through support from WRA and other partnerships
5021	FPLD construction team	Not approved, operating model remains unchanged
708	Te Huia funding assistance rate	Council decision on moving into a permanent service from 2027 at normal 51% FAR requires consultation and decision as part of the 2027-2037 LTP
709	Travel demand management programme design	Business Case developed but not included in LTP Submission made by HCC in support Currently no further action proposed
5049	Resource required to transfer urban drainage areas back to district councils	No further work undertaken, other than ongoing monitoring of need for transfer.
5028	Asset data and information improvements	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
402	High frequency monitoring	No longer relevant
408	Consent and contractor environmental data capture and storage	No longer relevant
5029	Integrated automation of PS and FG strategy	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
253	Permanent Operational Readiness Coordinator	CDEM request funded through LTP
2021	EV infrastructure	Implemented through LTP

SIP #	Strategic Idea Proposal	Status
707	Public transport digital modernisation	No longer relevant
5039	Principal engineer advisor	New Chief Engineer role created through ICM Review
5041	Scheme programmer	New scheme engineers and capital programme leads role created through ICM Review
2017	Paeroa wash bay and workshops	Implemented through LTP
5038	Lower Waikato Operations additional resource	Still relevant and to be considered through new SIP
415	Biosecurity science support	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Update provided through Attachment Two
251	GIS capability additions	CDEM request funded through LTP
426	Environmental section structure	No longer relevant
5040	Survey team ICM	Not approved, operating model remains unchanged
411	Data management analyst	No longer relevant
2022	Warm Home Scheme	Resolved through LTP
5030	Stores and chemical management	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
201	Support to informal meetings of council	Delivered through reprioritisation of existing budgets
5027	Advancing condition monitoring with specialist	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
7018	Automation and advanced analytics	No longer relevant
2010	OpenText Cloud Migration	Resolved through LTP
2019	Kerepehi Depot	Resolved through LTP
255	NZ Response Team shared cost CDEM group	CDEM request funded through LTP
2015	Review of project and programme management resourcing at WRC	Delivered through reprioritisation of existing budgets
2023	Sustainable Homes - Eco Retrofit	Resolved through LTP
5032	Asset standardisation	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
2025	Te Waka funding	Resolved through LTP
414	SPI business support services	No longer relevant
2018	Whitianga Building Lease	Resolved
2024	Regional Development Fund	Resolved through LTP
427	Social science and evaluation research	No longer relevant
7012	Automation and digitisation of PT timetables	Delivered through reprioritisation of existing budgets
506	Business support specialist role, Flood Protection and Land Drainage	Work programme progressing as possible within existing budget
7010	Public transport rebrand	Business Case approved and funded through the LTP Work complete
2011	IS Portfolio and Projects Management	Resolved
5033	Purchase two tractors	Not approved, operating model remains unchanged
7020	Cease funding public transport for special events	Funding public transport for special events is still relevant and matter is raised through new SIP for consideration

SIP #	Strategic Idea Proposal	Status
7019	Reduced capital development	Resolved through LTP
508	Business support officer (Whitianga)	No longer relevant

2024 – 2034 LTP Investment Cases

Healthy waterways (freshwater implementation)

Healthy waterways (freshwater implementation)			
This is the continuation of an integrated work programme, approved through the 2021 – 2031 LTP, to undertake our freshwater roles and responsibilities.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
(277)	(112)	1,660	(100)
Commentary			
Policy: • This work has been paused since early this year pending the new Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. • These bills are expected to be enacted in the next couple of months before the election. • There will be no investment from the Resource Management Policy section in the healthy waterways. • This investment will instead be redirected towards transition to and preparation of the Natural Environments Plan as required by the Natural Environment Bill.			
Environmental Monitoring: • Fish monitoring started over the 2024/25 summer as planned. Outcomes from the first summer of monitoring were shared at the EPC committee. Second year was completed during 2025/26 summer and student recruitment is under way for 2026/27 summer. • 4.5 FTE were in the 2024 SIP this in 2025/26 was reduced to 3FTE as part of savings back to council. These roles are being recruited. • Laboratory costs for further water quality analysis and algae sampling will start in 2026/27 \$110k. These were deferred from 2024/25 to provide savings back to council.			

Development of the Water Security Management Plan

Development of the Water Security Management Plan		
This work will identify options to increase water security and enable sustainable growth in the Waikato region. Funded through Prior Year Surplus funds due to the strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.		
Time	Scope	Budget
Planned investment (\$000)		
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
194	194	-
Commentary		
- The Water Security Management Plan has been completed and approved by Council - There is no expenditure planned this year above BAU budgeted work. - Planning is ongoing for future work.		

Options for rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland

Options for rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland		
The development of a Catchment Action Plan for the rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland. Funded through prior year surplus funds due to strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.		
Time	Scope	Budget
Planned investment (\$000)		
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
200	200	141
Commentary		
The draft Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan was workshopped with Council on 2 June. Following feedback from catchment landowners, finalisation of the Plan has been delayed by six to eight weeks to allow for further consultation meetings, which are expected to occur in mid to late August. The Plan has been developed through a collaborative Working Group and is endorsed by the majority of members; however, farming interests in the catchment have raised significant concerns and have escalated these to ministers and MPs. The Action Plan is scheduled to be considered at the September meeting of the Strategy and Policy Committee for a final decision on approval. Contractor support for project delivery has been extended to the end of September to support this revised timeframe. A carryover of unspent funds to 2027/28 is being requested to support Plan finalisation and implementation planning, which would help address concerns about possible impacts of the Plan. The amount of the proposed carryover still needs to be confirmed. There remains a material risk that Council may not approve the Action Plan. Given the level of partner and river iwi investment in developing the Plan, non-approval would carry significant reputational risk for WRC. Overall, this is a complex project that has become politically charged and will require careful management through the remaining consultation and decision-making stages.		

Biosecurity and Biodiversity

Biosecurity and Biodiversity				
This programme builds on work funded through the 2021-2031 LTP to improve biodiversity and biosecurity outcomes and ensure sustainable change in the region.				
Time	Scope	Budget		
Planned investment (\$000)				
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
38	968	1,582	+358	+208
Commentary				
This programme of work is on track, noting that this is a complex business case with many component parts with a large programme of cross-directorate work. The individual elements are: Biosecurity Officers Taupo and Whitianga This is unlikely to be supported under ELT level of service review impacting other biosecurity programmes including wilding pines in Coromandel and upper Waikato, and corbicula in the upper Waikato; these cuts will need to be considered if savings are also sought from those programmes. Additional staff sought were also going to support the Priority Biodiversity Sites work programme to reduce associated travel costs with Hamilton based staff servicing these areas and to enable local relationships with local staff to be strengthened. Biosecurity Science support This was not supported during ELT level of service review, so impacting biosecurity programme effectiveness and RPMP reporting; this will need to be considered if savings are also sought from those programmes. Tiers 2 and 3 terrestrial biodiversity monitoring Tier 2 was supported during ELT level of service review Tier 3 was not supported during ELT level of service review; staff are considering other LoS changes to accommodate as this is mandatory under NPS-IB. Any changes in the level of service offered here will impact the Priority Biodiversity Sites programme; so, we have not proposed savings in that programme through the ICM SIP process. Restoration activities on multiple Māori owned land This item is unlikely to be supported during ELT level of service review. An investigation into effective support mechanisms for restoration on multiple Māori-owned land has been completed; without funding the recommendations of this report will not be implemented. Community restoration support for freshwater lakes and wetlands This item is unlikely to be supported during ELT level of service review. There is an existing work programme which can continue without increased level of service.				

Supporting the takutai moana coastal and marine strategic priority

Supporting the takutai moana coastal and marine strategic priority					
The Coastal and Marine Business Case remains relevant despite Takutai Moana no longer being a formal WRC strategic priority. It supports coastal plan implementation, Firth of Thames monitoring, evidence-based decision-making, aquaculture, marine biodiversity, and ecosystem health. Its focus is to:					
• develop coastal water quality standards • monitor degraded coastal waterbodies • improve understanding of coastal habitats and ecosystem health					
These are delivered through two investment objectives: implementing and evaluating the next Coastal Plan, and improving coastal biodiversity and ecosystem-health knowledge.					
Time		Scope		Budget	
				+\$281k	
Planned investment (\$000)					
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
318	740	860	591	563	684
Commentary					
Coastal programme capability has expanded since July 2024, supported by new staff and the research vessel Kohi Whika.					
• Objective 1: Firth of Thames water quality monitoring is building long-term evidence to support coastal plan implementation, degraded-waterbody assessment, aquaculture management and improved buoy monitoring. • Engagement with Ngāti Te Wehi is progressing, but the mātauranga Māori component is delayed due to relationship-building and data-sovereignty considerations. • Objective 2: Reef, seagrass and habitat mapping work is underway, supported by new ROV capability and partnerships with DOC and the University of Auckland. • Continued investment will maintain service levels, support water quality standards, and improve marine spatial planning and biodiversity knowledge. • Early costs were mainly for long-term infrastructure, though some external provider costs remain.					

Review of Funding for Flood Management and Drainage

Review of Funding for Flood Management and Drainage Services (formally known as ‘funding for critical infrastructure’)			
To review the current funding models for WRC’s flood management, river control works, and drainage services, as well as substitutes for these, and to develop and test alternative funding models that considers affordability issues for ratepayers and ensure sustainable investment in infrastructure.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
200	242	371	186
Commentary			
- Phase 1 of the flood management and drainage funding review is complete. - Phase 2 is being redesigned and rescope in response to the findings from Phase 1, through a Project Investment Case and is expected to focus on practical testing of revised funding and rating options, using existing Hauraki adaptation modelling and engagement structures. This will help assess how the equity framework applies to real schemes, compare current and future funding approaches, and build the evidence needed for longer-term decisions on affordability, adaptation investment and potential Crown co-investment. - The budget indicated is provisional and relates to an option currently being assessed through the new Project Investment Case. They are provided for planning purposes only and do not represent a committed budget or final funding request.			

Understanding and adapting to natural hazard risk

Understanding and adapting to natural hazard risk			
This is a continuation of the 2021-2031 LTP business case for regional resilience outcomes, to provide a strategic foundation for the council to support communities to understand and adapt to a variety of natural hazard risks.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
396	396	396	TBA
Commentary			
- Regional Resilience BAU and Programme gives effect to Legislative requirements and Innovation. - The programme has progressed well in most of the key projects: Risk prioritisation, LIM project and Modelling & Adaptation Planning in Hauraki Plains and commencement of the Waikato Region Water Resource Model. - Due to changing legislative requirements, particularly in relation to community adaptation, the development of a Regional Resilience Strategy has been re-scoped to focus on a framework that enables a whole-of-council approach to understanding and responding, it is inwards looking and as such external engagement was minimal. - Resilience is and continues to be a key pillar for Councils strategic direction and priority setting. - The drafting of the Resilience and Adaptation Framework is a fundamental step in improving organisational coordination and embedding a strategic approach to how we approach Natural Hazard Management to enhance community resilience. - The SIDF trial has concluded with a short list of options and lessons learned reports that were prepared for review by the community panel. A report was delivered by ICM Director to ICMC. - Resource pressure on Regional Resilience team following a series of significant weather events has been a reoccurring theme this last LTP period. - ICM review and weather impacts meant some works were deferred. Two key projects – Communications and Engagement and Iwi input to resilience planning were deferred and will be scoped in 2026/27 programme. - Implementation of Framework – implementation plan developed 2026/27 with plan informing LTP conversations.			

Metro spatial plan – transport programme

Metro spatial plan – transport programme			
Provision for the ongoing investment in the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan and support significant projected growth in the sub-region.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
566	566	566	500
Commentary			
In the 2025/26 financial year, the MSP Transport Programme included significant progress on three of the four multi-modal corridor studies (Northern/Te Rapa, completed; Eastern Cross City Connector, near completed; Eastern Clyde St, underway) while the Hamilton Southern Links Network Operating Plan was another major item. There remained a focus from the Future Proof Councils on the Hamilton Southern Links Road of National Significance project as well as fast track development impacts, and how these projects impact on Hamilton-Waikato transport networks and the growth of Hamilton and the wider metro spatial plan area. The revised programme remains on track for full delivery. Planned investment FY27/28 - we are currently working through the LTP alignment project with partner councils. However, our planned project for FY27/28 includes MSP implementation plan and the Metro BRT IBC. The high-level cost estimate at this point is looking at around \$500,000. Please note, this at this is only an estimate at this point.			

Public transport rebranding

Public transport rebranding			
Review of the council’s public transport brand strategy and corporate image, and implementation across digital and printed channels.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
-	184	196	-
Commentary			
• The project is now completed its development stage and has now moved into implementation where we are working through a staged implementation approach • It will be carefully phased and coordinated alongside other significant public transport projects, including the National Ticketing Solution roll out (Nov 2027), contract transitions (regional contracts Nov 2027 and urban contracts 2028) and other network initiatives.			

A strategic and spatial focus

A strategic and spatial focus			
A project to guide the region in preparing a regional spatial strategy and plan. Funded through Prior Year Surplus funds due to strategic nature of work over a fixed time period.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
220	267	250	250
Commentary			
Council agreed to fund the preparation of a regional spatial strategy over a four-year period. The stages in the process are: 1. a regional spatial inventory to provide an evidence base (complete); 2. a framework for the development of the strategy (complete); 3. A plan and actions for the period from the completion of the framework and the commencement of the regional strategy/plan (under development). Central government released planned new Acts for consultation that will replace the Resource Management Act, and they include a requirement to prepare a regional spatial plan. WRC staff will continue to prepare for commencement with the intent that the work done is not sensitive to changes and is likely to be required regardless of the final form of the legislation. The total expenditure budget for 2025/26 was \$428k which included the \$267k planned plus a carryover of \$161k. Unspent budget of around \$400k from 2025/26 has been requested to be carried over into 2026/27 for a total budget of around \$650k.			

Sustainable Peatlands

Sustainable Peatlands			
This programme builds on work funded through the 2021-2031 LTP to address peat subsidence and associated greenhouse gas emissions.			
Time	Scope	Budget	
Planned investment (\$000)			
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
-	796	458	
Commentary			
• Work for the 25/26 year progressed well, with a focus on the programme’s core scope of identifying and testing opportunities for sustainable land and drainage management on drained peatlands in the Waikato. There were minor delays due to the technical nature of projects within the programme. • The timing of contract milestones for the field-based experimental work, specifically milestones 1 through to 5, has resulted in a change to the phasing outlined in the LTP business case. Expenditure is tracking lower than provisioned for in the LTP and a revised programme is to be developed.			

Other LTP business cases

- Increase capacity for Maritime Services
 - o Recruitment is complete.
- Te Ao Māori
 - o Recruitment is complete.
- Te Huia passenger rail service enhancements
 - o Implementation scheduled from 2027/28.
- Te Huia passenger rail renewal of rolling stock
 - o Implementation scheduled from 2027/28. Note, a SIP has been prepared requesting investment in a business case.

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Regional Combined Plan (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Programme
Date Created:	4/08/2026 3:52 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	60.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	7.50
		Total Score LTP27	68.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Moderate
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Extreme
External Impact	Extreme
Change Complexity	Extreme
Technical Skill Availability	Extreme
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Extreme
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

New legislation is requiring each region, by 2031, to change its planning to a regional combined plan, consisting of:

1. A regional spatial plan prepared by all local authorities in a region
2. A natural environment plan prepared by the regional council
3. Land use plans for each territorial authority
4. A land use plan for the coastal marine area prepared by the regional council.

The opportunity is for WRC to lead coordination of the combined plan, to ensure consistency and alignment across the region for the various components of the combined plan.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

New legislation is expected to be passed by September 2026. Governance and the secretariat for the spatial plan is expected to be set up in 2026/27 so that the RSP is notified within 21 months of enactment. Within this LTP period it is expected that all combined plan components are prepared, notified and adopted by the responsible local authority/ies.

WRC already holds expertise in regional coordination and oversight, as well as detailed information and data layers for the areas required.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The regionally combined plan is intended to streamline local resource management by reducing over 14 plans to 1 unified regional document, and integrating spatial, land-use, and environmental rules. Having WRC lead coordination of the plan for the region provides a centralising direction to guide alignment with other regional responsibilities.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

Options Assessment:

Investment Logic: Because the Combined Plan requirements, legal timeframes and statutory obligations are largely set through the legislative framework, the options do not represent choices about whether the work is undertaken. Instead, the options assess different levels of investment in the capability needed to deliver the statutory process with an acceptable level of risk. On that basis, the realistic choice is between a minimum coordination model that carries higher delivery risk and a more integrated model that provides stronger confidence that the region can meet its statutory obligations, support participation, maintain evidence quality and progress through notification, hearings, implementation planning and monitoring.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Reprioritise existing some funding for plan development and implementation to combined regional plan. Advantages: Lowest immediate cost. Uses existing resources, relationships and forums. Disadvantages: No dedicated coordination or programme capability. High risk of ad hoc, fragmented delivery, duplication or gaps, delay and inconsistent approaches.	\$ No additional costs	No additional costs	No	Legislative requirements not met; opens up risk of litigation. Environmental impacts and community are negatively impacted
Option 1 (minimum)	Project- do minimum- TAs lead regional combined plan	Leave to single TA/multiple TAs to lead combined plan. WRC contributes nominal amount or in-kind equivalent. Disadvantages: risk that legislative requirements are not met effectively due to disconnect or inability to coordinate. Uncoordinated plan outcomes likely to be inferior, particularly for environment. Expects TAs to coordinate regional level.	\$ No additional costs (reprioritise existing funding as contribution)	Simplicity for WRC- hands off approach to coordination	No	Why this is not preferred: possibility that legislative requirements not met, inferior outcomes for direction of natural environment plan. Dynamic region that through previous efforts has not been able to organise itself without regional council coordination. Regional council already operates at required and appropriate scale, holds information at this scale.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 2 (intermediate)	Core Regional Programme office project	WRC hosts a dedicated regional programme office to provide programme management, coordinated plan architecture and design including e-plan and digital platform, integrate national direction, align implementation of national planning standards, input into land use plans, provide overall communications and engagement activities, and iwi/Maori participation, across the various plans under the combined plan, provide overall coordination around transition to new planning system, coordinate procurement strategy, risk management, benefits management, and reporting to decision makers, and coordinate response to regulatory relief policy. Advantages: Improves coordination, accountability, reporting and regional programme discipline. Disadvantages: Heavily depends on council specialist capacity, complexity of coordinating in-kind support and contributions from TAs. Intended to be interim arrangement rather than long term new way of working.	\$\$\$	Establishes a coordinated regional project. Reduces duplication, strengthens accountability and provides greater confidence that councils can coordinate.	No	Minimum viable implementation model, but with higher delivery risk if councils cannot reliably provide specialist input.
Option 2 (comprehensive programme)	Integrated Regional Secretariat and Planning Capability ongoing programme	WRC leads- coordinates, convenes, does the 'heavy lifting' for bringing partners together, leads 'holding the pen' to provide programme management, coordinated plan architecture and design including e-plan and digital platform, integrate national direction, align implementation of national planning standards, input into land use plans, provide overall communications and engagement activities, and iwi/Maori participation, across the various plans under the combined plan, provide overall coordination around transition to new planning system, coordinate procurement strategy, risk management, benefits management, and reporting to decision makers, and coordinate response to regulatory relief policy. Advantages: core established ongoing group 'in-house', straightforward to use regional scale structures, staff can be redeployed within organisation to new functions.	\$\$\$\$ Significant staff in-kind support as well as financial contribution.	Best anticipated outcomes for region. Provides capability across the full combined plan lifecycle, including transition coordination, engagement, implementation and monitoring. Improves delivery confidence, evidence consistency, regional coordination and participation.	Yes	Why this is preferred option: WRC ensures regional interests central and woven throughout, regional expertise is central and supports best outcomes for region overall, reduces 'competition' between TAs to hold the pen.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	The investment is expected to require procurement of specialist services and capability. The following will need to be procured at different stages of this programme: - Programme manager - Project manager - Programme coordinator - Room hire, catering - iwi engagement contributions, koha - Iwi engagement lead - Engagement coordinator - Comms design, collateral - Advertising - IT or planning platform investment - Legal expertise to support process - Legal fees regulatory relief - Workshops facilitator - Additional SME support If regulatory relief legislative provisions go ahead, legal fees around regulatory relief are likely to be particularly significant- in the millions of dollars. Procurement will be undertaken in accordance with WRC procurement policies and any agreed regional procurement arrangements. Depending on the scope, value, and timing of individual work packages, services may be sourced through: - Existing council supplier panels or standing arrangements. - Joint procurement with territorial authority partners directly or through secretariat. - Open-market Requests for Proposal (RFPs) via GETS for larger or specialised services. - Direct appointment where permitted under procurement policy and justified by capability, urgency, continuity, or value considerations. Specific procurement requirements, packaging of work, and sourcing approaches will be confirmed once governance arrangements, delivery model, and resource requirements for the RSP process have been agreed.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Programme Manager	New role (to be procured)	1 FTE	To programme manage across all the projects of the regional combined plan- the combined plan, regional spatial plan, regional spatial plan process, natural environment plan, land use plan for the coastal marine area, and ongoing maintenance and

Resource Table			
			implementation of the combined plan. Estimated at 1 FTE ongoing.
Programme Coordinator	New role (to be procured)	1 FTE	To coordinate across all the projects of the regional combined plan- the combined plan, regional spatial plan, regional spatial plan process, natural environment plan, land use plan for the coastal marine area, and ongoing maintenance and implementation of the combined plan. Estimated at 1 FTE ongoing.
Tai Ranga Whenua SME	Tai Ranga Whenua	1 FTE	To provide advice on iwi engagement and relationships. Estimated at 1 FTE for 3 years then reducing to 200 hours per year ongoing.
Communications SME	Communications	0.6FTE	To coordinate comms & engagement strategy and plan, lead and coordinate engagement, arrange comms materials. Estimated at 0.6FTE ongoing.
Planner SME	RM Policy or Strategic Policy Implementation	0.5FTE	To provide planning input to the combined plan as workstream leads. Estimated at 0.5FTE ongoing.
Policy SME	RM Policy or Strategic Policy Implementation	0.5FTE	To provide policy input to the combined plan as workstream leads. Estimated at 0.5FTE ongoing.
Project Coordinator	SPI Business Support	0.5FTE	To coordinate the combined plan project itself. Estimated at 0.5FTE over 3 years.
Finance SME	Finance	600	To support the project, in particular estimating regulatory relief impacts. Estimated at 600 hours total.
HR SME	People & Capability	800	To support roles recruitment and provide HR advice. Estimated at 800 hours over 4 years.
Info Services SME	Information Services	400	For e-planning integration and system integration needs. Estimated at 400 hours per year over 3 years.
Legal SME	Finance	300	For procurement and review of documentation. Estimated at 300 hours over 3 years.
Spatial Info SME	Spatial Information	200+	To provide spatial information coordination and data layers for combined plan beyond spatial plan requirements. Estimated at 200 hours p/a ongoing.
Science SME	Science	200+	To provide science input to implementation and maintenance of combined plan, estimated at 200 hours per year from 2029 on.
Democracy SME	Democracy Services	0.3FTE	To provide democracy advice for combined plan implementation and maintenance, estimated at 0.5 FTE for 2029/30 then 0.2FTE thereafter.
Economist SME	Social & Economic Science	600+	To provide economic advice for combined plan implementation and maintenance, estimated at 0.2FTE for 2029/40, then 0.1FTE thereafter.

Financial Assessment:

Based on assumption that WRC share of total costs is about one third, and remainder is shared amongst territorial authorities of the Waikato region.

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$1,057,500	\$1,977,500	\$1,050,000	\$885,000	\$885,000	\$885k pa	\$
Total Cost*	\$2,199,500	\$3,109,500	\$2,532,500	\$2,820,000	\$3,785,000	\$3,785k pa	\$
Partner Funding	\$1,473,665	\$2,083,365	\$1,696,775	\$1,889,400	\$2,536,000	\$2,536k pa	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$1,473,665	\$2,083,365	\$1,696,775	\$1,889,400	\$2,536,000	\$1,889.4k pa	\$
Net	\$725,835	\$1,026,135	\$835,725	\$930,600	\$930,600	\$930.6k pa	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☒ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Delivery of this investment will require multi-disciplinary internal, regional and specialist capability, including programme and project management, governance and democracy support, planning and policy expertise, iwi/Māori participation advice, stakeholder engagement, and legal, financial capability. External or specialist support may be required for project and programme management, legal advice, statutory planning, engagement, iwi/Māori participation, and assurance where this capability is not available internally or through regional partner councils. 1. Programme and project management 2. Comms and engagement 3. Policy and planning 4. Spatial information 5. Democracy services 6. Stakeholder engagement and liaison 7. Iwi engagement 8. Subject matter expertise: natural hazards, science, catchment management, civil defence, economics, transport planning 9. Hearings decision making and support 10. Governance 11. Legal expertise
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Further below is the long list of stakeholders. Stakeholders most impacted by the project are territorial authorities of the region, industry, and infrastructure/utility providers, as the combined plan will map and direct land use, transport, and key infrastructure provision. Territorial authorities of the region Iwi • JMA partners • Broader iwi with iwi management plans • Tainui Group Holdings Central government • Kiwirail • NZTA • Environment • Education • Health (Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora and Ministry of Health) • Conservation • Heritage • Environment Protection Agency • MBIE • Housing and Urban Development and Kainga Ora • Internal Affairs • Public Service Commissioner

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	• Fisheries Neighbouring local government • Auckland • Bay of Plenty/Tauranga/ Western Bay of Plenty • Taranaki • Horizons • Ruapehu District Local govt groupings • Future Proof • Regional Transport Committee • Upper North Island Strategic Alliance • Civil Defence Local govt representative groups • Local Government NZ • Taituara/SOLGM • Te Uru Kahika (regional sector) Community • Local residents • Community groups • NGOs: Wel Energy Trust, Perry Trust, Gallaghers, Bryant Trust, Trust Waikato, Age Concern, Grey Power, Bike Waikato • Advocacy groups eg ACRE, Waikato Conservation Board, Community Waikato • Sport Waikato • Tertiary education providers eg Uni of Waikato, WinTec • Waikato Housing Initiative • Waikato Wellbeing Project • Regional tourism and economic development entities • SME representation eg Ham Business Association, Early Childhood education • Community Boards Industry • Freight/logistics companies • Sector representatives • Developers/investors • Business owners • Farmers/farmers groups • Growers/growers groups • Developers • The Northern Infrastructure Forum • Agritech and technology providers • Chambers of Commerce • Forestry/timber business • Food/beverage producing industry • Packaging industry eg Visy • Quarrying • Mining • Tourism operators • Aquaculture, fisheries Infrastructure/utility providers • Lines companies • Energy utilities • Inland ports • Hamilton Airport • Waters entities

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Telecoms providers
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1. Regional cost-sharing arrangement Participating councils will agree a regional cost-sharing arrangement for costs related to the RSP process for which the combined plan is an essential component, with WRC contributing approximately one-third of those total costs. There will be ongoing costs of RSP implementation and running the ongoing secretariat beyond Dec 2030. Overall costs are based on estimates, averages, and regional comparisons. 2. Legislative and institutional settings remain broadly consistent The final legislation will continue to require a coordinated approach including transition arrangements, joint evidence base, joint iwi/Maori engagement and joint comms and engagement, jointly prepared Regional Spatial Plan, supported by a spatial planning committee, process agreement, and secretariat function and that these requirements will not materially change from current expectations. Significant changes to the legislative framework could alter governance, capability, timing, and resource requirements. 3. Interdependent SIPs proceed in a coordinated manner The five interrelated SIPs (RSP Process, Regional Spatial Plan, Regional Combined Plan, Natural Environment Plan, and Coastal Marine Area Land Use Plan) will be funded and progressed in a coordinated manner. Changes to scope, timing, or resourcing within one SIP may require corresponding adjustments to the others. 4. Sufficient specialist capability can be secured when required It is assumed that the region will be able to access expertise needed within required timeframes. The proposed investment assumes this capability will be available through a combination of council resources, shared regional arrangements, and external procurement where necessary.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1. Compressed statutory delivery timeframes The timeframe anticipated by Government for establishing governance arrangements and preparing the first combined plans is ambitious. This constrains the ability to phase work, requiring capability, governance arrangements, and supporting systems to be established within relatively short timeframes. 2. Limited availability of specialist capability All regions are expected to be progressing similar planning processes concurrently, as well as continuing to deliver business as usual required under other legislation and responding to weather emergency events. This is likely to create competition for specialist resources, including planning experts, programme managers, technical advisors, hearings commissioners, and central government representatives, potentially affecting delivery timing, costs, and procurement approaches. 3. Local government funding and capacity pressures The ability of councils to contribute funding and staff resources may be constrained by broader local government reforms, organisational change, and competing strategic priorities. This may influence the scale, timing, and delivery model adopted for the Regional Spatial Plan process.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1. National Direction and Implementation Framework Dependency: Timely release of sufficient legislation, regulations, national direction, national standards, and implementation guidance from central government. Why it is needed: detailed work and resource requirements depend on clarity regarding final statutory requirements and implementation expectations. Delays or significant changes may require programme redesign or reprioritisation. 2. Regional Commitment and Partnership Dependency: Ongoing willingness and cooperation among all local authorities to establish and maintain governance, funding, resource-sharing, and decision-making arrangements. Why it is needed: Successful establishment of the process relies on collective regional ownership and agreement. Challenges arising from previous reform processes or competing local priorities may affect the ability to reach and sustain agreement. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Availability Dependency: Availability of specialist capability. Why it is needed: The Regional Spatial Plan process requires access to specialist expertise that will be in demand nationally as multiple regions progress planning reform simultaneously. The ability to secure and retain capability is critical to successful delivery. 4. Interdependencies of related key work Dependency: This SIP is part of a combined package of interrelated work to prepare a combined regional plan. Each package of work will need to be resourced to enable each component of the combined plan to be completed.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT RISK 02 Governance and Reform Transition Investing in combined regional planning requirements will support WRC to be ready for and adapt to the new legislative and regulatory requirements under planning system reform. STRAT RISK 03 Relationships Combined regional planning requires stronger relationships with stakeholders and clearly articulating roles and responsibilities because efforts must be combined and aligned. Investing in comms and engagement for regional combined planning will provide clear messaging to communities, iwi, partners and key stakeholders, supporting mandate to implement strategic change. STRAT RISK 04 People, Capacity, Capability and Culture WRC front-footing coordination of regional combined plans provides for certainty of roles and organisational responsibilities, potentially attracting and retaining staff who want to work in this new area of strategic spatial planning. STRAT RISK 07 Climate Change Regional combined planning is intended to be better coordinated to plan for challenges such as land use in a changing climate. Parties are to jointly agree areas for development and also that are not suitable due to natural hazard risk. ORG RISK 01 Legislative Compliance Investing in combined regional planning means deliberately putting resource into the council keeping pace with changing legislation requirements to ensure it remains well-positioned to adapt, be compliant and undertaking best endeavours to avoid risk of liability or under delivery.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Potential risks: Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.	1. Regional Funding, Resourcing and Partnership Alignment Risk: Participating councils may be unable to reach or maintain agreement on governance arrangements, funding responsibilities, resource commitments, hosting arrangements, or programme priorities. Impact: Delays in programme establishment, funding shortfalls, reduced delivery capability, increased financial exposure for individual councils, and increased risk of not meeting statutory requirements and delivery timeframes. 2. Funding and Cost Uncertainty Risk: Costs are based on current assumptions, indicative benchmarks, and proposed delivery models. Legislative requirements, governance arrangements, and capability needs may change as the planning reform programme progresses. Impact: Total project costs may exceed current estimates, requiring additional funding contributions from regional partners or adjustment of scope, timing, or delivery arrangements. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Constraints Risk: Multiple regions will be establishing Combinrf Plan processes concurrently, creating competition for programme management, planning, engagement, legal, technical, and hearings expertise. Impact: Increased procurement costs, delays in securing resources, reduced delivery capacity, and potential impacts on programme quality and timing. 4. Legislative and Reform Change Risk: Planning reform legislation, regulations, implementation guidance, and wider local government reform settings may continue to evolve during project establishment. Impact: Changes may require revisions to governance arrangements, project scope, resource requirements, delivery models, and cost estimates. 5. Delivery Timeframe Risk Risk: The timeframe anticipated for development may be challenging given the need for regional agreement, stakeholder engagement, and programme/project mobilisation. Impact: Delays may affect readiness for implementation of the new planning system and reduce the quality or completeness of deliverables produced within available timeframes. 6. Legal, Statutory and Process Compliance Risk: The combined plan process operates within a complex and evolving legislative framework. Inadequate governance arrangements, procedural errors, or failure to appropriately consider statutory requirements, including engagement and participation obligations, could expose the programme to challenge. Impact: Project delays, rework, increased costs, reputational impacts, and potential legal challenge to aspects of the process or associated decisions. 7. Public Trust and Stakeholder Confidence Risk: Resource management reforms may be perceived by some stakeholders as creating additional costs, complexity, or changes to existing planning arrangements. Insufficient communication and engagement may result in misunderstanding of the purpose, benefits, and statutory requirements of the investment. Impact: Reduced stakeholder confidence, reputational impacts, increased scrutiny from elected members and communities, and additional effort required to build understanding and support for implementation.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	8. Long-Term Funding Sustainability Risk: While establishment and first-generation Combined Plan costs are estimated through to December 2030, the longer-term costs associated with implementation, monitoring, future plan reviews, and ongoing secretariat arrangements remain uncertain. Impact: Future funding pressures for participating councils, challenges in maintaining programme capability, and the need for further investment decisions beyond the initial implementation period.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Partner costs sharing options comparison spreadsheet- compares six draft options for discussion on how local authorities in the region could share costs for regional spatial planning.		37943754
Programme FTE and costs breakdown spreadsheet- provides working calculations and best estimates.		38065375
Snapshot of all 5 SIPS and key info for each (first table in first worksheet SIP planning August 2026.xlsx)		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Regional Spatial Plan Process (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	6/08/2026 10:23 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	60.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	7.50
		Total Score LTP27	68.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Moderate
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Extreme
External Impact	Extreme
Change Complexity	Extreme
Technical Skill Availability	Extreme
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Extreme
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience

Supporting Information	Result
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

New legislation is requiring each region to prepare a regional combined plan, consisting of:

1. A regional spatial plan prepared by all local authorities in a region
2. A natural environment plan prepared by the regional council
3. Land use plans for each territorial authority
4. A land use plan for the coastal marine area prepared by the regional council.

The purpose of a regional spatial plan is to set the strategic direction for growth and change in a region for a time frame of 30 years or longer. All local authorities in a region are responsible for jointly preparing a regional spatial plan.

This SIP is focused on establishing and operating the Regional Spatial Plan process, including governance arrangements, committee establishment, process agreements, secretariat functions, programme management, funding and cost-sharing arrangements, stakeholder participation frameworks, reporting, and coordination. It does not include preparation of the Regional Spatial Plan itself, development of the Natural Environment Plan, development of Land Use Plans, or other combined plan components, which are addressed through separate SIPs.

Without dedicated investment there is a significant risk that the Waikato region will be unable to establish the institutional capability to meet the statutory timeframes, coordinate multiple councils and iwi partners, and support preparation of the first Regional Spatial Plan.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The new legislation - the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act - is to be given royal assent in August or September 2026. The Planning Act will set out the statutory process that the local authorities of the region will have to follow. Governance and the secretariat for the spatial plan is expected to be set up in 2026/27 so that the RSP is notified within 22 months of enactment (transition commences 1 month after royal assent, RSPs must be notified 21 months of transition commencing). Within this LTP period it is expected that all combined plan components are prepared, notified and adopted by the responsible local authority or authorities.

Early investment is required to ensure WRC can participate effectively from the outset, rather than responding reactively once statutory timeframes are already running.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

This investment will establish the foundations required to jointly prepare a regional spatial plan, including governance, institutional, funding, and coordination arrangements. The resulting process will support efficient collaboration across local authorities and Iwi/Māori, improve regional alignment on growth and infrastructure issues, and provide greater certainty for implementation of the new planning system.

Category: *In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?*

<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory

<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

Options Assessment:

Investment Logic: Because the statutory requirements, governance obligations, and delivery timeframes are largely prescribed through legislation, the key decision is the level of capability required to establish and operate the Regional Spatial Plan process. The preferred option represents the minimum level of dedicated capability considered necessary to meet legislative requirements while maintaining acceptable delivery, governance, legal, and reputational risk. This SIP focuses on establishing and operating the process required to prepare a Regional Spatial Plan, rather than preparing the content of the Regional Spatial Plan itself

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Continue existing distributed arrangements	Continue relying on existing regional forums, existing council staff, Future Proof-type arrangements and informal collaboration to prepare for the Regional Spatial Plan. Advantages: Lowest immediate cost. Uses existing relationships and forums. Disadvantages: No dedicated secretariat or programme capability. High risk of fragmented delivery, duplication, delay and inconsistent approaches.	\$	Maintains existing collaborative arrangements and avoids additional establishment costs. Enables continued regional discussion and relationship-building using existing forums and staff resources. However, benefits are limited and unlikely to support statutory delivery requirements.	No	Not viable for statutory delivery. This approach has supported early discussions, but it will not meet RSP process requirements once the system commences.
Option 1 (minimum)	Regional process establishment function	Establish a small time-limited coordination function to progress no-regrets readiness work, including process agreement drafting, committee design, secretariat design, evidence audit, stakeholder mapping, iwi/Māori participation mapping, capability assessment and assumptions/change-control registers. Advantages: Low cost. Allows early mobilisation. Helps clarify the size and nature of future investment. Useful while legislation, regulations, national direction and central-government arrangements are still evolving. Disadvantages: Does not provide enough capability to deliver the full RSP process. Limited ability to support options assessment, public notification, Independent Hearings Panel processes, implementation planning or annual monitoring. High reliance on already stretched council staff.	\$\$	Improves regional readiness by progressing foundational work such as process agreements, governance design, evidence audits and capability assessments. Provides greater clarity on future delivery requirements, reduces some establishment risk and enables early preparation while legislative settings continue to evolve.	No	Realistic only as a short-term transitional step. Useful as preparatory investment, but not a final delivery model.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 2 (intermediate)	Core Regional Programme Office	Establish a dedicated regional programme office to provide programme management, governance support, reporting, risk management, workstream coordination, evidence coordination and support to the development of the process agreement and committee terms of reference. Advantages: Improves coordination, accountability, reporting and regional programme discipline. Disadvantages: Heavily depends on council specialist capacity and will not have sufficient capacity to support the full statutory process once work intensifies.	\$\$\$	Establishes a coordinated regional programme with improved governance support, reporting, risk management and workstream coordination. Reduces duplication, strengthens accountability and provides greater confidence that councils can coordinate preparation of the RSP process.	No	Minimum viable implementation model, but with higher delivery risk if councils cannot reliably provide specialist input.
Option 3 (PREFERRED)	Regional Planning Secretariat (the engine room)	Establish a dedicated integrated regional secretariat with programme management, governance support, planning leadership, evidence and GIS coordination, iwi/Māori participation support, stakeholder engagement, infrastructure and central-government coordination, options assessment support, public notification and hearings support, implementation planning and monitoring capability. Advantages: Best aligns with statutory obligations. Reduces reliance on informal council capacity. Supports the full RSP lifecycle and improves delivery confidence, evidence consistency and accountability. Disadvantages: Requires higher investment than Options 1 and 2. Requires agreed funding, host/accountability arrangements, resourcing commitments and clear governance controls. More complex to establish than a small programme office.	\$\$\$\$	Provides capability across the full RSP lifecycle, including governance, planning, engagement, hearings, implementation and monitoring. Improves delivery confidence, evidence consistency, regional coordination and participation.	Yes	Preferred option. This is considered the minimum viable operating model capable of meeting the statutory requirements of the Regional Spatial Plan process. It provides sufficient governance, secretariat, programme management, planning coordination, engagement, and hearings support capability to establish and operate the process with an acceptable level of delivery, legal, and governance risk. Options 1 and 2 may support elements of the process but rely heavily on existing council capacity and are unlikely to provide sufficient capability to support the full statutory lifecycle. While this option requires greater investment, it is considered proportionate to the scale, complexity, and legislative

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
						requirements of the RSP process.
Option 4 (maximum)	Independent Regional Spatial Planning Agency	Establish a stand-alone or independent shared regional entity responsible for RSP programme delivery, governance support, planning, evidence, engagement, implementation monitoring and wider regional planning integration. Advantages: Highest level of dedicated capability. Strong regional identity and continuity. Reduces host-council bias. Provides enduring institutional capacity for regional spatial planning and implementation monitoring. Disadvantages: Highest cost. Greatest establishment complexity. May duplicate council functions. Requires significant governance, funding and accountability arrangements. It is difficult to justify while legislative, central-government and local-government reform settings remain unsettled.	\$\$\$\$	Creates enduring regional capability with strong institutional continuity, dedicated expertise and independent coordination. Maximises regional planning capability, supports long-term implementation and monitoring, and provides a platform for broader regional planning integration over time.	No	Realistic only if the region wants a permanent regional planning institution. This option may exceed what is needed for first-generation RSP delivery and may not be proportionate at this stage. Useful as an upper-bound comparator, but unlikely to be preferred unless there is appetite for major institutional change.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	The investment is expected to require procurement of specialist services and capability to support establishment of the Regional Spatial Plan process, including programme management, governance and institutional design, technical planning, engagement, legal, and other specialist advisory services. Procurement will be undertaken in accordance with WRC procurement policies and any agreed regional procurement arrangements. Depending on the scope, value, and timing of individual work packages, services may be sourced through: - Existing council supplier panels or standing arrangements. - Joint procurement with territorial authority partners. - Open-market Requests for Proposal (RFPs) via GETS for larger or specialised services. - Direct appointment where permitted under procurement policy and justified by capability, urgency, continuity, or value considerations. Specific procurement requirements, packaging of work, and sourcing approaches will be confirmed once governance arrangements, delivery model, and resource requirements for the RSP process have been agreed.

Team Resource Table:

Resource estimates reflect the need to establish a new statutory governance and planning framework across multiple organisations, including governance establishment, committee support, process agreement development, secretariat functions, stakeholder participation arrangements, evidence coordination, legal and procurement support, hearings administration, and ongoing programme management over the transition period.

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Central government lead	ELT	288	Act as the key liaison between central government and regional partners to support coordinated RSP delivery. Assumption is 0.2 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28.
Communications SME	WRC Communications	288	Provides public communications and communications and engagement advice. Assumption is 0.2 FTE based on 30h/w for 28/29.
Contracts SME	Business Support - SPI	72	Provides contract management and procurement support, helping to establish, administer, and monitor contracts required to deliver RSP process activities. Assumption is 0.05 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28.
Democracy SME	Democracy	1440	Decision-making frameworks, delegations, committee establishment, terms of reference, membership and appointment arrangements, and governance support. Assumption is 0.5 FTE based on 30h/w for 28/29.
Financial SME	Finance	216	Funding arrangements, cost-sharing models, financial analysis, secretariat funding arrangements, and regional funding advice. Assumption is 0.05 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & 29/30.
Geospatial SME	Geospatial team	720	Geospatial systems, information frameworks, mapping requirements, and spatial information management. Assumption is 0.1FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & then 0.3 FTE 29/30.

Resource Table				
Hearings SME	External	720	Independent Hearings Panel administration, hearing procedures, scheduling, logistics, and final approval processes. Assumption is 0.5 FTE based on 30h/w for 28/29.	
Information Management SME	Internal or consider external (co-lab?)		Captured under Regional Combined Plan SIP. Information governance, document management, records management, information-sharing arrangements, and secretariat systems.	
Iwi/Māori SME	Tai-ranga whenua and from regional partners		Captured under Regional Combined Plan SIP. Development of iwi/Māori participation arrangements, relationship management, and support for maintaining existing obligations and agreements throughout the process	
Legal SME	Business Advisory Team		Captured under Regional Combined Plan SIP. Advice on statutory requirements, governance arrangements, process agreements, cost-sharing arrangements, and legal compliance.	
Planning SME	Strategic and Spatial Planning	5760	Development of process agreements, governance arrangements, secretariat design, cross-boundary integration, implementation monitoring, statutory process advice, and regional planning coordination. Assumption is 1FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & then 2 FTE 29/30.	
Policy SME	Strategic and Spatial Planning/ Policy Implementation	5760	Advice on implementation monitoring, hearings recommendations, committee responses, and implementation planning. Assumption is 1FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & then 2 FTE 29/30.	
Procurement SME	Business Advisory Services	72	Oversees procurement planning and sourcing activities, enabling the timely and compliant engagement of external resources required to deliver the RSP process. Assumption is 0.05 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28.	
Project Co-ordinator	Business Support - SPI	2880	NEW - Likely new FTE – not enough internal capacity Project coordination, administration, reporting support, scheduling, documentation, and delivery support. Assumption is 0.5FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & then 1 FTE 29/30.	
Project Governance Group (x2 senior users and x3 senior suppliers)	Could be a mix of WRC staff and regional partner staff (small working group of CE's??)	2160	Governance oversight, strategic direction, issue resolution, and decision support for the Project Sponsor. Given the cross-agency nature of the RSP, we could have multiple senior users and senior suppliers to ensure LG, iwi/maori and central govt interests are represented while retaining the Sponsor as the single accountable decision-maker. Assumption is these would be at tier 2 or 3 @ 0.1 FTE (each) based on 30h/w across 27/28, 28/29, 29/30	
Project Manager	Contracted	3960	NEW Day-to-day management of the investment, project planning, reporting, risk management, change control, process assurance, and secretariat establishment. Assumption is 1 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & 29/30.	
Project Sponsor	Executive Leadership Team	864	Executive sponsorship, strategic oversight, key decision-making, stakeholder escalation, and central and regional partner engagement. Assumption is 0.2 FTE based on 30h/w for 27/28, 28/29 & 29/30.	
Stakeholder Engagement SME	Contracted		NEW Stakeholder participation planning, agency engagement, communications support, and coordination of external relationships.	

Financial Assessment:

	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	Ongoing	Totals
Capex				\$	\$
Opex	\$1,597,500.00	\$1,891,500.00	\$2,059,000.00	\$	\$5,548,000
Total Cost*	\$1,597,500.00	\$1,891,500.00	\$2,059,000.00	\$	\$5,548,000
Partner Funding	\$1,065,000	\$1,261,000	\$1,372,667	\$	\$3,698,667

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Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total	\$1,065,000	\$1,261,000	\$1,372,667	\$	\$3,698,667
Revenue/Saving					
Net	\$532,500	\$630,500	\$686,333	\$	\$1,849,333

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations (Local Authority Contributions)
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☒ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Delivery of this investment will require multi-disciplinary internal, regional and specialist capability, including programme and project management, governance and democracy support, planning and policy expertise, iwi/Māori participation advice, stakeholder engagement, legal, financial, GIS/information management, and hearings administration capability. External or specialist support may be required for project and programme management, legal advice, statutory planning, engagement, iwi/Māori participation, hearings and assurance where this capability is not available internally or through regional partner councils.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Territorial authorities • Hamilton City • Waipa • Waikato • South Waikato • Taupo • Rotorua Lakes • Otorohanga • Waitomo • Hauraki • Matamata Piako • Thames Coromandel Iwi • JMA partners • Broader iwi with iwi management plans • Tainui Group Holdings Central government • Kiwirail • NZTA • Environment • Education • Health (Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora and Ministry of Health) • Conservation • Heritage • Environment Protection Agency • MBIE

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	• Housing and Urban Development and Kainga Ora • Internal Affairs • Public Service Commissioner • Fisheries Neighbouring local government • Auckland • Bay of Plenty/Tauranga/ Western Bay of Plenty • Taranaki • Horizons • Ruapehu District Local govt groupings • Future Proof • Regional Transport Committee • Upper North Island Strategic Alliance • Civil Defence Local govt representative groups • Local Government NZ • Taituara/SOLGM • Te Uru Kahika (regional sector) Community • Local residents • Community groups • NGOs: Wel Energy Trust, Perry Trust, Gallaghers, Bryant Trust, Trust Waikato, Age Concern, Grey Power, Bike Waikato • Advocacy groups e.g. ACRE, Waikato Conservation Board, Community Waikato • Sport Waikato • Tertiary education providers e.g. Uni of Waikato, WinTec • Waikato Housing Initiative • Waikato Wellbeing Project • Regional tourism and economic development entities • SME representation e.g. Ham Business Association, Early Childhood education • Community Boards Industry • Freight/logistics companies • Sector representatives • Developers/investors • Business owners • Farmers/farmers groups • Growers/growers groups • Developers • The Northern Infrastructure Forum • Agritech and technology providers • Chambers of Commerce • Forestry/timber business • Food/beverage producing industry • Packaging industry e.g. Visy • Quarrying • Mining • Tourism operators • Aquaculture, fisheries Infrastructure/utility providers • Lines companies • Energy utilities

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	• Inland ports • Hamilton Airport • Waters entities • Telecoms providers
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1. Regional cost-sharing arrangement Participating councils will agree a regional cost-sharing arrangement for establishment of the RSP process, including governance, secretariat, and plan development activities, with WRC contributing approximately one-third of total programme costs. 2. Legislative and institutional settings remain broadly consistent The final legislation will continue to require a jointly prepared Regional Spatial Plan, supported by a spatial planning committee, process agreement, and secretariat function and that these requirements will not materially change from current expectations. Significant changes to the legislative framework could alter governance, capability, timing, and resource requirements. 3. Interdependent SIPs proceed in a coordinated manner The five interrelated SIPs (RSP Process, Regional Spatial Plan, Regional Combined Plan, Natural Environment Plan, and Coastal Marine Area Land Use Plan) will be funded and progressed in a coordinated manner. Changes to scope, timing, or resourcing within one SIP may require corresponding adjustments to the others. 4. Sufficient specialist capability can be secured when required It is assumed that the region will be able to access the programme management, planning, engagement, technical, and specialist expertise needed to establish and deliver the Regional Spatial Plan process within required timeframes. The proposed investment assumes this capability will be available through a combination of council resources, shared regional arrangements, and external procurement where necessary.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1. Compressed statutory delivery timeframes The timeframe anticipated by Government for establishing governance arrangements and preparing the first generation of regional planning instruments is ambitious. This constrains the ability to phase work, requiring capability, governance arrangements, and supporting systems to be established within relatively short timeframes. 2. Limited availability of specialist capability All regions are expected to be progressing similar planning processes concurrently. This is likely to create competition for specialist resources, including planning experts, programme managers, technical advisors, hearings commissioners, and central government representatives, potentially affecting delivery timing, costs, and procurement approaches. 3. Local government funding and capacity pressures The ability of councils to contribute funding and staff resources may be constrained by broader local government reforms, organisational change, and competing strategic priorities. This may influence the scale, timing, and delivery model adopted for the Regional Spatial Plan process.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that</i>	1. National Direction and Implementation Framework Dependency: Timely release of sufficient legislation, regulations, national direction, national standards, and implementation guidance from central government.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
<i>must occur to enable success.</i>	Why it is needed: Governance arrangements, process agreements, secretariat design, programme planning, and resource requirements depend on clarity regarding final statutory requirements and implementation expectations. Delays or significant changes may require programme redesign or reprioritization. 2. Regional Commitment and Partnership Dependency: Ongoing willingness and cooperation among all local authorities to establish and maintain governance, funding, resource-sharing, and decision-making arrangements. Why it is needed: Successful establishment of the Regional Spatial Plan process relies on collective regional ownership and agreement. Challenges arising from previous reform processes or competing local priorities may affect the ability to reach and sustain agreement. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Availability Dependency: Availability of specialist programme, planning, engagement, legal, technical, governance and secretariat capability. Why it is needed: The Regional Spatial Plan process requires access to specialist expertise that will be in demand nationally as multiple regions progress planning reform simultaneously. The ability to secure and retain capability is critical to successful delivery.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT RISK 02 - Governance and Reform Transition This investment supports WRC's preparedness for planning system reform by establishing the governance, secretariat, programme management, and operational arrangements required to implement new legislative requirements and support a successful transition to the future planning system. STRAT RISK 03 – Relationships The Regional Spatial Plan process requires effective collaboration between councils, iwi, mana whenua, central government, infrastructure providers, and communities. This investment supports coordinated engagement, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective participation arrangements that help build trust, alignment, and shared ownership of regional planning outcomes. STRAT RISK 04 – People, Capacity, Capability and Culture This investment establishes dedicated programme, governance, and secretariat capability to support delivery of the Regional Spatial Plan process, reducing reliance on already constrained council resources and improving organisational readiness for planning reform. STRAT RISK 07 - Climate Change This investment supports future mitigation of STRAT RISK 07 (Climate Change) by establishing the governance and planning framework through which climate adaptation, resilience, natural hazard, infrastructure, and land-use issues can be addressed in the Regional Spatial Plan. STRAT RISK 08 - Giving Effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi This investment contributes to mitigating this risk by supporting governance, participation and engagement arrangements that enable effective involvement of iwi and mana whenua throughout the Regional Spatial Plan process. ORG RISK 02- Legal Compliance This investment contributes to mitigating organisational legal compliance risk by establishing the governance, secretariat, process, and decision-making arrangements required to comply with the new planning legislation. It supports

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	WRC's ability to adapt to regulatory change, meet statutory obligations, and reduce the risk of legal challenge, procedural error, reputational harm, and non-compliance throughout the Regional Spatial Plan process.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	1. Regional Funding, Resourcing and Partnership Alignment Risk: Participating councils may be unable to reach or maintain agreement on governance arrangements, funding responsibilities, resource commitments, hosting arrangements, or programme priorities required to establish and operate the Regional Spatial Plan process. Impact: Delays in programme establishment, funding shortfalls, reduced delivery capability, increased financial exposure for individual councils, and increased risk of not meeting statutory requirements and delivery timeframes. 2. Funding and Cost Uncertainty Risk: Costs are based on current assumptions, indicative benchmarks, and proposed delivery models. Legislative requirements, governance arrangements, and capability needs may change as the planning reform programme progresses. Impact: Total project costs may exceed current estimates, requiring additional funding contributions from regional partners or adjustment of scope, timing, or delivery arrangements. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Constraints Risk: Multiple regions will be establishing Regional Spatial Plan processes concurrently, creating competition for programme management, planning, engagement, legal, technical, and hearings expertise. Impact: Increased procurement costs, delays in securing resources, reduced delivery capacity, and potential impacts on programme quality and timing. 4. Legislative and Reform Change Risk: Planning reform legislation, regulations, implementation guidance, and wider local government reform settings may continue to evolve during project establishment. Impact: Changes may require revisions to governance arrangements, project scope, resource requirements, delivery models, and cost estimates. 5. Delivery Timeframe Risk Risk: The timeframe anticipated for establishing governance arrangements and progressing Regional Spatial Plan development may be challenging given the need for regional agreement, stakeholder engagement, and programme/project mobilisation. Impact: Delays may affect readiness for implementation of the new planning system and reduce the quality or completeness of deliverables produced within available timeframes. 6. Legal, Statutory and Process Compliance Risk: The Regional Spatial Plan process operates within a complex and evolving legislative framework. Inadequate governance arrangements, procedural errors, or failure to appropriately consider statutory requirements, including engagement and participation obligations, could expose the programme to challenge. Impact: Project delays, rework, increased costs, reputational impacts, and potential legal challenge to aspects of the process or associated decisions. 7. Public Trust and Stakeholder Confidence

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Risk: Resource management reforms may be perceived by some stakeholders as creating additional costs, complexity, or changes to existing planning arrangements. Insufficient communication and engagement may result in misunderstanding of the purpose, benefits, and statutory requirements of the investment. Impact: Reduced stakeholder confidence, reputational impacts, increased scrutiny from elected members and communities, and additional effort required to build understanding and support for implementation. 8. Long-Term Funding Sustainability Risk: While establishment and first-generation Regional Spatial Plan costs are estimated through to December 2030, the longer-term costs associated with implementation, monitoring, future plan reviews, and ongoing secretariat arrangements remain uncertain. Impact: Future funding pressures for participating councils, challenges in maintaining programme capability, and the need for further investment decisions beyond the initial implementation period.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Select Committee Reports: • Natural Environment Bill • Planning Bill		
Snapshot of all 5 SIPS and key info for each (first table in first worksheet SIP planning August 2026.xlsx)		
Estimated FTE Required and Costs – Working document		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Regional Spatial Plan (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	7/31/2026 4:20 AM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	60.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	10.00
		Total Score LTP27	70.71

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Moderate
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Extreme
External Impact	Extreme
Change Complexity	Extreme
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Extreme
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

New legislation requires that each region prepares a regional combined plan, consisting of:

1. A regional spatial plan (RSP) prepared by all local authorities in a region
2. A natural environment plan prepared by the regional council
3. Land use plans for each territorial authority
4. A land use plan for the coastal marine area prepared by the regional council.

This SIP establishes the likely overall cost and what WRC's contribution is likely to be for the preparation of the regional spatial plan including the long-term spatial strategy, growth and development patterns, infrastructure priorities, climate resilience considerations, and coordination of regional investment and land use outcomes.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The new legislation- the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act - is to be given royal assent in August or September 2026. The Planning Act will set out the statutory process that the local authorities of the region will have to follow. Governance and the secretariat for the spatial plan will need to be set up in 2026/27 so that the RSP is notified within 22 months of enactment (transition commences 1 month after royal assent, RSPs must be notified 21 months of transition commencing). Within this LTP period it is expected that the RSP and all combined plan components are prepared, notified and adopted by the responsible local authority or local authorities.

Early investment is required to ensure WRC can participate effectively from the outset, rather than responding reactively once statutory timeframes are already running.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

WRC will be resourced to contribute to preparation of the first regional spatial plan as required by the Planning Bill. Regionally combined plans are intended to streamline local resource management by reducing over 100 plans to 17 unified regional documents, and integrating spatial, land-use, and environmental rules.

The purpose of a RSP is to set the strategic direction for growth and change in a region for a time frame of 30 years or longer. All local authorities in a region are responsible for jointly preparing a regional spatial plan.

The region will benefit from having an agreed direction which will then be implemented through the natural environment plan and the land use plans.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

Options Assessment:

Investment logic: Because the statutory requirements are largely fixed, the decision is not whether the work happens. The realistic choice is how much dedicated capability is established, how quickly and how much delivery risk the region is prepared to accept.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Not viable	This is not an option - we have a fundamental activities shift due to legislative change. The Planning Bill creates a statutory requirement for all the councils in a region to jointly prepare a regional spatial plan. WRC does not have the option to not participate.	BAU	None	No	Local authorities have a mandatory requirement to jointly prepare a RSP for the region.
Option 1(minimum)	Minimum compliance contribution	WRC could elect to on minimum input via existing staff on top of BAU and rely more heavily on TAs prepare the plan. WRC contributes nominal amount or in-kind equivalent. While this option reduces cost to the organisation, it risks an inefficient process as regional council is in a unique position of having a regional perspective and we hold significant regional level data sets and evidence.	\$	Lower cost	No	Possibility that legislative requirements not met, inferior outcomes for direction of natural environment plan. Dynamic region that through previous efforts has not been able to organise itself without regional council coordination. Outcomes likely to be inferior, particularly for environment. Regional council mindset is already at regional scale, holds information at this scale.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Outsourcing	WRC makes a financial contribution in lieu of staff involvement or contracts consultants to contribute on behalf of WRC (noting that staff would still need some level of involvement).	\$\$\$	Less imposition on staff time	No	Loss of ability to influence the process, expensive, staff miss out on an opportunity to upskill on spatial planning. Reputational risk – WRC seen as not engaging fully.
Option 3	Active regional leadership and coordination role	WRC is well resourced to be actively involved in preparing the RSP, and to take the lead where necessary to ensure that regional benefits are not restricted by local issues.	\$\$	Creates enduring regional capability with strong institutional continuity. Maximises regional planning capability, supports long-term implementation and monitoring, and provides a platform for broader	Yes	WRC is uniquely positioned to provide regional coordination, regional-scale evidence, and integration across environmental, infrastructure, resilience and growth-related matters. This option maximises the likelihood of a coordinated regional outcome and reduces

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
				regional planning integration over time.		the risk of fragmented or locally-driven planning approaches.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	New roles will be needed to facilitate WRC's contribution and input into the RSP. A fixed term project coordinator should be able to be recruited; however, a project manager is likely to be difficult to employ on a fix term contract so the preferred option is to engage a project manager over a two year period for the RSP preparation. Procurement will be undertaken in line with WRC's procurement processes or the RSP secretariat procurement processes once established. It is likely to need a tender process given the likely cost and multi-year contract required.

Team Resource Table:

Resource estimates reflect the need to establish a new statutory planning framework within compressed legislative timeframes while simultaneously supporting governance, stakeholder engagement, technical evidence development, inter-council coordination, and integration with related combined plan components.

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Project Sponsor	ELT	768	Central government lead
Project Sponsor	ELT	768	Project sponsor
Senior supplier	ELT	1536	PCG members (3 at 0.1 FTE)
Senior User	ELT/SLT	128	PCG members (2 at 0.1 FTE)
Project Manager	Contractor	320	New role – to project manage the RSP preparation
Project Coordinator	New role - Strategic and Spatial Planning	3840	New role – to coordinate the RSP preparation
Policy SME	Strategic and Spatial Planning/ Policy Implementation	7680	Policy input into RSP preparation (2 FTE)
Planning SME	Strategic and Spatial Planning	7680	Planning impact of RSP preparation (2 FTE)
Spatial Information SME	Spatial Information	1536	Provision of spatial information and data management. evidence preparation and expert advice
Science SME	Science	960	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Economist	Social Science and Economics	1152	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Regional Resilience SME	Regional Resilience	768	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Transport SME	Transport	768	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Biosecurity SME	Biosecurity	192	Evidence preparation and expert advice
ICM SME	ICM	192	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Consents SME	RUD	192	Evidence preparation and expert advice

Resource Table			
CDEM SME	CDEM	192	Evidence preparation and expert advice
Comms SME	Comms	384	Communications support
Democracy SME	Democracy	960	Support for governance input and reporting

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)				
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	Totals
Capex	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Opex	\$2,741,000	\$2,803,500	\$0	\$5,544,500
Total Cost*	\$2,741,000	\$2,803,500	\$0	\$5,544,500
Partner Funding	\$1,827,333	\$1,869,000	\$0	\$3,696,333
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue/Saving	\$1,827,333	\$1,869,000	\$0	\$0
Net	\$913,667	\$934,500	\$0	\$1,848,167

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☒ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	A wide range of internal and external resourcing will be required in the following areas for the RSP and wider regional combined plan: 1. Programme and project management 2. Policy and planning 3. Spatial information 4. Democracy services 5. Stakeholder engagement and liaison 6. Iwi engagement 7. Subject matter expertise: natural hazards, science, catchment management, civil defence, economics, transport planning 8. Hearings decision making 9. Governance 10. Legal

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?</i> <i>For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	There will be a wide range of stakeholders for the regional spatial plan, including but not limited to: Territorial authorities • Hamilton City • Waipa • Waikato • South Waikato • Taupo • Rotorua Lakes • Otorohanga • Waitomo • Hauraki • Matamata Piako • Thames Coromandel Iwi • JMA partners • Broader iwi with iwi management plans • Tainui Group Holdings Central government • Kiwirail • NZTA • Environment • Education • Health (Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora and Ministry of Health) • Conservation • Heritage • Environment Protection Agency • MBIE • Housing and Urban Development and Kainga Ora • Internal Affairs • Public Service Commissioner • Fisheries Neighbouring local government • Auckland • Bay of Plenty/Tauranga/ Western Bay of Plenty • Taranaki • Horizons • Ruapehu District Local govt groupings • Future Proof • Regional Transport Committee • Upper North Island Strategic Alliance • Civil Defence Local govt representative groups • Local Government NZ • Taituara/SOLGM • Te Uru Kahika (regional sector) Community • Local residents • Community groups • NGOs: Wel Energy Trust, Perry Trust, Gallaghers, Bryant Trust, Trust Waikato, Age Concern, Grey Power, Bike Waikato • Advocacy groups eg ACRE, Waikato Conservation Board, Community Waikato

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	• Sport Waikato • Tertiary education providers eg Uni of Waikato, WinTec • Waikato Housing Initiative • Waikato Wellbeing Project • Regional tourism and economic development entities • SME representation eg Ham Business Association, Early Childhood education • Community Boards Industry • Freight/logistics companies • Sector representatives • Developers/investors • Business owners • Farmers/farmers groups • Growers/growers groups • Developers • The Northern Infrastructure Forum • AgriTech and technology providers • Chambers of Commerce • Forestry/timber business • Food/beverage producing industry • Packaging industry eg Visy • Quarrying • Mining • Tourism operators • Aquaculture, fisheries Infrastructure/utility providers • Lines companies • Energy utilities • Inland ports • Hamilton Airport • Waters entities • Telecoms providers
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	The RSP forms part of the wider combined regional plan. It is expected to be completed 31 months after royal assent of the Planning Act 2026. 1. Regional cost-sharing arrangement Participating councils will agree a regional cost-sharing arrangement for preparation of the RSP, with WRC contributing approximately one-third of total costs. 2. Legislative and institutional settings remain broadly consistent The final legislation will continue to require a jointly prepared Regional Spatial Plan and these requirements will not materially change from current expectations. Significant changes to the legislative framework could alter governance, capability, timing, and resource requirements. 3. Interdependent SIPs proceed in a coordinated manner The five interrelated SIPs (RSP Process, Regional Spatial Plan, Regional Combined Plan, Natural Environment Plan, and Coastal Marine Area Land Use Plan) will be funded and progressed in a coordinated manner. Changes to scope, timing, or resourcing within one SIP may require corresponding adjustments to the others. 4. Sufficient specialist capability can be secured when required

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	It is assumed that the region will be able to access the project management, planning, technical, and specialist expertise needed to establish and deliver the RSP within required timeframes. The proposed investment assumes this capability will be available through a combination of council resources, shared regional arrangements, and external procurement where necessary. 5. Prioritisation of work programmes This work will be occurring along side existing work programmes. It is assumed that staff will be able to reprioritize work to focus in on RSP preparation in line with expected timeframes.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1. Compressed statutory delivery timeframes The timeframe anticipated by Government for establishing governance arrangements and preparing the first generation of regional planning instruments is ambitious. This constrains the ability to phase work, requiring capability, governance arrangements, and supporting systems to be established within relatively short timeframes. 2. Limited availability of specialist capability All regions are expected to be progressing similar planning processes concurrently. This is likely to create competition for specialist resources, including planning experts, programme managers, technical advisors, hearings commissioners, and central government representatives, potentially affecting delivery timing, costs, and procurement approaches. 3. Local government funding and capacity pressures The ability of councils to contribute funding and staff resources may be constrained by broader local government reforms, organisational change, and competing strategic priorities. This may influence the scale, timing, and delivery model adopted for the Regional Spatial Plan process.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1. National Direction and Implementation Framework Dependency: Timely release of sufficient legislation, regulations, national direction, national standards, and implementation guidance from central government. Why it is needed: Governance arrangements, process agreements, secretariat design, programme planning, and resource requirements depend on clarity regarding final statutory requirements and implementation expectations. Delays or significant changes may require programme redesign or reprioritization. 2. Regional Commitment and Partnership Dependency: Ongoing willingness and cooperation among all local authorities to establish and maintain governance, funding, resource-sharing, and decision-making arrangements. Why it is needed: Successful establishment of the RSP process relies on collective regional ownership and agreement. Challenges arising from previous reform processes or competing local priorities may affect the ability to reach and sustain agreement. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Availability Dependency: Availability of specialist programme, planning, engagement, legal, technical, governance and secretariat capability. Why it is needed: The RSP preparation requires access to specialist expertise that will be in demand nationally as multiple regions progress planning reform

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	simultaneously. The ability to secure and retain capability is critical to successful delivery.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	<i>The following strategic risks have been identified:</i> STRAT RISK 02 Governance and Reform Transition Investing in combined regional planning requirements will support WRC to be ready for and adapt to the new legislative and regulatory requirements under planning system reform. STRAT RISK 03 Relationships Combined regional planning requires stronger relationships with stakeholders and clearly articulating roles and responsibilities because efforts must be combined and aligned. Investing in comms and engagement for regional combined planning will provide clear messaging to communities, iwi, partners and key stakeholders, supporting mandate to implement strategic change. STRAT RISK 04 People, Capacity, Capability and Culture WRC front-footing coordination of regional combined plans provides for certainty of roles and organisational responsibilities, potentially attracting and retaining staff who want to work in this new area of strategic spatial planning. STRAT RISK 07 Climate Change Regional combined planning is intended to be better coordinated to plan for challenges such as land use in a changing climate. Parties are to jointly agree areas for development and also that are not suitable due to natural hazard risk
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	1. Regional Funding, Resourcing and Partnership Alignment Risk: Participating councils may be unable to reach or maintain agreement on governance arrangements, funding responsibilities, resource commitments, hosting arrangements, or programme priorities required to undertake Regional Spatial Plan preparation. Impact: Delays in programme establishment, funding shortfalls, reduced delivery capability, increased financial exposure for individual councils, and increased risk of not meeting statutory requirements and delivery timeframes. 2. Funding and Cost Uncertainty Risk: Costs are based on current assumptions, indicative benchmarks, and proposed delivery models. Legislative requirements, governance arrangements, and capability needs may change as the planning reform programme progresses. Impact: Total project costs may exceed current estimates, requiring additional funding contributions from regional partners or adjustment of scope, timing, or delivery arrangements. 3. Specialist Capability and Capacity Constraints Risk: Multiple regions will be preparing RPSs concurrently, creating competition for programme management, planning, engagement, legal, technical, and hearings expertise. Impact: Increased procurement costs, delays in securing resources, reduced delivery capacity, and potential impacts on quality and timing. 4. Legislative and Reform Change

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Risk: Planning reform legislation, regulations, implementation guidance, and wider local government reform settings may continue to evolve during project establishment. Impact: Changes may require revisions to governance arrangements, project scope, resource requirements, delivery models, and cost estimates. 5. Delivery Timeframe Risk Risk: The timeframe anticipated for establishing governance arrangements and progressing RSP development may be challenging given the need for regional agreement, stakeholder engagement, and programme/project mobilisation. Impact: Delays may affect readiness for implementation of the new planning system and reduce the quality or completeness of deliverables produced within available timeframes. 6. Legal, Statutory and Process Compliance Risk: The RSP preparation operates within a complex and evolving legislative framework. Inadequate governance arrangements, procedural errors, or failure to appropriately consider statutory requirements, including engagement and participation obligations, could expose the programme to challenge. Impact: Project delays, rework, increased costs, reputational impacts, and potential legal challenge to aspects of the process or associated decisions. 7. Public Trust and Stakeholder Confidence Risk: Resource management reforms may be perceived by some stakeholders as creating additional costs, complexity, or changes to existing planning arrangements. Insufficient communication and engagement may result in misunderstanding of the purpose, benefits, and statutory requirements of the investment. Impact: Reduced stakeholder confidence, reputational impacts, increased scrutiny from elected members and communities, and additional effort required to build understanding and support for implementation. 8. Long-Term Funding Sustainability Risk: While the RSP preparation costs are estimated through to July 2029, the longer-term costs associated with implementation, monitoring, future plan reviews, and ongoing secretariat arrangements remain uncertain. Impact: Future funding pressures for participating councils, challenges in maintaining programme capability, and the need for further investment decisions beyond the initial implementation period.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Select Committee Reports: • Natural Environment Bill • Planning Bill		
Snapshot of all 5 SIPS and key info for each (first table in first worksheet SIP planning August 2026.xlsx)		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Land Use Plan for the CMA (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	31/07/2026 4:12 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	60.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	17.50
		Total Score LTP27	78.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	High
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Low
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	High
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	High
Technical Skill Availability	Extreme
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Budget delivery
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	2 Coast Marine
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The challenge is to prepare a Land Use Plan - coastal marine area within the timeframe and requirements directed in the Planning Bill. The Bill is expected to become law by late 2026. The timing of national direction and national standards is uncertain. National direction and standards must be given effect to in preparing the LUP. Another challenge is to ensure alignment with the Spatial Plan process and with preparation of the NEP which will also provisions for the cma. It will also be necessary to ensure appropriate alignment with Land Use Plans prepared by territorial authorities adjacent to the cma to ensure consistency of approach.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Refer to the requirements in the Land Use Plan coastal marine area including contents, and timing. The LUP is mandatory under the Planning Bill and must be prepared in accordance with the Schedule 3 of that Bill. The time to complete this plan is currently December 2030.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The outcome of this project will be a first-generation LUP that will assist with managing the coastal marine area in combination with the NEP. The LUP will implement the Spatial Plan and national direction and national standards. The benefits will include efficient allocation of natural resources within environmental limits and improvements in the quality of those resources. The LUP will enable activities to occur in the cma while maintaining environmental quality.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Council continues progressing the Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan through the existing process and respond to planning reform requirements at a later date. Advantages: Low short-term cost and no additional resource commitment by Council. Disadvantages: Council will have limited understanding of future statutory obligations, resource requirements, and implementation pathways. No structured assessment would be undertaken to determine how existing Coastal Plan provisions transition into the RSP, LUP CMA and NEP, delaying preparation for the development of the LUP CMA. This may result in reactive planning, and compressed timeframes.	\$	Lowest cost option and allows Council to retain focus on existing Coastal Plan processes and statutory obligations.	No	This option will not meet the statutory requirements for a LUP CMA under the Planning Bill.
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Council undertakes a targeted assessment of the implications of resource management reform for coastal planning, including identifying the likely future location of Coastal Plan provisions within the RSP, CMA LUP and NEP, and key transition issues. Advantages: Low cost, improves Council's understanding of the future planning framework, identifies key risks and dependencies, and supports early planning for reform implementation. Disadvantages: Does not progress development of the CMA LUP and provides only a high-level understanding of implementation requirements. Further policy, technical and transition work would need to be funded separately.	\$	Improved understanding of reform implications and a stronger basis for future planning and investment decisions.	No	Provides a useful understanding of transition requirements but does not progress implementation or development of the CMA LUP.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Council undertakes a structured programme to prepare for transition of the proposed Regional Coastal Plan into the new planning framework and support future development of the LUP CMA. The programme would assess the future allocation of Coastal Plan provisions between the RSP, LUP CMA and NEP, identify provisions that can be transferred directly and those requiring amendment or redesign, identify transition risks and implementation requirements, and establish the policy, technical, GIS, legal and planning resourcing required to support future LUP CMA development. The programme will be designed to incorporate national direction, implementation guidance and other reform components as they become available. Advantages: This option enables Council to commence transition planning and LUP CMA development immediately, establishes the capability and resources required to implement the new planning framework, allows new government direction to be incorporated as it is released, reduces the risk of compressed delivery timeframes, and supports coordinated development of the LUP CMA, NEP and RSP. Disadvantages: This option may require additional resources, and some aspects of the work may need to be refined as further reform details become available. It also involves a higher upfront investment than Option 1.	\$\$	Improved transition readiness, a clearer understanding of future planning and implementation requirements, reduced transition risk, establishment of the capability required for future CMA LUP development, improved integration across future planning instruments, and better-informed resource and investment decisions.	Yes	While important components of the new planning system remain under development, sufficient information is available to commence transition planning, assess Coastal Plan provisions, establish supporting workstreams and progress preparatory work required for future CMA LUP development. This option allows Council to make meaningful progress now while retaining flexibility to adapt as Regional Spatial Plans, national direction and implementation requirements become available.
Option 3 (alternative)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Undertake a comprehensive coastal planning reform programme including detailed review and redesign of Coastal Plan provisions, development of the CMA LUP, detailed transition planning, implementation programme	\$\$\$	Comprehensive transition and implementation programme with a more detailed	No	While this option would provide a more detailed understanding of potential implementation requirements and accelerate preparatory

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		design, future plan architecture, resource modelling and supporting technical work. Advantages: This option would enable Council to progress a more comprehensive transition and LUP CMA development programme, undertake more detailed planning and implementation work, and develop a stronger understanding of future resourcing and delivery requirements than the other options. Disadvantages: This option requires significant investment and relies on information that is not yet available, including Regional Spatial Plans, national instruments, standardised provisions and transition arrangements. As a result, there is a higher risk of rework and inefficiencies, and some components of the programme may be progressed before key policy and legislative settings are confirmed.		understanding of future programme, resource and delivery requirements.		work, significant uncertainty remains regarding several key components of the reform package. As a result, there is an increased risk of rework and inefficient investment, making this option less attractive than a more staged approach.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Professional Services • Use of existing panel contracts or preferred supplier lists for legal services; policy development and economics and others. • Direct engagement for short-term specialist roles (e.g. via DIA Marketplace or other sector agreements). • If no suitable panel exists, a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Quotation (RFQ) may be issued in accordance with WRC procurement policy. Known Suppliers or Partnerships • For some services, preferred suppliers may already be known from previous engagements, e.g. Freshwater Policy review, Regional Coastal Plan review.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Consents SME		210	Provide consenting advice to team preparing LUP.
Policy SME		21,888	Prepare / write LUP, notify it, summarise submissions, including transition of existing proposed Regional Coastal Plan provisions into LUP. Prepare officers report responding to submissions, attend hearing. Have estimated 4 staff each working 36 hours per week on preparing the LUP.
Communication SME		120	Provide comms support for preparation of LUP
Contractor		740	Provide expert policy assistance to preparing LUP
Project coordinator		2520	Coordinate project requirements, assist with comms, notification and preparation of LUP.
Project manager		3110	Project manage development of LUP and hearings process
Project sponsor		59	
Science SME		630	To provide science support for development of LUP
Spatial		240	Provide spatial support to team developing LUP.
Tai-ranga whenua		200	Advice on iwi consultation, assistance at co-governance meetings and incorporating matauranga maori into LUP CMA provisions

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$616,000.00	\$666,000.00	\$976,000.00	\$1,126,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$	\$3,584,000
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

*Note *this table does not include internal costs for staff.*

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Programme / project management - Strategic leadership, project leadership, project coordination. Internal Expertise - Policy development - including policy analysis, options development, action plan and LUP provision writing - Science - natural character, identification of significant historical heritage, identifications of outstanding natural features and landscape - Economics - Tangata whenua engagement, including identification of sites of significance to Maori, also refer to Combined Plan SIP - Community / stakeholder engagement – to lead engagement during LUP preparation - Consenting and monitoring – provide advice on consenting aspects of the LUP. - Spatial analysts - Communications - Matauranga Maori Contracted Services - Specialist policy expertise, legal services, engagement specialists. Other topic specific expertise as required, e.g. natural character, sites of significance to iwi. Communications - Internal comms.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Hearings Independent hearing commissioners and hearings secretary – assuming five commissioners for 15 days plus one external hearings secretary.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?</i> <i>For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Governance - Waikato Regional Council - Executive Leadership Team (ELT) - Director, Science, Policy and Information (project sponsor) - Manager, Resource Management Policy (business owner) Consulted - Industry stakeholders / representatives, e.g. marine farmers, - NGOs e.g. Forest and Bird, Environmental Defence Society - Central government agencies, DoC, MCERT, MPI - Landowners in cma - Territorial authorities - Communities - Neighbouring regional councils - Recreational group representatives, e.g. surfers, boat owners - Iwi and relevant customary marine title groups (in accordance with Natural Environment Act Schedule 1 requirements). Informed - All WRC staff (via awareness campaign, training, and comms) - General public Most Impacted - Resource Users – e.g. marine farmers - Landowners in cma - Tangata whenua - Communities
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	National direction - National direction and national standards will be delivered on time as scheduled. - It is assumed that provisions of the proposed Regional Coastal Plan plans can be carried over into the new planning system with amendments. Continued political support for RM reform - It is assumed that the Planning and Natural Environment Bills will be enacted in 2026 and that national political support (post-2026 election) for the RM reform package proposed (including the Acts and associated national direction) will continue without significant changes to transitional and implementation timeframes. Local government reorganisation will retain WRC resource management functions - Local government reforms as currently proposed will result in reorganisation of local authorities in 2028-2029. It is assumed that progress made to develop policy options and engage with the community in the preparation of the NEP will be beneficial, and transferrable, regardless of any resulting changes to local authority boundaries and structures. Availability of required skills and capacity - It is assumed that the necessary internal and external expertise (outlined above) can be allocated or recruited in a timely manner, resulting in the development of a new NEP within the timeframes set out in legislation. - The team resource table above has indicated the roles required at an SME level and assumed these are available. - It is assumed that provisions of existing plans can be carried over into the new planning system with amendments. Action Plans and Regulatory relief

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	- Action plans will not be required for the first-generation LUP cma. - The LUP will provide a framework for the provision of regulatory relief but will not estimate full costs of implementing that framework. Current resourcing - Current staff resources from the Resource Management Policy section and other sections for the freshwater policy review, regional coastal plan review will be redirected to the LUP and NEP.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Resource Availability - Limited internal capacity in house and externally. RM reform will touch all local authorities at the same time placing greater strain on the availability of planning expertise and legal support. Budget - High level of uncertainty, impact of new bills and requirement for the LUP is still being assessed. Substantial budget required within an uncertain legislative environment. Conservative budget estimated, acknowledging that minor adjustments may be required as legislative certainty increases. Timeframe - Competing priorities and change in legislation may occur. Three interrelated plans will be prepared concurrently while national direction and national standards are being developed and implemented. - Availability of hearings commissioners at time when all NEPs and LUPs will be going through the hearings process. Scope - There is a high degree of uncertainty around the precise scope and purpose of the LUP CMA. Refer to the document listed in Appendix A.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	- National direction and national standards - Development of Spatial Plan and Natural Environments Plan. The LUP implements the Spatial Plan. - The LUP CMA must be consistent with the NEP and any LUP that applies to a district adjacent to that part of the cma.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT RISK 02- Governance and Reform Transition – <i>mitigation</i>: Robust project planning /ongoing management to ensure smooth transition to new planning system. ORG RISK 01 – Legislative Compliance – <i>mitigation</i>: Detailed project planning/implementation to ensure compliance with new legislative requirements.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk: Delays in recruiting or contracting key roles. <i>Mitigation:</i> Early recruitment for vacancies in resource management policy section and engaging key contractors. Risk: Legislative timeframes or national direction is adjusted, requiring changes to project milestones, tasks and deliverables. <i>Mitigation:</i> Maintain involvement in SIGs and oversight of communications from ministerial officials regarding emerging national direction and delivery dates. Maintain an adaptive project plan that is responsive to change. Where possible delay workstreams reliant on national direction until that direction is received or government intentions clarified. Strong change management, regular updating Risk: Competing for external resources from other Councils, e.g. commissioners. All Councils across NZ will developing LUPs at the same time. <i>Mitigation:</i> Early procurement of commissioners, e.g. legal services, expert planners, economists.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

	• Risk: Local government reorganisation affects budget commitments, local authority boundaries and resourcing during NEP development program. <i>Mitigation:</i> maintain relationships and communication of project milestones with nearby local authorities and the RSP secretariat to ensure information transferability/compatibility if regional boundaries change following reform.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Preliminary Review of Coastal Marine Area Provisions in the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill		38003498
Planning Bill		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Natural Environment Plan and Transition Policies (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	3/08/2026 8:38 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	67.86
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	17.50
		Total Score LTP27	85.36

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	High
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Extreme
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Low
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	High
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	High
Technical Skill Availability	Extreme
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Budget delivery
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	1 Water
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The challenge is to prepare a Natural Environments Plan within the timeframe and requirements directed in the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. The Bills are expected to become law by late 2026. The timing of national direction and national standards is uncertain. National direction and standards must be given effect to in preparing the NEP. Another challenge is to ensure alignment with the Spatial Plan process and with preparation of Land Use Plans, particularly for the coastal marine area.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Refer to the requirements in the Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill for a Natural Environment Plan (NEP), including contents, and timing. The NEP is mandatory and must be prepared in accordance with the Schedule 3 of the Planning Bill. The time to complete this plan is December 2030.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The outcome of this project will be a first-generation NEP that will manage natural resources across the Waikato Region. The NEP will implement the Spatial Plan and National Direction and National Standards. The benefits will include efficient allocation of natural resources within environmental limits and improvements in the quality of those resources. The NEP will enable activities to occur while maintaining environmental quality.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous and how and when compliance must be achieved is specified.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue with Freshwater Policy review project. Commence review of air and geothermal modules of the Waikato Regional Plan. Finish review of proposed Regional Coastal Plan. Commence review of RPS. Advantages: Low short-term cost and no additional resource commitment by Council. Disadvantages: Council will have limited understanding of future statutory obligations, resource requirements, and implementation pathways. No structured assessment would be undertaken to determine how existing Plan provisions transition into the RSP, CMA LUP and NEP, delaying preparation for the development of these documents. This may result in reactive planning, and compressed timeframes.	\$	Maintains and reviews current WRP, RCP and RPS	No	This option does not meet the statutory requirements of the Planning Bill and Natural Environments Bill.
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Council amends existing RMA documents and prepares a draft natural environment plan (NEP) in accordance with requirements prescribed in the Natural Environment Act, Planning Act and national direction (including national policy statements, national standards and regulations). Council relies heavily on new nationally prescribed methods and standardised rules to draft the NEP. No new technical studies are undertaken unless required to meet legislative requirements or fill technical gaps in the coastal water, land and soil and indigenous biodiversity domains. Existing provisions related to these domains as well as the geothermal and air chapters of the operative regional plan are brought forward into draft NEP with minimal change. No, or very limited, development of bespoke regional provisions.	\$	Meets council's legislative requirements.	No	This option achieves the bare minimum required to meet legislative requirements. However, it risks the need for another plan review process shortly after adoption of the first NEP to improve plan effectiveness with respect to achieving the environmental limits and other community aspirations.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Contracted services are kept to a minimum as required to meet legislative requirements with primary reliance on redirected internal staff resourcing throughout plan drafting, notification and hearings phases. Advantages: Minimises cost. Meets legislative requirements. Disadvantages: Largely relies on stretching or reallocating current staff capacity. Progress may be slower than if external resourcing is obtained and the risk of missing legislative deadlines is increased. Existing trends of degradation (breach of limits) in areas such as the Waikato and Waipa and Hauraki catchments may continue where current approaches have proven ineffective. May result in the need for an immediate NEP review once the plan is made operative to include bespoke provisions that respond to local environmental issues. Risks reversing environmental improvements made through implementation of the Lake Taupo catchment provisions.				
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Council undertakes a structured programme to prepare for transition of the Waikato Regional Plan (including PC1) and proposed Regional Coastal Plan into the new planning framework and support future development of the NEP. Council relies on national direction (including standards and regulations) as required to meet legislative requirements but conservatively invests resources in additional technical work where there is strong rationale for developing bespoke provisions for targeted parts of the region. Existing planning provisions and work already undertaken to achieve environmental improvements in the proposed Regional Coastal Plan, Waikato Regional Plan, and Waikato/Waipā and Lake Taupo catchments are used as the starting point for bespoke provisions.	\$\$	Meets legislative requirements and improves planning outcomes. Reduces risk of early plan-redevelopment required to respond to changing national direction,	Yes	This option meets legislative requirements and is responsive to local catchment scale issues that are best addressed through development and implementation of bespoke planning provisions (such as those established to improve water quality in Lake Taupo, Waikato and Waipa catchments and provisions to address degraded water

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Additional resources are provided to develop robust justification reports where required. Community engagement programmes are adjusted to provide analysis of options for bespoke provisions. Advantages: retains the value added (both financial and environmental) through development and implementation of the proposed Regional Coastal Plan, Lake Taupo catchment nitrogen management framework. Provides greater ability to address degrading trends in the Firth of Thames and wider Hauraki catchment. Enables improved translation of the PC1 provisions for the Waikato and Waipa catchments into the new NEP framework. Likely to result in a more robust first-generation NEP. Disadvantages: Higher cost due to additional staff/external contractor resourcing to support drafting of bespoke provisions and associated community engagement needs. Increased time pressure due to expanded work programme having to fit within tight legislative timeframes. Action plans may need to be more substantial. Uncertainty with respect to the extent of flexibility available under the new Acts will persist until mid-2027.		community dissatisfaction and degrading environmental trends.		quality in the Firth of Thames). It seeks to develop robust planning provisions that will stand up well to minor changes in national direction over time.
Option 4 (maximum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	In addition to the scope set out for the 'intermediate' option above, additional resourcing is provided to support development of more innovative action plans for overallocated catchments that require them, and more thorough analysis of the costs and benefits associated with proposed environmental limits prior to plan notification.	\$\$\$\$	Wider community support for plan provisions. Durability of NEP. Environmental outcomes achieved more	No	This option seeks to expand the plan development programme to maximise opportunities for community involvement in developing innovative solutions to remedying breaches (or likely breaches) in environmental limits. However, there is a

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Advantages: Enhanced community involvement and satisfaction. Potential for fewer submissions. Improved plan effectiveness and environmental outcomes. Disadvantages: Higher cost due to increased time and resourcing required to undertake a more engaging plan development process.		efficiently and effectively.		risk that a more involved engagement programme (than that required by legislation) may be too ambitious within the timeframes expected for the RM reform process.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Professional Services - Use of existing panel contracts or preferred supplier lists for legal services; policy development and economics and others. - Direct engagement for short-term specialist roles (e.g. via DIA Marketplace or other sector agreements). - If no suitable panel exists, a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Quotation (RFQ) may be issued in accordance with WRC procurement policy. Known Suppliers or Partnerships - For some services, preferred suppliers may already be known from previous engagements, e.g. Freshwater Policy review, Regional Coastal Plan review.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Communications SME		190	To provide communications support for preparation of NEP, including website updates, public notification of documents, reviewing and preparing fact sheets etc.
Consents SME		555	To provide consent advice of NEP preparation on various chapters, including reviewing draft and being part of internal teams to assist plan preparation
Contractor		700	To provide expert policy development support and guidance for the team writing the NEP.
Jenni Somerville		3320	To provide project coordination and planning technical support to the team preparing the NEP.
Policy SME		54432	Policy team is preparing / writing the NEP. Estimate based on 9 policy advisors each working 36 hours per week on the project until the end of 2030.
Primary Industry SME		190	To provide advice on NEP provisions for farming, including farm environment plans. Assist with translating PC1 provisions into NEP.
Project manager		2220	To manage the project to develop the NEP.
Project sponsor		56	
Regional resilience SME		330	Provide natural hazards input / advice into development of NEP.
Science SME		1750	Provide science input in NEP development, including development of limits, identification of biodiversity, coastal science advice, air, geothermal and freshwater, flows and levels.
Economics SME		240	Provide economics advice into preparation of NEP
Spatial SME		320	Provide spatial support for preparation of NEP as required.
Tai-ranga whenua		240	Advice on iwi consultation, assistance at co-governance meetings and incorporating matauranga maori into NEP provisions

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$742,000.00	\$757,000.00	\$1,032,000.00	\$1,332,000.00	\$215,000.00	\$	\$3,778,000
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

*Note *This table does not include internal costs for staff*

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Programme / project management - Strategic leadership, project management, project coordination. Internal Expertise - Policy development, including policy analysis, options development, action plan and NEP provision writing. - Science - water, soil, air, geothermal, ecology, coastal science, wetlands, karst, indigenous biodiversity - to support environmental limit setting, development of bespoke provisions (where required). - Economics- Cost/benefit analysis of proposed environmental limits and any bespoke policy provisions proposed. Support to develop the regulatory relief framework for the NEP. - Natural hazards/resilience - Tangata whenua engagement – refer to combined plan SIP - Community / stakeholder engagement – to lead engagement during NEP preparation - Consenting and monitoring – provide advice on consenting aspects of NEP. - Farming expertise - Analysis of the effectiveness of non-regulatory methods and freshwater farm plans in achieving environmental limits. - Catchment management – Integrated Catchment Management - Flood control and drainage scheme management technical knowledge - Spatial analysts - Communications - Matauranga Maori Contracted Services

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	- Specialist policy expertise, legal services, economic analysis, farming systems, engagement specialists. Other topic specific expertise as required, e.g. noise in coastal marine area. Communications - Internal comms, including website updates, assistance with notification of documents. Hearings - Independent hearing commissioners and hearings secretary – assuming five commissioners for 15 days plus one external hearings secretary.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Governance - Waikato Regional Council - Executive Leadership Team (ELT) - Director, Science, Policy and Information (project sponsor) - Manager, Resource Management Policy (business owner) Involved (Core Delivery) - River iwi partners - WRC staff: Coastal and Freshwater Policy, Consents and Compliance, Science, Primary Industry Engagement, Integrated Catchment Management, Spatial Information, and Communications Teams. - External contractors (providing project management, technical expertise and legal support services). Consulted - Industry stakeholders / representatives, e.g. Federated Farmers, - NGOs e.g. Forest and Bird, Fish and Game - Central government agencies, DoC, MCERT, MPI - Landowners - Communities - Territorial authorities - Neighbouring regional councils - Iwi and relevant customary marine title groups (in accordance with Natural Environment Act Schedule 1 requirements). - Drinking water suppliers – Te Mata Arawai - Waste water managers - Recreational group representatives Informed - All WRC staff (via awareness campaign, training, and comms) - General public Most Impacted - Resource Users, e.g. farmers, industry groups - Landowners - Tangata whenua - Communities
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	National direction - National direction and national standards will be delivered on time as scheduled. - It is assumed that provisions of the proposed Regional Coastal Plan plans can be carried over into the new planning system with amendments. Continued political support for RM reform - It is assumed that the Planning and Natural Environment Bills will be enacted in 2026 and that national political support (post-2026 election) for the RM reform package proposed (including the Acts and associated national

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	direction) will continue without significant changes to transitional and implementation timeframes. Local government reorganisation will retain WRC resource management functions - Local government reforms as currently proposed will result in reorganisation of local authorities in 2028-2029. It is assumed that progress made to develop policy options and engage with the community in the preparation of the NEP will be beneficial, and transferrable, regardless of any resulting changes to local authority boundaries and structures. Availability of required skills and capacity - It is assumed that the necessary internal and external expertise (outlined above) can be allocated or recruited in a timely manner, resulting in the development of a new NEP within the timeframes set out in legislation. - The team resource table above has indicated the roles required at an SME level and assumed these are available. - It is assumed that provisions of existing plans can be carried over into the new planning system with amendments. Action Plans and Regulatory relief - Action plans will not be required for the first-generation NEP. - The NEP will provide a framework for the provision of regulatory relief but will not estimate full costs of implementing that framework. Current resourcing - Current staff resources from the Resource Management Policy section and other sections for the freshwater policy review, regional coastal plan review will be redirected to the NEP and LUP.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Resource Availability - Limited internal capacity in house and externally. RM reform will touch all local authorities at the same time placing greater strain on the availability of planning expertise and legal support. Budget - High level of uncertainty, impact of new bills is still being assessed. Substantial budget required within an uncertain legislative environment. Conservative budget estimated, acknowledging that minor adjustments may be required as legislative certainty increases. Timeframe - Competing priorities and change in legislation may occur. Three interrelated plans will be prepared concurrently while national direction and national standards are being developed and implemented. - Availability of independent hearings commissioners at time when all NEPs and LUPs will be going through the hearings process.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	- National direction and national standards – to be developed - Development of Spatial Plan and Land Use Plan coastal marine area. NEP implements the Spatial Plan. - Delivery of SIP for drinking water source protection zones will provide input into the NEP. - Delivery of the Geothermal SIP in terms of delivering geothermal information for the NEP.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT RISK 02 - Governance and Reform Transition – <i>mitigation:</i> Robust project planning /ongoing management to ensure smooth transition to new planning system. ORG RISK 01 – Legislative Compliance – <i>mitigation:</i> Detailed project planning/implementation to ensure compliance with new legislative requirements.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk: Delays in recruiting or contracting key roles. <i>Mitigation:</i> Early recruitment for vacancies in resource management policy section and engaging key contractors. Risk: Legislative timeframes or national direction is adjusted, requiring changes to project milestones, tasks and deliverables. <i>Mitigation:</i> Maintain involvement in SIGs and oversight of communications from ministerial officials regarding emerging national direction and delivery dates. Maintain an adaptive project plan that is responsive to change. Where possible delay workstreams reliant on national direction until that direction is received or government intentions clarified. Strong change management, regular updating Risk: Competing for external resources from other Councils, e.g. commissioners. All Councils across NZ will developing NEPs at the same time. <i>Mitigation:</i> Early procurement of commissioners, e.g. legal services, expert planners, economists. Risk: Local government reorganisation affects budget commitments, local authority boundaries and resourcing during NEP development program. <i>Mitigation:</i> maintain relationships and communication of project milestones with nearby local authorities and the RSP secretariat to ensure information transferability/compatibility if regional boundaries change following reform.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Natural Environment Bill		
Planning Bill		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Geothermal (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	7/28/2026 11:13 AM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	53.55
Finance Code (Infor)	40124	Achievability Score	60.00
		Total Score LTP27	113.55

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	Low
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	High
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	High
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	Low
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	5 Energy and Industry
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Inform

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Waikato region is home to over 70% of New Zealand's geothermal resources, which have a critical role in renewables and a low emissions economy. Growing energy demand increases pressure on resource use, while our once world-renowned geothermal resource policy is more than 20 years old and out of touch with new data, and ill-equipped to enable new technology which can further optimise geothermal energy use. Impending regulatory changes mean that a Natural Environment Plan is required, along with limits setting to ensure a sustainably managed geothermal resource.

Central government is investing in geothermal R&D (e.g. GeoShot supercritical project) and strongly directing geothermal expansion; including sustainable but enabling regulation. Local government, in whatever form it takes, has a vital role to enable geothermal development in a way that ensures long term system sustainability, and the protection (through retention) of other geothermal benefits such as tourism.

To support sustainable growth and development, Local Government needs to:

- **Provide fit-for-purpose regulation:** 3-5 km deep (3D) system boundaries, revised system classification, sustainable yields
- **Enable increased productivity within limits:** as above and development system SoE monitoring
- **Enable uptake of emerging geothermal technologies:** Understanding research and applying Waikato and system specific conditions to ensure policy is enabling, yet protective.
- **Widen access to data for decision-making:** Cataloguing, QA/QC and public access frameworks for data.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

New national and regional strategies drive local government geothermal science and policy to focus on enabling or even encouraging the expansion of geothermal energy use. The central government Geothermal Strategy 'From the Ground up' sets a target of doubling geothermal energy use by 2040; outlining specific goals and objectives (MBIE, 2026). The Waikato Regional Energy Strategy (WRC, 2026a) notes that geothermal energy will have an increasing stake in regional energy generation and decarbonisation (business-as-usual scenarios predict geothermal energy will increase from 27TJ pa to 45TJ pa. by 2050 and in an optimistic scenario to 47TJ pa). The draft Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy (WRC, 2026b) also notes the role of geothermal energy provision in increasing electricity supply and the establishment of place-based geothermal clusters. Finally, the 2022 Waikato Regional Council SoE report indicates that the rapid expansion of renewable geothermal energy is not matched by council investment in monitoring (WRC, 2022).

These four documents all point towards a critical need to better inform and develop geothermal policy and monitoring to meet the needs of our communities and economy. They point to increasing demand for geothermal resource use, and the need for a robust, evidence-based policy framework that provides certainty for investors in geothermal energy. Failure to do so increases organisational reputational risk and opportunity cost for the region.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Meeting the needs identified in the Opportunity section above will deliver the following benefits for the region:

- Clear and well-evidenced policy frameworks that provide certainty for industry and investors
- Fast, consistent and well-informed resource allocation decisions
- State of the Environment monitoring reports on the sustainability of our development systems
- State of the Environment monitoring provides assurance of protection of surface features that provide economic and environmental benefits to the region

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	- Peer Review Panel processes and monitoring documentation for the 5 development systems - Technical support to RUD and Policy on consenting and planning matters - Quarterly or annual characteristic monitoring of 60 surface features, ~4 yearly geochemistry surveys - Sporadic analysis of surface habitat, magnetotelluric data and protected feature monitoring as underspends elsewhere allow.	\$60k OPEX \$220k Labour	Technical support to consenting processes	No	The current level of service does not support the goals of the central government Geothermal Strategy. It does not ensure that policy is responsive to new technology which could enable geothermal energy use expansion, it is not well-informed by current system knowledge, and it is not protective of geothermal benefits. It does not support investigations such as cause and effect of resource activities on geothermal features.
Option 1 Easing	Easing policy barriers- less than minimum	Revise system boundaries (including 3D) for just the development systems (7 of the 15 existing). Systems would be addressed over several years as budget allows. This would require supplementary financial support from partners such as Kanoa, MBIE, or resource consent holders to deliver policy updates in time for Regional Spatial Plan notification (June 2028) and Natural Environment Plan notification (December 2029).	Additional to BAU: \$150k pa OPEX + potential partner funds	Updated policy but unlikely to be in time for Natural Environment Plan and Spatial Plan notifications.	Second preference	Existing staff formalize the existing geoscientific knowledge into revised system boundaries; consult with resource users to allow them to supply additional information if they wish to contest the boundaries. This option would not identify potential new development systems such as blind systems that have no surface expression. It would not improve SoE monitoring of system health or surface features; and for these reasons this is the second preference only.
Option 2 Enabling	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	The above plus: - Monitor protected features - Analyse existing geoscientific data and deep rock properties to improve understanding of geothermal resources and system boundaries - Supplement geophysical data with surface feature, geology and hydrological data to redefine new system boundaries in policy - Combine existing and new data to support system classification review - Expand State of the Environment reporting using readily available information - Investigate geothermal ground/vegetation changes using satellite and airborne remote-sensing data 5-yearly geothermal habitat monitoring undertaken by ecologists	Additional to BAU: \$150k OPEX to provide data, consultancy services, evidence to policy team (40124) and 2 yearly surface feature geochemistry studies (40123) \$120k OPEX five-yearly beginning 2029/30 to conduct habitat monitoring (40123) \$180k Labour	Timely updated policy for Natural Environment Plan. Clarity and certainty for industry on policies and permissions. Well informed resource allocation decisions. Regular SOE reporting on health of development	First preference	This option would deliver: - Fit-for-purpose regulation - Increased productivity within limits - Support for uptake of emerging geothermal technologies - Wider access to data for decision-making, research, and investment by others. - Identification of potential new energy resources through investigation of blind systems (with no surface expression). This would support local government delivery of its responsibilities in the central government Geothermal Strategy and support economic development via expansion of geothermal energy use.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		- QA/QC existing (non-commercial) data ready for publication and use - Partner with Kanoa, PROs, Geothermal Institute to deliver Waikato-specific geothermal outcomes and add additional value.	One additional 3-year fixed term scientist; 2 students per year	systems and protected features.		Would address and investigate risk of tipping points and system collapse through over-exploitation (e.g. Ohaaki system).
Option 3 Establishing	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Transformational change to re-consider the role of local government as partners in resource delineation and assessment; conducting R&D as major partners or sole providers to de-risk potential new development (e.g. Reporoa). This could involve working with iwi, resource developers and land-owners financing or co-financing resource assessment, exploratory wells, commissioning, procuring and reporting on new geoscientific data. This involves defining and characterising systems with no or few surface features which could be present across the Waikato Region.	Additional to the above: \$5 million OPEX for contracted services \$110k permanent Scientist role	As above but also: Considerable re-risking of geothermal exploration for industry Waikato might become the choice for new gentailers or direct heat users.	No	While this could change the nature of geothermal development in the Waikato Region, not all R&D provides new viable resources. While industry requires some level of de-risking to promote new development, there must be a distribution of risk across the sector.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	Recruitment of Scientist and summer student roles would proceed in accordance with WRC recruitment policies. The procurement process will follow WRC requirements and will include: a. Needs Assessment & Planning - Define the scope of work - Assess risks, resource availability, quality standards and milestones b. Engagement with providers - Issue Requests for Proposal (RFP) via GETS or procure multiple quotes - Engage in direct procurement for low-value and low-risk work (with justification). c. Evaluate & Award the work based on: - Technical capability - Track record and experience - Health and safety compliance - Cost-effectiveness d. Contract Management - Oversee delivery, monitor risks, and ensure contract compliance - Publish results if required

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Project manager	Science	180	
Science delivery and procurement	Science	540	
Science delivery and procurement	Science	360	
Policy support	Strategic and Spatial Planning	120	
Science delivery and State of the Environment reporting	Science	1800	
Field monitoring and data QA/QC	Science/Environmental Monitoring	675	
Field monitoring and data QA/QC	Science/Environmental Monitoring	675	

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex						\$	\$
Total Cost*	\$ 330k	\$ 330k	\$ 330k	\$ 210k	\$ 210k	\$ 210k	\$
Partner Funding	\$ TBC	\$ TBC	\$ TBC	\$ TBC	\$ TBC	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Scientist – Fixed term three years Require MSC or PhD in Geothermal Science or similar, with 3+ years experience preferred 2 x Students – summer period Undergraduate students working towards an Environmental Science degree; preferred Geothermal Institute students.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?</i> <i>For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Internal: - Strategic and Spatial planning staff: end users of products - Resource Use Group: end users of science products External: - Geothermal industry: vested interest in certainty and clarity of policies and resource allocation decisions - Iwi: interest in the sustainable management of resources and geothermal taonga - Public Research Organisations: data users and providers of research products - Academic sector: end users of data for research and providers of research outputs - Commercial consultancy sector: providers of specialist services - Community: interested in the state of the environment reporting - Industry – electricity generators / direct heat users / minerals extraction
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	- Sustained electricity and direct heat energy demand - Sustained demand for renewables - Continued local government role in resource allocation

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	- Policy development timeframes required under Resource Management reform - Geothermal technical capacity must be available. Growing demand across the sector for these resources may limit the availability of highly specialist skills.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	- Resource Management reform consolidation and enactment (although RMA 1991 provides the same environment) - Local Government reform to continue to provide regional functions
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 02 Legislative Compliance - Improves SOE data quality, supports effective policy STRAT 03 – Relationships - Provides certainty, clarity and well-evidence policy and decision-making for resource users STRAT 09 Climate Change - Supports low emission economy
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk: Insufficient technical capacity. Mitigation: Early planning and pacing of project deliverables. Risk: Delays in recruiting key roles. Mitigation: Continue strong partnership with Geothermal Institute and consider contracting to role if required. Risk: Insufficient Policy resource to convert science to revised policy. Mitigation: Build policy labour resource into budget, involve policy staff in project management team.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Briefing: Local Government and the future of Geothermal Science https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/36931222		36931222
MBIE (2026). From the ground up: A strategy to unlock New Zealand's geothermal potential. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/from-the-ground-up-a-strategy-to-unlock-new-zealands-geothermal-potential.pdf .		
WRC (2026a). Waikato regional energy strategy 2026–2050. Waikato Regional Council. https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/WaikatoRegionalEnergyStrategyDocument.pdf .		
WRC (2026b). Draft Waikato regional economic development strategy (May 2026 draft). Waikato Regional Council. Agenda of Regional Growth and Resilience Committee Meeting - Tuesday, 12 May 2026 .		
WRC (2022). State of the environment monitoring report 2022. Waikato Regional Council. https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/7364-SOE-report-2022-WR.pdf .		

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Hydro Lakes water quality investigation (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Science Policy and Information
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	7/30/2026 3:12 PM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	25.00
Finance Code (Infor)	40023	Achievability Score	67.50
		Total Score LTP27	92.50

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Extreme
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	No Rating
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	1 Water
Te Ara Tupu focus area	
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Waikato hydro lakes are a strategically important component of the Waikato River system, supporting hydro-electric generation, recreation, water abstraction, cultural values, biodiversity and community wellbeing. Increasingly frequent and spatially complex algal blooms, at times toxic, are creating growing risks to public health (recreational use and drinking water) and lake health. Current monitoring provides valuable shoreline and river information but lacks the lake-based data needed to understand bloom drivers (including changing climate), lake processes and emerging environmental change.

Doing this now will improve health warnings in the coming summers, and enable knowledge gain before the blooms are more widespread and progress from the upper dams down to Karapiro.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Public observations, media reporting, community enquiries and summer recreational water quality monitoring indicate increasing concern about algal blooms. Monitoring has identified bloom events and occasions where public health warnings have been required during peak recreational periods. However, existing monitoring does not provide sufficient in-lake information to determine the causes, extent or future trajectory of blooms, creating a significant evidence gap for decision-making. Health warnings are not timely due to laboratory processing delays.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

This investment will deliver a focused 3-year monitoring and investigation programme to improve understanding of hydro lake water quality, algal bloom dynamics and environmental drivers. The programme will provide improved health warnings and establish baseline datasets, quantify spatial and temporal variability, and assess opportunities for forecasting and early warning systems. The findings will provide the evidence needed for future monitoring requirements and evaluate lake management options.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Wildcard
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue the current shore-based recreational water quality monitoring programme, including in-situ measurements of algae pigments monitoring at four high-use recreational sites during summer and monthly cyanobacteria biovolume sampling. Existing monitoring will continue to support recreational water quality assessments and public health warnings where required. No additional investment would be made in lake-based monitoring, continuous instrumentation, lake profiling, satellite imagery, or investigations into algal bloom drivers.	Existing budgets only. No additional funding required	Maintains current recreational monitoring and health warning services	No	Does not provide the information needed to understand bloom drivers or inform future management decisions.
Option 1 (minimum)	Barebones - starts answering the questions but relatively high labour input.	Undertake targeted three-year hydro lakes investigation. Includes two continuous monitoring stations located in representative upper and lower hydro lakes. Extension of the Waikato River Water Quality Monitoring Programme (WARIMP) to currently unmonitored tailraces – know what is entering and leaving the lakes. Boat based monthly water quality monitoring at approximately 16 sites within the eight hydro lakes profiling through the water column. Additional seasonal cyanobacteria biovolume monitoring and bed sediment sampling for four lakes – know what from the bed is getting resuspended into the water column. No improvement in summer-time real-time warning of blooms at recreational sites.	1 FTE. \$600k OPEX lab, lease of equipment \$160k CAPEX – vehicle and sampling equipment	Establishes limited baseline understanding of lake processes and bloom dynamics.	No	Improves understanding of hydro lake processes but may not provide sufficient spatial coverage or monitoring frequency to fully understand bloom drivers across the hydro lake system. Low technology use and high level of FTE input for the limited range of data captured.
Option 2 (Foundational)	Foundational - answering the questions a bit more, introducing more technology with lowest labour input	Building on option 1 but increase monitoring coverage and frequency through four continuous monitoring stations traded off with a reduction of discrete water quality sampling from 16 sites down to 8. Inclusion of satellite imagery for health warnings and visual understanding of bloom extent. Importantly introduces real-time shore-based monitoring at 2 high uses recreational sites giving improved health warnings during summer.	0.7 FTE. \$660k OPEX lab, lease of equipment \$260k CAPEX – vehicle and sampling equipment	Establishes baseline understanding of lake processes and bloom dynamics with some real time health warnings including satellite imagery. Lower FTE input	Yes 2nd	Balances cost and coverage, providing baseline information to understand bloom drivers and inform future management decisions. Greater focus on the more valuable continuous monitoring. Introduces real time health warnings at 2 shore sites.
Option 3 (intermediate)	Sufficient - Enough coverage and frequency to answer more confidently	Building on Option 2, retaining 4 continuous monitoring stations, but increasing discrete water quality sampling to 20 monthly lake monitoring sites to give greater spatial coverage of each lake. The 20 sites increase the labour input and laboratory cost. Increase of shore based real-time monitoring from 2 to 4 recreational sites. Same level of satellite imagery used for health warnings as Option 2.	1.5 FTE. \$1,215k OPEX lab, lease of equipment \$360k CAPEX – sensors, vehicle and sampling equipment	Provides robust understanding of hydro lake processes, bloom dynamics and recreational health risks.	Yes 1st	Provides good monitoring in multiple locations and in 4 locations continuously across these complex 8 lakes. Has greatest likelihood of providing the data needed for development of bloom forecast models

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		These enhancements improve understanding of bloom development, lake stratification and spatial variability across the hydro lakes. Real-time recreational monitoring would provide more timely information for lake users and public health responses than periodic manual sampling, while daily satellite imagery supports remote monitoring and development of future forecasting capability.				
Option 4 (Ambitious)	Comprehensive - High level of certainty and operational capability	Building on Option 3, further increase monitoring coverage through eight continuous monitoring stations (1 for each lake), approximately 24 monthly lake monitoring sites (3 per lake), bi-monthly cyanobacteria biovolume sampling, six shore-based continuous recreational monitoring stations, and additional spatial bloom surveys using remote sensing technologies including drones. These enhancements provide a high level of spatial and temporal coverage across the hydro lakes and strengthen understanding of bloom dynamics, lake processes, and public health risks.	2 FTE. \$2,060k OPEX lab, lease of equipment \$460k CAPEX – sensors, vehicle and sampling equipment	Provides comprehensive hydro lake monitoring and early warning capability	No	Provides the highest level of coverage but requires significant investment before key learnings can inform where monitoring effort is best targeted.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Open tender

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
1.5 New FTE	Water Quality	1728 hrs per year	Fulltime fixed term 3 years. Environmental Monitoring Scientists

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION (#3 Sufficient))							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30			Ongoing	Totals
Capex	\$360,000	\$0	\$0			\$	\$ 360,000
Opex	\$435,000	\$375,000	\$405,000			\$	\$1,215,000
Total Cost*	\$795,000	\$375,000	\$405,000	\$	\$	\$	\$1,575,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☒ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	• Lake water quality and limnology expertise. • Environmental monitoring programme design and delivery. • Data management, analysis and interpretation. • Telemetry and continuous monitoring systems – looking at leasing/contracting lake monitoring equipment, deployment, and data management. Increases likelihood of success compared to WRC purchased and operated gear.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	• Mercury as hydro scheme operator. Funding source through consent annual fees – currently pay \$100k to science and monitoring. Also undertake own monitoring that will dovetail into this project. • Maniapoto, Raukawa, Ngāti Tahu - Ngāti Whaoa Rūnanga Trust (have been very active regards Whirinaki arm blooms), and other iwi with interests in the hydro lakes. • Recreational lake users, communities and consent holders. • Waikato River Authority, District Councils (reserve managers) and HealthNZ (Health warnings)
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	• Use of EM boat Kohi Whika purchased as part of coastal monitoring. • Access to existing Karapiro continuous monitoring by Lincoln AgriTech currently supported with WRC \$75k per annum. Costs assume access and not needing to run a duplicate site. • Possible access to ESNZ future site to reduce costs further. They received funding for clam research but have not yet installed a site and may also utilize the existing Karapiro one. • Site access and stakeholder support can be secured. • Three years of focused monitoring will provide sufficient learning to inform future programme design and investment decisions.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	• Large, complex and highly modified lake systems require a balance between spatial coverage and monitoring frequency. • Clam management and constraint of CCD before moving between lakes slowing monitoring. • Environmental variability and changing climatic conditions may influence interpretation of results over the monitoring period.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	• Access agreements and stakeholder support for monitoring site installation and operation. • Timely procurement and deployment of monitoring equipment and telemetry. • Availability of specialist technical and field resources to deliver the programme and investigations.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 01 Natural Resources – Improves understanding of environmental condition, trends and drivers, supporting earlier identification and management of water quality risks. STRAT 03 Relationships – provides robust information to support engagement with iwi, stakeholders, hydro operators and communities. Key waterway covered by Te Ture Whaimana. Provide improved health warnings, with HealthNZ, for users of the hydro lakes. STRAT 09 Climate Change – Improves understanding of climate-related influences on lake condition and supports future adaptation and management decisions. Climate change is expected to increase water temperatures, alter hydrological patterns and create conditions that favour more frequent, prolonged and potentially more severe algal blooms, further increasing risks to lake health and water users.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Potential risks:

Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.

- Delays in procurement, installation or site access agreements may impact programme delivery.
- Equipment or telemetry failures may result in temporary data gaps.
- Key monitoring questions may require longer-term monitoring before future programme design is fully optimised.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Regional economic development (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Corporate
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	7/08/2026 1:53 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	53.57
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	50.00
		Total Score LTP27	103.57

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Extreme
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Moderate
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	High
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Regional energy strategy
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	5 Energy and Industry
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	Consult

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The current funding model has successfully established the foundations of regional economic development within WRC, but it is not sufficient to deliver the full programme required by the Regional Economic Development Strategy. Funding of \$604,000 across 2025/26 and 2026/27 has enabled a Regional Economic Development Lead, specialist support, and targeted contracted services. This has delivered critical economic insights, strategic advice, business case development, and regional coordination. To realise the full economic opportunity for the Waikato region, ongoing investment is required to establish a sustainable virtual Economic Development Business Unit within WRC focused on implementation, coordinating WRC's approach to special events, investment attraction, regional energy strategy delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and future-focused economic planning. Without additional funding, Council's role will remain limited to coordination rather than driving regional outcomes.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

WRC has some capacity and capability to undertake the economic development functions. However the range of functions is broad, extending into operations and exceeds the capacity of the existing resources. There is a need to acquire more capacity and capability to support the Regional Economic Development Lead to deliver the regional economic development strategy, including the implementation of specialised operational functions such as business relationship management, investment promotion and facilitation, events and regional branding. These functions are best delivered by WRC rather than any other entity. In the past these functions have either been delivered by a third party (e.g. Te Waka) or sourced by WRC from contractors/suppliers. In addition, there is no funding allocated for the implementation of the Waikato regional energy strategy. This includes secretariat duties for the Waikato Regional Energy Forum, relationship management, monitoring and reporting. There is no funding allocated for assessing the regional benefits of special events and coordinating WRC's approach to these. There is no funding allocated for the establishment of a foresight programme. This would consist of trend analysis, forecasting, horizon scanning, and scenario development and analysis.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

When the council approved funding in 2025, it was intended to enable the council to continue to support and progress regional economic development activities while establishing a view of a sustainable model through the 2027-2037 LTP. That model has been developed (outlined above). Delivering the model in this way will allow WRC to deliver the functions that are demanded by central government, business and other partners at regional scale, and support territorial authorities and iwi. Only the functions that reflect market failure (e.g. information asymmetry, coordination failure, spillover benefits) and are most effectively and efficiently delivered by WRC at regional scale have been included. Current resources have been considered and the demands on these reveal that the resources are both constrained and lack the specialist skills required. Delivering regional economic development effectively will support the attraction of third party investment to the region, for example the government is looking to the region to develop a proposal for a Regional Deal. This type of activity will be delivered with the right skills if the proposal is accepted, leading to improved economic outcomes in the region and higher stakeholder satisfaction as WRC will be delivering on what is expected. This includes implementation of the regional energy strategy. It has been adopted and is expected to be delivered through a regional energy forum. That requires resource for facilitation, such as through secretariat support. This also includes coordinating WRC's approach to current and future events such as World Surf League, Fieldays and Te Matatini. The foresight programme would identify opportunities and threats

facing the Waikato region and WRC and develop a common evidence base for Waikato Regional Council to complement the existing strategic risk advice function and long-term strategic planning through the Strategic Direction, Long Term Plans, Regional Land Transport Plans, Regional Spatial Plan and regional economic development strategy.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes cost, benefit)	Current output (\$302,000) funded through LTP. Enables the council to continue to support and progress regional economic development activities: information and insights, advice to councillors, staff and third parties (including business cases), economic development strategy and implementation plan (including coordination and facilitation of third parties). - Advantages: no extra cost; minimal disruption. - Disadvantages: Slow progress, not delivering on all community expectations, missed strategic opportunities, excludes Waikato regional energy strategy implementation and events coordination.	\$302,000 (including salary and contracted services)	Minimal; maintains current state	No	Funding for 2025-2027. Addresses minimal strategic needs. Insufficient to meet current expectations, excludes Waikato regional energy strategy implementation and events coordination.
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Status quo plus 1.0 FTE (95% of band H) funded through LTP. Enables the council to continue to maintain the status quo and develop investment cases for capital contribution to economic development initiatives through various funds; manage economic development website, and business marketing toolkit; relationship management for investment facilitation; support foresight programme. - Advantages: minimal impact and progress in some areas. - Disadvantages: not delivering some community expectations, may not be possible to engage a single FTE with all skills required or split contracts up into enough size to attract better people/contractors, no support for implementation of Waikato regional energy strategy .	\$417,000 (including salary and contracted services)	Achieves foundational improvements.	No	This option delivers the critical first steps while relying on (increased) in-house capacity and capability only. Excludes Waikato regional energy strategy implementation . It addresses some of Council's strategic needs in the short term by balancing impact and cost-efficiency.

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Strategic Investment Proposal

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 2 (preferred)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Option 1 plus minimum additional contracted services budget (\$50,000) funded through LTP. Enables the council to do the minimum and undertake some monitoring and evaluation of the economic development strategy and implementation plan; marketing (e.g. campaigns and events) for investment facilitation; support implementation of the Waikato regional energy strategy (Energy Forum secretariat, some monitoring, reporting, advocacy); support events coordination; and enhance the foresight programme with some evidence and insights. • Advantages: tangible impact and progress in all areas, limited ability to spread load between FTE and some contractors. • Disadvantages: some limits on monitoring, reporting, advocacy for regional energy strategy; no resources for responding to opportunities (such as investment business cases).	\$467,000 (including salary and contracted services)	Achieves foundational improvements.	Yes	This option includes some support for Waikato regional energy strategy implementation and events coordination. Annual requests would be submitted for additional funding for unplanned/ad hoc needs, subject to satisfactory business case. It addresses some of Council's strategic needs in the short term by balancing impact and cost-efficiency.
Option 3 (ambitious)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Option 2 plus moderate contracted services budget (additional \$100,000) funded through LTP. Enables the council to do the above and expand/increase: monitoring and evaluation of economic development strategy and implementation plan; marketing for investment facilitation; evidence and insights for both the regional energy strategy and foresight programme. • Advantages: capacity to meet unplanned/ad hoc needs, high delivery, good impact and fast progress across all areas. • Disadvantages: higher cost, some organisational change	\$517,000 (including salary and contracted services)	Significant improvement in capacity, capability and delivery.	Yes	This option would allow rapid and large-scale impact across the full breadth of activities.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 4 (maximum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Option 3 plus high contracted services budget (additional \$150,000) funded through LTP. Enables the council to procure all the capacity and capability desired, plus all external monitoring, reports etc. - Advantages: ability to procure all capacity or outputs that may be needed. - Disadvantages: highest cost, diminishing marginal returns compared to option 3, risk of unutilised resources.	\$567,000 (including salary and contracted services)	Maximum improvement in capacity, capability and delivery.	No	This option has few additional benefits to the regional community and ratepayers, relative to the additional cost.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	The procurement process will follow WRC requirements and will include: a. Needs Assessment & Planning - Define the scope of work (e.g., economic development strategy monitoring and evaluation, energy monitoring, foresight, marketing). - Assess risks, funding availability, and urgency (e.g., unforeseen investment promotion opportunity). b. Engagement with providers - Use existing providers/ contractors. - Issue Requests for Proposal (RFP) via GETS. - Engage in direct procurement for urgent or low-value work (with justification). c. Evaluate & Award the work - Based on: - Technical capability. - Health and safety compliance. - Management plans. - Cost-effectiveness and broader outcomes (e.g., local employment, sustainability). d. Contract Management Oversee delivery, monitor risks, and ensure compliance with relevant standards.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Regional Economic Development Lead	Office of the Chief Executive	2,080	Regional Economic Development Lead – To provide high-quality strategic leadership to the council and to facilitate partnerships to optimise opportunities for the Waikato region's economy.
(Principal) Economist	Social and Economic Science	208	To contribute to communicating timely economic development information and insights to support decision making at local, sub-regional and regional scales; monitoring and evaluating the implementation of regional economic development initiatives against agreed performance targets and measures.
Various. Including but not limited to: - Principal Strategic Advisor - Senior Policy Advisor	Strategic and Spatial Planning (SPI)	500	To contribute to: implementation of the Waikato regional energy strategy, including but not limited to: Providing secretariat duties for the Waikato Regional Energy Forum, Fostering, and maintaining excellent relationships with key energy and regional economy related stakeholders,

Resource Table			
SPI natural resource science support as required for evidence base			- Monitoring and maintaining a database of energy related activity in the region. - Periodic reporting on energy-related changes that affect economic development in the region. - Monitor and report on any energy related regional targets the Forum considers relevant to regional economic activity. - Assisting the Forum advocate to central government on national energy matters. - Assisting the Forum advocate to the Regional spatial planning committee and any other regional entity to ensure agreed Forum targets are included in the new planning and resource allocation documents to support a transition to a low emissions economy.
Communications; Digital and Design	Communications and Marketing	208	Provide communications advice, design, production of collateral, including for investment facilitation.
TBC	TBC	416	Contract management, project management and coordination.
Customer Service Specialist	Customer Experience Support	104	Handling inquiries, providing support, and resolving any complaints or issues.
Business Support Specialist	TBC	208	Provide support for communications, stakeholder management, event management.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$	\$2,335,000
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$467,000	\$	\$2,335,000
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Lead (internal) - leadership, stakeholder engagement, and overall management Information and insights (internal and external) - gather, analyse, interpret and translate data and evidence on Waikato's economy to help draw actionable insights Foresight (internal and external) - plan, execute and review foresight programme consisting of multiple techniques (trend analysis, forecasting, horizon scanning, scenarios) and outputs to support internal and external decision-making Policy advice (internal) - provide advice to external parties, councillors and WRC functions. Research, concept development, feasibility studies, investment cases Strategy (internal and external) - develop framework, analyse SWOT and enablers analysis, consult stakeholders. Draft strategy and implementation plans. Coordinate actors and networks. Facilitate initiatives. Capital investment (internal) - develop investment cases for council's capital contribution to economic development initiatives through various funds Customer service (internal) - timely and informative responses via phone, face to face, email, chat or social media Investment facilitation (internal) - investment promotion, facilitation, retention, growth - deliver and develop economic development website, investment facilitation and business marketing toolkit, including social media - build and maintain relationships with businesses Evaluation and monitoring (internal and external) - monitor and evaluate the implementation of the regional economic development strategy and implementation plan against agreed performance targets and measures Business support (internal) - support meetings, programme, events and logistics. Manage administration, including financial. Coordinate travel, catering and event arrangements. Deliver proactive diary, inbox, and workflow management Communications (internal and external) - provide communications advice, outputs and solutions to support stakeholder relationship management, manage media relations - lead stakeholder relationship management and communications, manage media relations, deliver multi-channel campaigns to support regional

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	economic development (including regional energy strategy implementation). Plan, coordinate and execute events from conception to completion - exploring branding options and confirming the supporting resources that will be needed. Depending on the outcome of this, there might be a need for specialist external resource to be procured Digital and design (internal) - create, edit and publish content Project management (internal) - initiate, plan, coordinate, monitor and control, and close projects from concept to completion Human resources (internal) - identify staffing needs, create job descriptions, source candidates, conduct interviews, and manages onboarding to ensure WRC hires qualified employees Procurement (internal) - identify needs and analyse market, specify requirements, plan and implement approach to market and evaluation, approach market and select suppliers, negotiate and award contracts, manage contracts and relationships, review Contract management (internal) - negotiate terms and conditions, draft, document and agree changes Tai Ranga Whenua (internal) - targeted review to confirm whether any specific Māori outcomes, partnership commitments, Māori economic interests, or Māori data considerations need to be reflected in programme design and delivery
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	External - businesses – influencer – inform - industry sectors – influencer – inform - business and industry associations – influencer – inform - workers – influencer – inform - iwi and Māori organisations – influencer – consult - education and training providers – influencer – inform - skills, training and workforce development – influencer – inform - capital providers – influencer – inform - infrastructure providers – influencer – inform - public and other research organisations – influencer – inform - economic development agencies – influencer – inform - business growth and development organisations – influencer – inform - regional tourism organisations – influencer – inform - regional film offices – influencer – inform - central government entities – influencer – consult - collective impact organisations – influencer – inform - philanthropic organisations – influencer – inform - territorial authorities – influencer – consult

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Internal • ELT – governance – collaborate • WRC council – governance – consult • WRC staff – provider – collaborate
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Sustained executive sponsorship, organisational and stakeholder support • it is assumed that ELT and key business units will continue to support regional economic development, including prioritising resources and enabling cross-functional collaboration; and that businesses, iwi, government and territorial authorities will continue to demand services from WRC. Accuracy of estimated resources and costs • it is assumed that the budget proposed is an accurate estimate of the likely costs and is more effective and efficient than doing nothing or the status quo. Availability of required skills and capacity • it is assumed that the necessary internal and external expertise can be recruited or allocated in a timely manner to deliver the activities.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Resource Availability • limited internal capacity to undertake functions or contribute resources. Budget • limited budget and competing priorities at WRC. Additional funding is required; must be managed within existing financial planning cycles through Long Term Plan. Sector/legal limitations • potential changes under Simplifying Local Government and the planned amendments to the purpose of local government in the Local Government Act could impact ELT and council and social licence.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Leadership sponsorship • ongoing support from ELT and Council is critical. Availability of qualified staff and contractors • access to skilled and experienced economic/business development, evaluation and monitoring professionals and suppliers. Limited or delayed availability can significantly impact timelines and costs. Availability of funding • funding must be secured through the LTP to deliver either the status quo or preferred option as there is no partner funding available.
Strategic risks <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	All • the foresight programme will identify risks (and opportunities) over different time horizons using different techniques, enabling the council to manage these proactively. Governance and Reform Transition • regional economic development identifies the optimal functions to be delivered at regional scale to complement existing territorial authority functions and inform potential future unitary authorities. Relationships

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	- the proposal will help meet the needs identified by stakeholders in 2024 (including businesses and iwi) and by the government currently. It will also enable proactive, ongoing relationship management with these. People, Capacity, Capability and Culture - invests in capability, clarifies roles, addresses capacity constraints, better staff attraction, better adaptation to future state needs. Climate Change - regional economic development and energy strategy implementation support transition to a low-emissions economy, mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Giving Effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi - the proposal will help us better meet the expectations of iwi, who are partners in regional economic development and energy strategy implementation. Legislative Compliance - energy strategy implementation will help WRC and the region meet obligations under climate legislation such as the Climate Change Response Act.

Potential risks

Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.

Lower than requested funding

- over-reliance on existing resources leads to not meeting expectations

Delays in recruiting or contracting key roles

- over-reliance on existing resources leads to not meeting expectations

Cost overruns

- unforeseen complexities or changes in market conditions leads to not delivering some functions

Political or public perception

- councillor or public objection to WRC performing these functions leads to loss of public trust or political pressure on council decision-makers

Insufficient internal collaboration

- over-reliance on existing resources leads to not meeting expectations

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
SIP LTP27 regional economic development overview	1	38474268

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Management of flood protection infrastructure on private land (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	22/07/2026 12:15 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	7.14
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	60.00
		Total Score LTP27	67.14

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	None

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	Moderate
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	3. We provide a standard of flood protection, agreed with communities, as set out in our zone plans and associated documents.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	None
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Consult

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

WRC have a significant number of flood protection assets (Value \$1.13Bn), many located on private land, some of which are not being well managed or maintained due to landowners and leaseholders restricting access and/or undertaking unauthorised modifications, including changes to operating parameters that impact neighbouring properties.

Assets on Council land can also be compromised by third parties, including adjacent landowners, leaseholders and infrastructure providers. Impacts range from damage, illegal occupation, unauthorised cropping or inappropriate planting on our stopbanks, dumping waste, and the contamination of land.

These issues across Council and private land compromises the integrity of our assets, increasing the potential for failure and associated flooding, and, or reducing the asset life and ability to achieve our level of service.

Asset issues and impacts are often found by chance and once identified typically involve protracted communications with landowners / third parties. Other activities may also be required including engineering and ecological assessments, and legal counsel to get a resolution. The time and costs involved in resolving issues can be high and may not be fully recovered by WRC. Much more significant costs could be incurred if these issues lead to the failure of an asset, resulting in large areas being impacted/damaged by flooding and the resulting harm to people and livestock.

Evidence: Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.

The following table is a range of recent examples where our assets have been compromised (Full list: [36964507](#)) :

Approx Timeline	Site	Entity	Key Issue	Impact	Time to resolve (Weeks, months or years)	Est \$ to resolve <10K 10 - 50K 50 - 100K >100K
2011 - 2024	Tuakau PS	Envirofert Counties Energy	Power poles, transformer on Stopbank plus cabling through it.	Stopbank integrity compromised.	Years	200 - 300K
2017 - 2024	10 Great South Road Tuakau	Oasis Property Holdings	Stopbank partly removed and replaced with retaining wall and car park	Stopbank integrity compromised.	Years	50 - 100K
2007 - 2025	Mill Drain - Waikato	Max Birt Lumber Corp	Drain maintenance, contaminated land.	Deferred Maintenance, Enhanced disposal costs Environmental harm Increased flood risk.	Years	50 - 100K
Ongoing	Multiple sites	Landowners	Unable to access assets through access tracks on private land (one of the key drivers for the bylaw) Unable to maintain assets Extended notification periods to access assets. Inadequate fencing and stock damage to assets. Placement of structures on our assets. Excavations on our assets. Cropping on or around our assets.	Stopbank integrity compromised. Deferred maintenance. Increased service costs. Increased risk of flooding.	Years	50 - 100K
Ongoing	Scheme land Lower Waikato	Individual Waikato Tainui	Illegal occupation of land Illegal dumping. Restricted site access Verbal abuse of staff	Unable to maintain assets. Access limitations. Potential clean up costs. Excessive staff time required to resolve.	Years	10 - 50 K
Ongoing	Scheme land Waikato (Mangawara)	Illegal Occupation	Placement of a Pou whenua on crest of stopbank	Unable to maintain assets. Access limitations. Potential clean up costs. Excessive staff time required to resolve.	Years	5 - 10 K
Ongoing	Jordans Detention Dam	Landowner	Risers added to convert to retention, not detention Structures built on crest Trees planted on crest (we believe it's been converted into a duck shooting pond) https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/app/nodes/35750487	Dam capacity significantly reduced from theoretical Structural Integrity possibly compromised Minimal confidence that repair work on the dam will be maintained by the landowner	Unknown	100-150k (\$80k for repairs, \$22k quoted for full investigation)

As an initial step to mitigate this risk, Council has registered our assets with B4U Dig to ensure other infrastructure entities are aware of our assets and do not inadvertently compromise them. However, this only partially mitigates the risk described in this proposal, meaning that Council needs to consider other more comprehensive solutions.

WRC engaged GMD consultants to undertake a flood asset protection scoping report in 2025. The report considered a range of options, and recommended a bylaw given it would have a solid legislative foundation and could progress following the LGA process. It was also noted that several regional councils have taken a similar approach to managing this issue. The report indicated that a cost of approximately \$500,000 be allocated to complete this work, and that a 2-3 year implementation period would be required.

It is noted that WRC has several examples from other regional council asset flood protection bylaws that could be readily adapted to our needs, and that utilising an LTP or AP process could significantly reduce the costs and timeframes involved in consultation.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The outcome required is an intervention that clearly states (and enables Council to enforce) the requirements of working in, around, or impacting our flood protection assets and their operability.

Having this intervention in place will enable us to efficiently and effectively deliver council's responsibilities outlined in the Soil Conservation & River Controls Act and reduce flood asset performance issues and associated risk and liability. It will also clarify council management and maintenance responsibilities and provide robust requirements for landowners, leaseholders, and third parties (e.g., utility & network companies) undertaking works on or near our flood protection assets.

Other benefits will depend on the intervention used. For example, a bylaw will enable Council to ensure access to our assets is protected, reduce the potential for adverse impacts and provide a pathway for remediation and cost recovery.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance/Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	5. Requirement is written into legislation; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and/ or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Maintain our reactive approach within existing budgets and only take action when adverse activities have/are occurring. Timescales for remediation will be extensive and costs will be as they arise and hard to recover. It is difficult to estimate costs due to the different scale of issues and when they become known. Estimated costs to date are typically between \$10K and \$50K per event, though these can escalate beyond \$100K dependent on the issue. The difficulty of resolving issues means that there is a higher risk of asset failure, with other consequences such as claims against WRC.	\$50K - \$100K per year to resolve events	None	No	Our current approach is reactive rather than strategic with many issues going unresolved for years and costs largely falling back on WRC. Risks to assets performance, service provision, environment, and economic activity remain. Other regional councils have attempted the same approach and now moved to a bylaw.
Option 1(minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Utilise alternative strategies including: - Increased education effort with landowners, leaseholders and businesses adjacent to our assets plus utility service providers. - Strengthen our regional and local authority district plan provisions. - Increase the number of easements and covenants, a large time and cost component of this option. - Improve defects notice process and engage legal support sooner. This is expected to be less effective based on experiences where other regional councils have tried similar approaches in the past and have been unsuccessful, noting a number of them have now gone down the bylaw route.	\$250K-500K to implement alternative strategies. plus \$50K - \$100K per year to resolve events.	Negligible	No	Cost, complexity and timeline to deliver are much greater under this option with less certainty of an effective outcome. Securing easements can only be done when land is subdivided and is an ineffective tool for a large and geographically spread asset base.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	This option utilises the low hanging fruit in Option 1 (e.g., increasing education, signage and defects notice process), while also developing and implementing a new asset protection bylaw. Council has already undertaken an assessment of the options available, and has researched suitable bylaw templates from other regional councils that will reduce time, cost and effort. While a comprehensive consultation process is required, we can use a future LTP or Annual Plan process to undertake this and make the process more efficient.	\$250K - \$500K to implement a new asset protection bylaw.	High	Yes	Provides a single, modern, integrated regulatory tool. Enables stakeholders and the general public to participate in consultation in developing the solution. Creates clear, regionally consistent, and legally enforceable rules for access and asset protection.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		As a first step, it is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee receive a report before the end of 2026 providing an overview of the options available and recommended next steps.				Enables proactive management and reduces reliance on reactive responses. Aligns with national best practice from other regional councils and takes advantage of readily available bylaw examples to build on.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	The procurement process will follow WRC requirements and will include: a. Needs Assessment & Planning - Define the scope of work (e.g., legal support, planners and project management). - Evidence compilation and gap analysis (s155(1) preliminary determinations). - Internal vs external capability and capacity to deliver works. - Programming inside or outside of LTP and AP processes and costs / time impacts. b. Engagement with providers - Use existing providers from the professional services panel where possible. - Issue Instructions for Service (IFS) to detail scope, timing and costs of services. c. Evaluate & Award the work based on - Technical capability (e.g., bylaw development, legislative knowledge and project management skills). - Unit rates. - Prior performance in similar works for WRC.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Project Sponsor and PGG (assuming 18-24 Months to complete)	ICM (Infrastructure Manager)	40	
Policy Guidance and PGG	SPI	30	
Comms and engagement specialist	Comms and Engagement	100	
Legal and procedural guidance.	Business Advisory	50	
TBC	In-house or contractor	50	Legal advice, in-house first call
TBC	Contractor	250	SME Project Manager
TBC	Contractor	350	SME Bylaw technical and project management support
TBC	In-house or contractor	160	Hearings reports and submissions analysis

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/317	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$50,000			\$	\$500,000
Total Cost*	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$	\$	\$	\$500,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue							
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$				
Net	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$100,000				\$500,000

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	WRC Opex.
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Project Management, Planning/RMA and replacement legislation, bylaw development, comms and engagement specialist. Whilst WRC have internal resources capable to assist in this work, prior attempts have identified capacity issues that mean they can only undertake support not main project delivery activities.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Council Landowners and leaseholders (likely to be the most impacted group). Iwi and mana whenua* Industry, commerce, and utility entities. Wider community <i>*The Waikato and Waipā Rivers Settlement Legislation has a significant impact on the development of any bylaw relating to the rivers. Notably, Te Ture Whaimana takes precedence over any inconsistent bylaw provision if it is more stringent. This establishes a legal requirement for early and substantive engagement with iwi partners to ensure the bylaw aligns with the vision and strategy for the rivers.</i>
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning</i>	1) Business case development will happen this FY and not incorporated into the SIP costings. 2) Consultation for bylaw development is extensive and will be undertaken as part of a future LTP or AP process.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
<i>and analysis, without current verification</i>	3) Current example bylaws can be utilised for efficiency and effectiveness. 4) Changes to legislation and or local government form will not impact the development or use of bylaws in the future. 5) WRC capability and capacity will be limited, requiring externally contracted resources to deliver the bylaw.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1) Internal resource capability and capacity 2) Appetite to develop a bylaw at a time of economic and local government uncertainty. 3) Uncertainty in implementation of bylaw given local government reform
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1) Legislative compliance - there is a requirement to prove the need for a bylaw. This has been covered in the Flood Protection Bylaw scoping report and case studies of other RCs having to do the same. 2) Being endorsed by ELT and Council for inclusion in the 2027-37 LTP.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 01 – Emergency Response Mitigation: Ensuring we have adequate access to and control over our assets enables us to respond to emergencies effectively . How: By implementing a bylaw and wider community education. STRAT 02 – Legislative Compliance Mitigation: WRC has a legislated duty to provide flood protection and resilience to its communities. A bylaw is an effective way to reinforce our operational effectiveness by giving us additional tools to prevent and remediate adverse impacts on assets. How: By implementing a bylaw and wider community education. STRAT 05 – Health and Safety Mitigation: Poorly maintained (due to access restrictions) or unapproved changes to assets pose physical risks of increased flooding for the community and puts at risk contractors and council staff. Ensuring we have 24/7 access to sites and a means of preventing asset impairment or quickly recovering costs reduce the risk to H&S. How: Ensures safe assets, access to sites and a mechanism to quickly remediate issues generated by others. STRAT 07 – Financial Sustainability Mitigation: Educations and early remediation with recovery of costs is more cost-effective than the current BAU of protracted negotiations, legal action and attempted cost recovery. How: The bylaw and enhanced education will raise awareness of third party duties and restrictions reducing potential asset impacts before they arise, or enabling quick resolution once they do.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	1. Cost Overruns • Risk: Actual costs may exceed initial estimates due to extended consultation or unforeseen complexities (e.g., regulatory and or local government changes). • Impact: Budget overruns can strain council finances or divert funds from other business activities. 2. Public Backlash or Perception Issues • Risk: Landowners, leaseholders and general ratepayers may object to bylaws being implemented as they are seen as being another restriction on their property rights or increasing rates unnecessarily. • Impact: Protracted comms and engagement, legal challenge, and / or political pressure on council decision-makers.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	3. Legal and Liability Challenges • Risk: If bylaw implementation is undertaken without following due legal process and consultation (e.g., with iwi or affected stakeholders), councils may face legal disputes. • Impact: Delays, reputational damage, or financial penalties. 4 WRC Resource Availability • Risk: If WRC resources become less available than anticipated this could increase reliance on contracted services to deliver the projects. • Impact: Delays in bylaw development and delivery, increased costs and reputational damage following extensive consultation. 5. Local Government Reform • Risk: Dissolution of WRC , Head Start reform uncertainty and split function for ICM • Impact: Uncertainty and delays in bylaw development, reputational risk, increased costs, potential duplication of function across TA's or new Unitary Authorities if formed.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Flood Protection Asset Impacts	1	36964507
Asset Protection Project Complexity Tool	1	37946823
Flood Protection Bylaw Scoping Report (GMD)	Final V2	33171312
Draft Land Drainage Issues and Options paper	Draft	11798867

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Consent Management (Potential Savings) (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	4/08/2026 2:11 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	3.57
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	87.5
		Total Score LTP27	91.07

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	None

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	None
Change Complexity	Moderate
Technical Skill Availability	Low
Level of Interest	None
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We provide a standard of flood protection, agreed with communities, as set out in our zone plans and associated documents.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Innovation
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Environmental Oversight monitoring for consent compliance in the Lower Waikato (Whangamarino and Motukaraka catchments) is currently undertaken by a contracted resource costing approximately \$113,000 per annum for Waikare and \$8,000 per annum for Motukaraka. There is an opportunity to bring this work inhouse and save approximately \$48,000 per year.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

25/26 FY costs were:

- \$113,000 – Waikare Oversight and management of consent conditions
- \$8,000 – Motukaraka Oversight and management of consent conditions.
- The activities that SLR undertake are:
 - contract management,
 - oversight of other consultants,
 - communicate with key stakeholders,
 - lead the lake Waikare liaison group meetings including the preparation and administration
 - peer review reports, surveys and work briefs, review reports with historical reports to ensure consistency etc.
 - ensure the T&T technical reports are in line with what is needed for consent compliance
 - Working with RUD
 - responsible for ensuring we are compliant
- When we work back in terms of labour hours, as in total cost/labour rate, we get 494 focused Hours. These hours are direct consultancy hours and do not include other corporate requirements that fall on staff, i.e. additional works, conflicting priorities, meeting attendance, training, leave etc. When all this is added in, it will increase hours required from an equivalent inhouse resource.
- These hours, if brought inhouse would need to be resourced and while they can potentially be resourced by existing FTEs, other priorities will either be reduced or under resourced adding increasing pressure to teams and staff that are already at capacity.

The risk is that we are not set up to monitor/administer these consents. Also Local Government reform could amalgamate consenting services, impacting on additional FTEs if recruited.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

- Attempt to reduced contracted services costs across ICM.
Full utilization of WRC staff resources.
- Internal coordination between RUD and ICM
- Knowledge retention in house
- Ability to determine what level of compliance is required rather than assumed from external parties who may not be as connected to WRC processes as internal staff.
- Ability to ensure communications with stakeholders support WRC planned direction, for example short, medium and long term approaches set out in Waikato Resilience Framework.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Tactical
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Retain contracted services to undertake consent compliance monitoring and reporting. Advantages - No change to processes or reporting quality. - Dedicated technical resource available with multiple resource back up allowing continuity and specialist input when required - Minimal oversight required from WRC staff, reducing workload and pressure - Clean management approach of the consent conditions, one consultancy firm currently deliver efficiently and effectively a range of activities that would be split across multiple roles in ICM Disadvantages - Opportunity to reduce contracted services costs lost. - Utilisation of internal resource capacity reduced. - Development of internal knowledge and experience isn't occurring	\$121,000/yr noting this is already in the current budget.	Medium	No	Existing service provider is experienced in what they do and generate high quality outputs and have overcome previous deficiencies in reporting systems. The potential costs savings and knowledge retention within WRC mean it is not the preferred option.
Option 1(minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Bring consent monitoring and reporting services completely inhouse. Utilise existing FTEs to deliver. Advantages - Opportunity to reduce contracted services costs - Utilisation of internal resource.. - Building Knowledge and experience - Internal resource can determine the level of consent compliance needed	-\$121,000/yr	Medium	No	The work was delivered internally previously and suffered from resourcing issues that impacted report delivery and quality. .

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		- More collaboration between RUD and ICM Disadvantages - Risks to reporting outputs and quality. - Existing internal resource capability is not be adequate to undertake the work. - Risk of non-compliance if activities are not performed adequately. - Resource diversion onto other priorities when in place. - Work required will span across multiple staff in ICM, risk that focus on this piece of work reduces and leads to compliance risk. - High potential for cost increases rather than savings should additional capabilities be required or increase of conflicting priorities - Local Government reform could amalgamate consenting services, impacting on additional FTEs recruited. - This is a targeted rate area that attracts a higher level of allocated cost from associated additional FTE (labour) and therefore savings for the target rate may not be realised. - Proposed FTEs are both currently in the process of recruitment with anticipated levels of utilisation excluding this additional work. - Risk that council outsources other work to free internal resources to undertake this work, nullifying any benefits.				
Option 2 (alternative)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Hybrid version: - Bring consent monitoring oversight in house, utilising part of existing FTE (currently being recruited). - Outsource areas of complex consent monitoring and management to consultants. Advantages - Internal resources can determine the level of consent compliance needed - More collaboration between RUD and ICM	Utilise Existing planner FTE with allowance for external support to assist oversight in administration	Medium	Yes	Enables full allocation of new WRC planner role currently being recruited. Retains some knowledge and experience in house Maintains quality and timing of deliverables.

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		- Determination of requirements needed to meet consent conditions and therefore only externally resourcing what is required. Disadvantages - Risk of non-compliance - Conflicting priorities and therefore focus lost - Resource diversion of Council FTE onto other priorities when in place - High potential for cost increases rather than savings - Local Government reform could amalgamate consenting services, impacting on additional FTEs recruited.	and management of other consultants. 40% internal, 60% external. \$73,000 for external support Contracted services costs saving \$48,000			Least cost biggest benefit option. Opportunity to refocus areas of Current FTEs within Environmental Compliance team, noting that other priorities will need to shift. Rationale for preferred, essentially this consent work is ongoing and building inhouse knowledge is the best solution with the aim of reducing overall costs

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	If option 3 chosen: The procurement process will follow WRC requirements and will include: a. Needs Assessment & Planning - Define the scope of work - Evidence compilation and gap analysis - Internal vs external capability and capacity to deliver works. - Programming work b. Engagement with providers - Use existing providers from the professional services panel where possible. - Issue Instructions for Service (IFS) to detail scope, timing and costs of services. c. Evaluate & Award the work based on - Technical capability (knowledge and project management skills). - Familiarity with ICM / Infrastructure works - Prior performance in similar works for WRC.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Senior Environmental Planner	Environmental Compliance and Planning	220/yr	Consent planning and advice
Business Support Specialist	ICM Business Support	20/yr	Procurement advice and guidance.
Team Leader	Environmental Compliance and Planning	20/yr	Staff guidance and support

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/317	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$ \$605,000	\$1,210,000.
Total Cost*	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$ \$605,000	\$1,210,000.
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$240,000	\$480,000
Total Revenue/Saving	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$240,000	\$480,000
Net	-\$73,000	-\$73,000	-\$73,000	-\$73,000	-\$73,000	\$365,000	\$730,000

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Project Management, data analysis, budgeting, business case writing.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Environmental Compliance Team (they will need to manage any future contracts) Landowners ELT and Councillors
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Roles required under existing and vacant FTE are filled. Council prefer to bring this piece of work in house versus other consent related works. Work currently delivered externally would be undertaken by the Planning and support section within ICM. The same quality, cost and timely of work will be received as is currently delivered.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Time to complete analysis of costs and benefits prior LTP consultation. Internal resource capacity to deliver the works.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Current contract termination date with existing supplier is 2027. This timing would work fine if we were to bring the work in house, given recruitment is still underway.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 02 – Legislative Compliance Mitigation: WRC has a legislated duty to provide consent compliance reporting on time and to a high quality. How: By retaining existing service provider
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk of delivery time, cost and quality of analysis and reporting. Ability to recruit FTE in times of Local Government reform and an uncertain future.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Consenting PIC	1	Consent Management PIC
SLR Contract		1005135

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Lower Waikato Resourcing (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	BAU
Date Created:	31/07/2026 9:54 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	25
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	95
		Total Score LTP27	120

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	Low
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Low
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	None
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	None
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We provide a standard of flood protection, agreed with communities, as set out in our zone plans and associated documents.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	None
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

An additional permanent resource is required for delivery of a large maintenance programme and standardize the teams with Hauraki and other Lower Waikato Operations teams in terms of structure and delivery. The addition of a Deputy Scheme Unit Lead will mean consistency with other Scheme areas but more importantly improve work planning / output as currently the team is limited to what they can achieve by themselves. More often than not the Pokeno Scheme Unit Lead or others in ICM are relied on to support field operations in the area, meaning that those assisting in the area are not able to undertake their core duties and management / specialists are utilised to undertake operational activities.

A Deputy Unit Lead role for Pokeno team will enable sufficient resource to plan and programme works, support operational activities on-the-ground and allow the Scheme Unit Lead to address higher level scheme and stakeholder issues and initiatives. Note this is the only Operations area without a Deputy Scheme Unit Lead, so this initiative will improve and standardise the teams and workload.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Staff allocated to the scheme area serviced by the Pokeno office are not able to meet the BAU workload. Instead, the work programme is reliant on staff from other locations, along with the Team Leader and Scheme Manager. This detracts from these core roles, something that is most evident from the additional demands on the Asset Management Team to support planning and reporting. It has also reduced the on-the-ground work output by the Scheme Lead due to the level of oversight that is required. The efficiency of work programme delivery is also reduced due to staff needing to travel from other offices to support this work area.

The Pokeno area is large geographically, and consists of aging Franklin District Council assets and highly engaged landowners and other stakeholders. This increases the level of effort that is required to operate and maintain these assets compared with modern equivalents. An increased demand on this work programme is also expected once the main channel work programme is re-started, with the main channel of the Waikato River being particularly dynamic and unstable in this area.

These aspects in combination mean the resource allocated to the Pokeno office is recommended as requiring to increase, with a particular focus on planning and overseeing the delivery of operations and maintenance activities. By improving the capacity for planning and resourcing in this area, the productivity of the work programme delivered by the Pokeno office will lift, including the increase in contracted services output that is required to reduce the backlog of work and ensure these scheme assets meet agreed levels of service.

Asset Data Sets

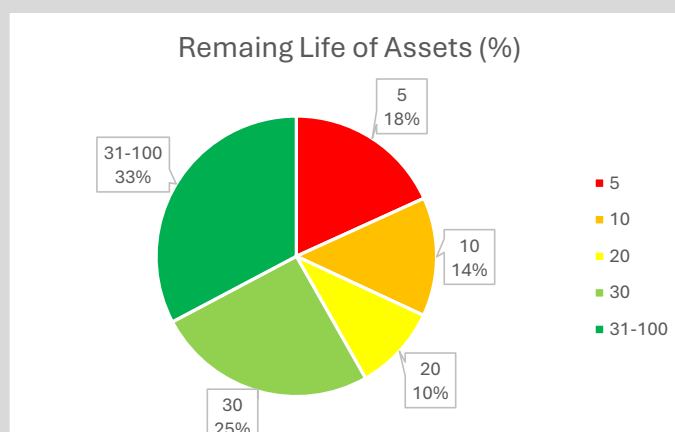
Whilst the condition of the asset base has improved with concerted effort from the team, the number of assets remaining in condition grade 4 and 5, and unknown (not assessed) remains significant, increasing the risk of asset failure and compromising LOS.

Count of All Condition	1	2	3	4	5	#Unknown	Grand Total
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5	#Unknown	Grand Total
Operations - Kerepehi Team	896	956	988	100	48	33	3021
Operations - Lower Waikato Northgate Central Team	442	924	696	106	34	242	2444
Operations - Lower Waikato Northgate Lower Team	415	383	708	65	27	183	1781
Operations - Lower Waikato Pokeno Team	355	400	624	66	31	228	1704
Operations - Paeroa Team	396	736	901	24	17	19	2093
Operations - Te Aroha Team	16	70	239	15	3	11	354
Grand Total	2520	3469	4156	376	160	716	11397

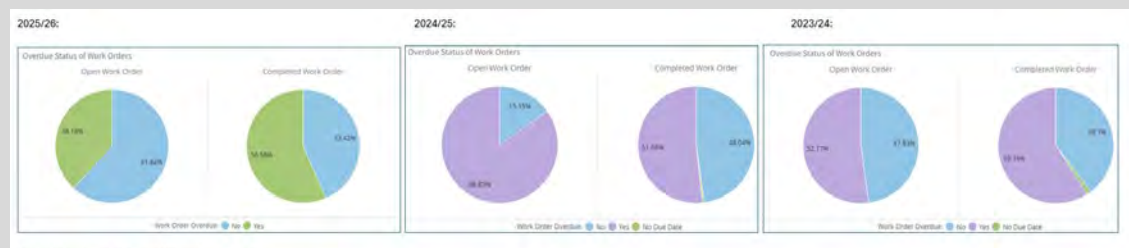
The capital renewals programme continues to increase across the Lower Waikato resulting in increased demands on operational staff supporting the delivery of the programme with site walkovers, operational detail input, scoping, tender assessment, on site management of contractors and landowner communications.



There are 505 assets (32%) with a remaining life of less than 10 years. This is resulting in an increased programmes of both operational and capital works that require resources to deliver. The chart below outlines the remaining life of assets (years) and percentage in that category for the Pokeno area.



Work Backlog



The pie charts above show an improving situation for work order completion over the past three years. However, there is still a substantial amount of work that is not able to be completed on time and this is compromising the asset performance and condition. This resource is specifically intended to reduce the work order backlog and take pressure off others supporting the area.

Some physical works required could be carried out by contractors but we still need the resource to do the planning and procuring of that work, which is a challenge area for the team. A planning / project management resource could be brought in to assist with that type of work but will be considerably more (3-5 times at least) than the ~ \$57/hr unburdened cost of the proposed FTE. Utilising a fixed term position to undertake the role will likely cost the same as an FTE and have less benefit overall.

In addition, the Asset Management team have been heavily supporting Lower Waikato Operations, which is detracting them from their core roles. Examples being, the Reliability Engineer scoping maintenance and minor capital works, undertaking landowner liaison for ongoing issues at sites e.g., pump faults etc. The Maintenance Planner is spending a lot of time in the area undertaking weekly planning and ensuring work order delivery. The asset management team need to be focussed on more tactical and higher value strategic initiatives rather than undertaking operational activities.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

- Manageable workloads on the team based at Pokeno, as well as those based at other offices who have been supporting delivery in this local area.
- Reduced H&S risk and fatigue on the team.
- Improved delivery of BAU and projects to ensure asset condition and LOS are maintained.
- Resource availability in emergency response times i.e., adverse weather and flooding events (currently have no cover for this area beyond the Scheme Unit Lead).
- Enables the Scheme Unit Lead to address higher level issues and initiatives, for example improving landowner relationships and addressing asset and scheme performance issues.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

Investment Category	Maintenance
Mandatory Setting	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue to backfill activities with staff from other operational locations. Advantages: None Disadvantages: Overdue delivery of work orders. Time, costs and resource inefficiencies remain. Increased risk to BAU delivery and LOS attainment. Reduced cover during extreme weather events. Fatigue within the locally based team.	None	None	No	Maintaining the status quo is not feasible long term with both BAU activities and LOS being compromised in the future under this options.
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Employ a fixed term contract employee (FTCE) for 2 years. Advantages: Recruiting for a fixed term role with the imminent local government reform could be more advantageous than a permanent role. Disadvantages: 1) Recruiting and retaining a fixed term role will be more difficult than an permanent role and will potentially incur more training and development costs on turnover of staff in the role.	\$105,000/yr (unburdened)	Medium	No	Costs are the same as recruiting an FTE in the first instance. The risk of higher turnover in the role, loss of knowledge retention and increased learning curve time make this a poorer option.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Employ a new permanent role (Deputy Scheme Lead based at the Pokeno office). Advantages: 1) WRC retains staff and organisational knowledge. 2) Reduced potential for ongoing increased recruitment and onboarding of new staff. 3) Ability to be more focused and increase delivery, resulting in better condition of assets and LOS. 4) Results in wider benefits across infrastructure team, allowing other roles to focus on their core roles.	\$105,000 / yr (unburdened costs) Plus a vehicle: \$60,000 capital and \$16,000 opex (vehicle use).	High	Yes	Costs are the same as recruiting an FTCE in the first instance. The risk of higher turnover in the role, loss of knowledge retention and increased learning curve are reduced significantly. Conforms with employment law.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Disadvantages: 1) Increases permanent staffing establishment by 1 FTE. 2) Creates an ongoing salary commitment. These disadvantages are offset by, improved service delivery, retention of expertise, reduced operational risk and improving the effectiveness and efficiencies within infrastructure section of ICM.				

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Scheme Manager	Infrastructure	10	Recruitment of FTE
Deputy Scheme Unit Lead	Infrastructure	1728	Recruitment of FTE
HR Business Partner	HR	5	Recruitment of FTE

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex	\$60,000					\$60,000	\$120,000
Opex	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$605,000	\$1,210,000
Total Cost*	\$181,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$665,000	\$1,330,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$181,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$121,000	\$665,000	\$1,330,000

*Note *including resourcing costs*

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

from the options provided.	☐

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	The expertise required to implement this proposal already exists within Waikato Regional Council and can be delivered through existing recruitment and employment processes. The role requires practical operational knowledge of flood protection and land drainage schemes, including asset maintenance, inspections, emergency response, and a working understanding of mechanical and electrical infrastructure associated with floodgates, pump stations, and drainage assets.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Key stakeholders include scheme ratepayers, landowners, leaseholders, and the communities that rely on flood protection and land drainage infrastructure across the Lower Waikato (Pokeno) Scheme area. Internal stakeholders include the Infrastructure Section, Asset Management Team, Emergency Management personnel, and Council leadership responsible for maintaining agreed levels of service. The proposal does not introduce significant additional cost to scheme ratepayers, as budget already exists to cover the costs of the FTE.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1) Council wishes to maintain service levels and operational delivery outcomes across the Pokeno area. 2) Council is prepared to consider an increase to approved establishment numbers where there is a demonstrated operational, financial, and service delivery benefit.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1) Organisational FTE establishment limits. 2) Council approval processes.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1) Approval of an additional permanent FTE position within the Infrastructure Section establishment. 2) Availability of ongoing operational funding to support the positions. 3) Successful retention or recruitment of suitably qualified personnel with flood protection and drainage scheme experience.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 01 – Emergency Response Mitigation: Ensuring we have adequate resources to operate and maintain our assets and enables us to respond to emergencies effectively. How: Addition of 1 full time equivalent employees, ensures the availability of trained personnel for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities. STRAT 02 – Legislative Compliance Mitigation: Supporting Council's statutory responsibilities for flood protection and drainage infrastructure. How: Permanent staffing supports ongoing maintenance, inspections, and asset management activities required to achieve service and compliance obligations.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	STRAT 05 – Health and Safety Mitigation: Poorly maintained assets pose physical risks of increased flooding for the community and puts at risk contractors and council staff from an H&S perspective. How: The FTE will make a significant impact on addressing H&S issues on site, and at times of severe weather events when support and cover has been required for operations. Bringing this resources on as an FTE will help stabilise BAU activities and asset health improvements. STRAT 07 – Financial Sustainability Mitigation: Reducing reliance on higher-cost staff from other teams to cover the lack of resources, or the use of external contractors will make the service provision more cost effective This includes better utilisation of the partially stranded 3rd person in the team and avoiding additional future asset renewal costs resulting from deferred maintenance. How: The new FTE will contribute to a measurable reductions in time, travel and use of other team members to deliver services and reducing contractor expenditure, i.e., floodgate maintenance and clearance activities.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk 1: Increase in approved FTE establishment The proposal requires an increase of one permanent FTE position which may be inconsistent with any organisation-wide headcount caps. Mitigation: Demonstrate that the additional position is supported by operational efficiencies, contractor savings, reduced organisational risk, and increased service delivery capability. Risk 2: Ongoing salary commitment Approval of a permanent position creates an ongoing employment cost. Mitigation: Ongoing contractor savings and improved internal delivery capability are expected to substantially offset these costs. Risk 3: Recruitment and retention Difficulty attracting or retaining suitably skilled staff may reduce anticipated benefits. Mitigation: The offer of an FTE role provides certainty for applicants and on appointment aids continuity of service and retains institutional knowledge.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Lower Waikato Resourcing PIC	1	Lower Waikato Resourcing PIC.xlsx
Multi Year Comparison of Asset condition	1	2020 - 2026 Condition data
Pokeno Asset Stats	1	Pokeno Asset Stats.xlsx Download
Lower Waikato – Taupo and Turangi Operations	1	Lower Waikato - Taupo Turangi Operations 1-10 Programme.xlsx

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Waihou Resourcing (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	BAU
Date Created:	31/07/2026 11:54 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	25
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	95
		Total Score LTP27	120

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	Low
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Low
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	None
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We provide a standard of flood protection, agreed with communities, as set out in our zone plans and associated documents.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	4 Regional Resilience
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Staff based at the Kerepehi Office are responsible for the operation and maintenance of flood protection assets across the lower Piako River Scheme and lower Waihou Valley Scheme. This infrastructure consists of a complex flood protection network comprising 27 pump stations, 69 floodgates, and more than 3,200 associated assets and asset components across the scheme. A significant proportion of this asset base is ageing, with approximately 34% of assets having 10 years or less remaining useful life, driving increasing requirements for inspections, maintenance, asset condition improvements, renewals planning, and operational response activities.

Over recent years, the scale of operational delivery across the Waihou Valley Scheme and Piako River Scheme has increased significantly. Operational-led capital works have grown from approximately \$716,000 in 2022/23 to around \$2.7 million per annum, reflecting increasing investment in maintaining asset performance, reliability, safety, and resilience. Much of this work is identified through operational inspections, asset condition assessments, maintenance programmes, and risk reduction initiatives undertaken by field staff.

The appointment of two fixed-term field staff in 2024 provided additional operational capacity to address growing workload demands. During this period, the scheme delivered a substantial increase in asset improvement works, including the installation of new child assets and upgrades to existing infrastructure such as safety railings, pump station improvements, access enhancements and other asset condition improvements. Asset condition data also shows an improvement in the proportion of assets in very good condition and a reduction in assets in poor and very poor condition, an improvement that has coincided with the fixed term increase in operational capacity available to the schemes. These staff have also supported maintenance delivery, floodgate servicing, emergency response capability, health and safety improvements, and operational-led capital works programmes.

The evidence indicates that this higher workload will be ongoing rather than temporary. Maintaining agreed levels of service, addressing the risks associated with an ageing asset portfolio, delivering increasing capital and maintenance programmes, and sustaining flood response capability will require a continuation of this increase in operational capacity. If the two fixed term positions are not retained, Council will need to either accept reduced programme delivery, increasing maintenance backlogs and asset risk. Some work programme improvement will be possible through the use of external contractors, however the scope of work able to be undertaken by this type of resource is limited compared to what can be provided in in-house resource.

The opportunity is to create two new permanent roles at the conclusion of the two existing fixed-term appointments, retaining proven operational capability that is integral to the delivery of the Waihou-Piako Scheme's maintenance, asset management, capital works, and emergency response functions.

Evidence: Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.

The appointment of two fixed-term staff has enabled the Waihou-Piako team to deliver a significantly larger operational and capital works programme while reducing reliance on external contractors.

Key benefits achieved since the appointment of the two fixed-term staff include:

The Waihou Valley Scheme and –Piako River Scheme consist of more than 3,200 assets and associated components. Asset data shows 34% of those assets have 10 years or less remaining useful life and require increasing levels of inspection, maintenance and renewal planning. During the period the two fixed-term appointments have been in place, both schemes have benefited from a substantial increase in asset improvement works, improved overall asset condition ratings and supported a significant increase in operational-led capital delivery. The workload driving these outcomes remains ongoing and is expected to increase. Without the additional capacity, Council will need to either accept a smaller work programme, defer asset improvement programmes, or increase its reliance on external contractors. Therefore, the proposal seeks to establish a permanent increase in operational capacity.

Increased asset management capability

- Completion of capital and asset improvement projects that would otherwise be deferred, resulting in improved asset condition ratings across the scheme.
- Improved asset condition extends asset life and reduces long-term replacement costs.
- Increased capacity to manage an ageing asset portfolio through additional inspections, maintenance activities, flood response, and emergency works without impacting planned programmes.
- Delivery of Asset Condition Improvement (ACI) programmes (e.g. fall prevention, access and structural upgrades) that could not previously be completed within existing resources.

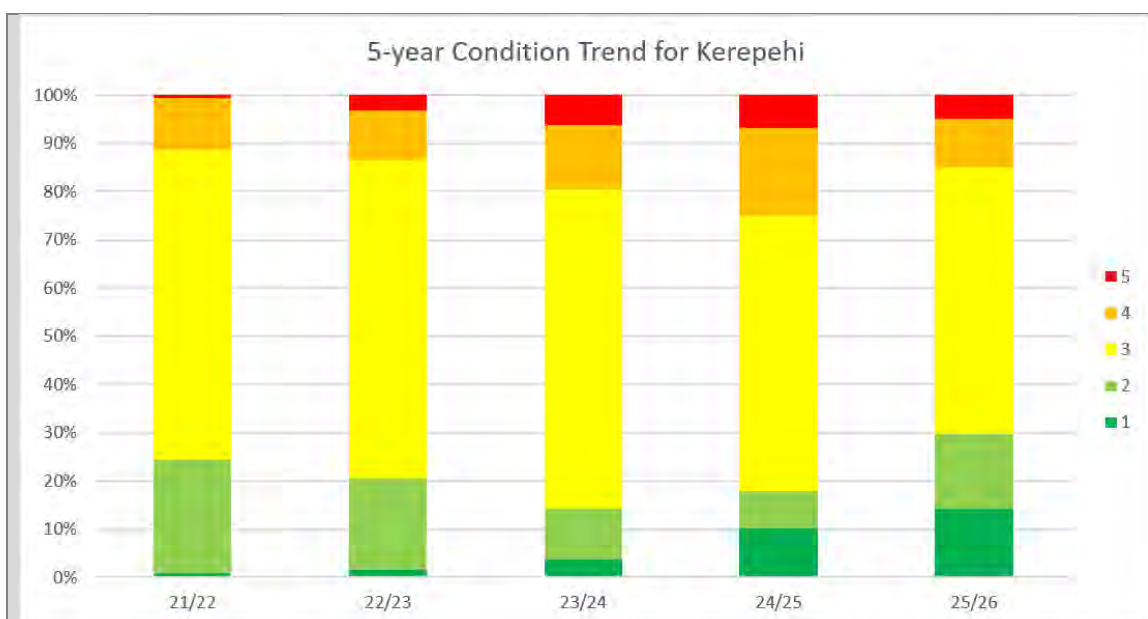
Delivery of asset improvements:

Completion of previously deferred capital and asset improvement projects and improving the overall condition rating of the asset base. Improved condition indicates a longer life for the assets concerned which in turn reduces replacement costs over time.

The number of asset improvements delivered increased significantly during the period in which the two fixed-term staff were employed. Asset records show 87 new child assets were installed in 2024, compared with annual averages of 9 to 17 between 2020 and 2023. These improvements included safety, access, structural and operational upgrades to existing assets and demonstrate the increased delivery capacity available to the scheme. The two additional staff have provided critical support for planning, procurement, construction supervision, installation and ongoing maintenance of these improvements.

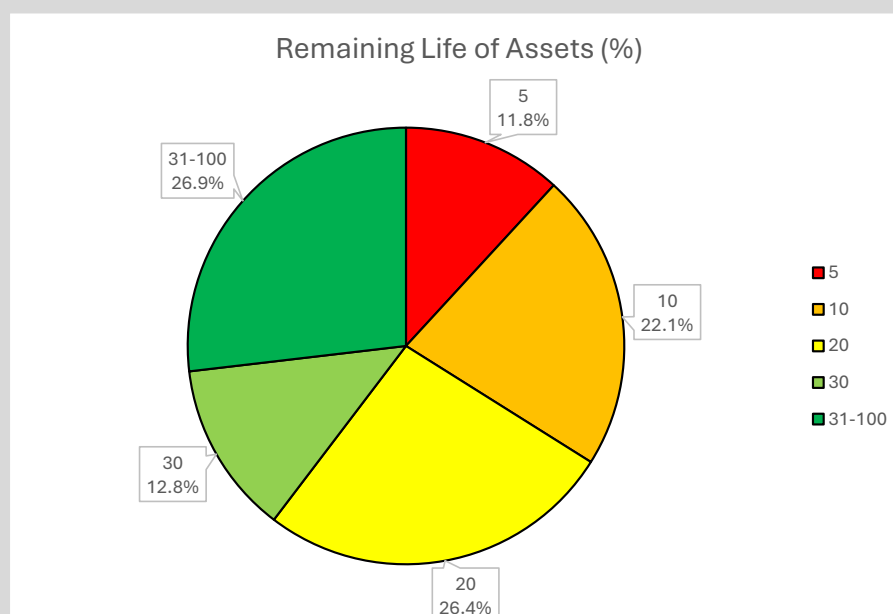
Asset Condition

The proportion of assets in very good condition (Condition 1) increased from 1% in 2021/22 to 14% in 2025/26, while assets in poor and very poor condition (Conditions 4 and 5) decreased from 12% to 9%. This improvement coincides with increased maintenance activity, asset condition improvement programmes, and operational-led capital works delivered during the period the fixed term appointments were in place.



Asset Age and Remaining Useful Life

Asset condition data shows that 1,095 assets and associated components (34% of the total asset inventory) have 10 years or less remaining useful life, including 382 assets (12%) with five years or less remaining life. These assets require increasing levels of inspection, maintenance, renewal planning and risk management. This workload is ongoing and is expected to grow over the next LTP period, creating a sustained need for operational staff capable of undertaking these activities.



Health and Safety:

The fixed term resources have enabled the delivery of high-risk maintenance activities and fall prevention initiatives. These improvements have reduced health and safety risks for operational staff and improved compliance with asset

management and workplace safety requirements. It is expected that there will be an ongoing need for safety improvements to be implemented across the schemes.

Reduced Reliance on Contractors Waihou-Piako Scheme:

Since the appointment of the two fixed-term staff, contracted services expenditure has reduced compared with 2023/24 levels. A number of factors have contributed to the reduction contractor expenditure, the fixed term staff have directly increased Council's ability to undertake maintenance, inspections, floodgate servicing, asset condition improvement works, and operational-led capital works internally. This has reduced reliance on external contractors and contributed significantly to the reduction in contracted services costs.

The reduction in contractor expenditure reflects a change in how work is delivered rather than a reduction in workload. The additional staff have enabled more maintenance, inspections, floodgate servicing, asset improvements, and operational-led capital works to be completed internally. Budgets have therefore been retained to support increasing programme delivery requirements, flood response capability, and asset risk management across an ageing asset base. The proposal seeks to permanently transfer part of this expenditure from contracted services to internal delivery capability rather than reduce service levels or programme outputs.

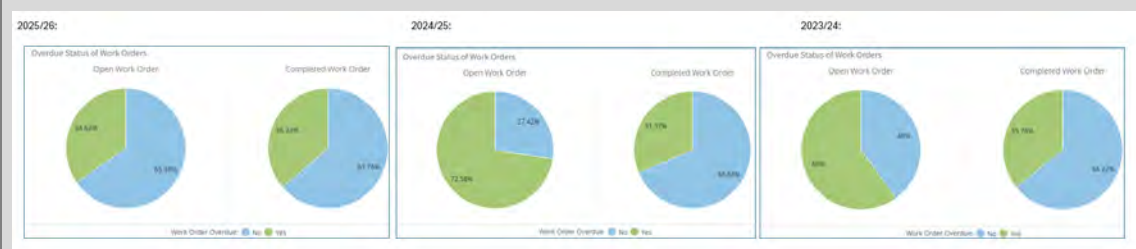
Supporting delivery of an increasing work programme and backlog reduction within the Kerepehi team.

Work order data demonstrates a sustained reduction in maintenance backlogs across the Kerepehi operational area over the last three financial years. During this period, the fixed term appointments increased the team's capacity to undertake inspections, maintenance, floodgate servicing, asset condition improvements, and operational-led capital works.

The additional fixed term resource has enabled the team to complete a greater proportion of planned and reactive work, resulting in a measurable reduction in overdue work orders while maintaining delivery of current programmes. This improvement has occurred alongside a significant increase in operational-led capital works and asset improvement activities across the Waihou Valley Scheme and Piako River Scheme.

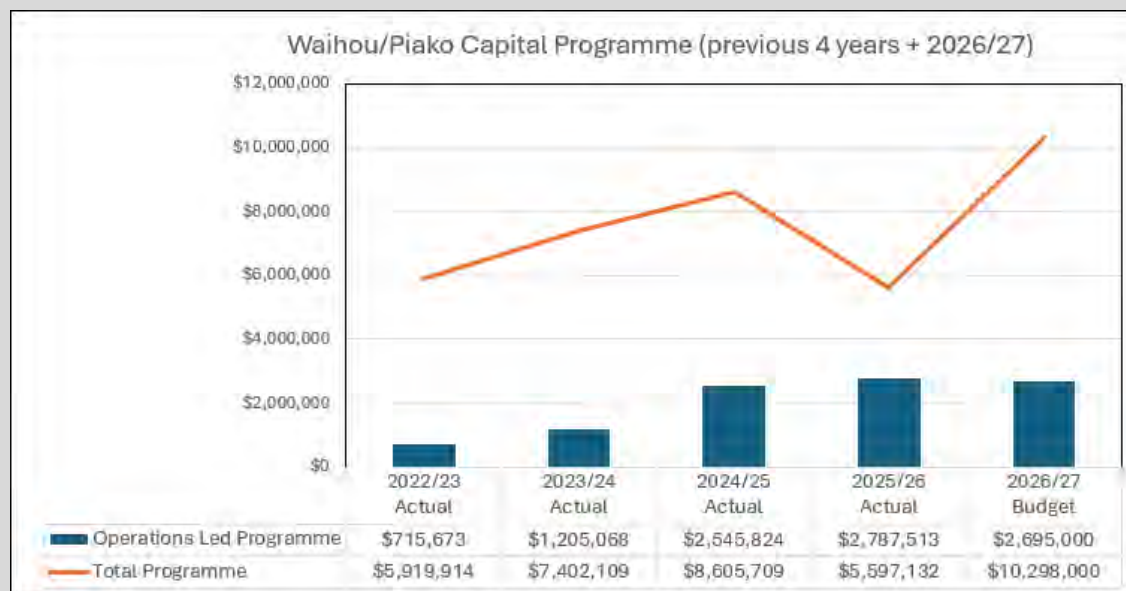
The reduction in backlog is important because it allows the team to proactively maintain assets, address condition issues earlier, reduce operational risks, and support continued improvements in overall asset condition. The data demonstrates that the current workload is not reducing and that an increase in operational capacity will be an important enabler to maintain service levels and deliver the increasing asset management requirements of the scheme.

Without the increase in operational capacity, the team is likely to experience increasing maintenance backlogs, reduced programme delivery, and greater reliance on external contractors to maintain current levels of service.



- The two fixed-term appointments have been integral to delivering a significant increase in operational-led capital works across the Waihou Valley Scheme and Piako River Scheme.
- Work volumes have increased substantially over the last three years in response to asset condition data and the requirements of an ageing scheme, particularly within the Piako River Scheme.
- This work is essential to maintaining assets in good condition and ensuring they continue to perform their intended flood protection functions.

- A significant proportion of the Waihou Valley Scheme and Piako River Scheme capital programmes are generated from operational asset condition assessments and maintenance requirements, making these positions critical to ongoing programme delivery.



The evidence demonstrates that the two fixed-term appointments have delivered measurable benefits through improved asset condition, enhanced health and safety outcomes, reduced contractor expenditure, and the successful delivery of a substantially increased operational-led capital works programme. With operational-led capital investment increasing from \$716,000 in 2022/23 to approximately \$2.7 million per annum, these roles have been an integral part of the scheme delivery model. Creating new permanent appointments will ensure continued delivery of critical asset management, maintenance, and capital works programmes while maintaining reduced reliance on external contractors and supporting long-term value for money.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

- Improved workload management and resilience across the Kerepehi-based operations team.
- Improved asset maintenance and condition management, extending asset life and reducing long-term renewal and replacement costs.
- Reduced reliance on external contractors through increased in-house capability, generating ongoing cost efficiencies. Contractor cost savings will offset the cost of the proposed 2 FTE uplift.
- Improved health and safety outcomes through reduced staff fatigue and increased capacity to safely deliver high-risk maintenance activities.
- Delivery of both business-as-usual operations and an expanding operational-led capital works programme, ensuring agreed levels of service are maintained across the scheme.
- Greater capacity to respond to adverse weather events, flooding, and emergency situations while maintaining planned maintenance and operational activities.
- Enhanced organisational knowledge and continuity through retention of experienced staff with scheme-specific expertise.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations, or regional policy statement.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Status Quo	Return to pre 2024 staffing levels, prior to 2 x fixed term contractors. Allow the fixed term contracts to lapse and outsource the work to contractors where possible. The advantage is the headcount does not increase across the section. The disadvantages are: 1) The existing internal capacity is expected to result in deferred maintenance, reduced inspection frequency, slower delivery of asset condition improvements, and increased risk of asset deterioration, service failure, and emergency response impacts. 2) Current costs savings are lost i.e., contractor savings and reduced costs in asset upkeep and replacement due to fulfilling maintenance programmes, previously not met pre 2024.	Existing budget	Low Maintains current approved staffing establishment without increasing permanent headcount.	No	This adds cost and complexity to the council whilst maintaining a capacity to deliver on BAU activities that is less than what is expected to be necessary.
Option 1	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	The preferred option is to establish two new permanent operational roles for the Kerepehi-based team. The evidence demonstrates that the workload currently being undertaken by the two fixed term appointments is expected to be ongoing and will form a core component of Scheme operations. The roles will support delivery of maintenance programmes, asset condition improvements, operational-led capital works, emergency response, and backlog reduction activities. Without these roles, Council would need to accept increased maintenance backlogs, deferred asset improvements, and reduced service levels (with some mitigation through the use of external contractors delivering a narrower scope of work). The preferred option establishes proven operational capability that has been integral to recent work programme delivery, managing an ageing asset portfolio and maintaining agreed levels of service. The advantages are: 1) We continue to make savings and deliver our works programmes effectively. 2) The fixed term appointments were established to support a specific work programme. The evidence now indicates that the workload they are performing is expected to form part of the long-term operational requirements of the scheme. 3) WRC retains staff and organisational knowledge.	\$140,000	High	Yes	The preferred option is to establish two new permanent operational roles based at Kerepehi. The roles are expected to be integral to the delivery of operations, asset maintenance, emergency response, and operational-led capital works programmes. This option supports the building of an experienced workforce with proven capability and scheme-specific operational knowledge. It reduces reliance on external contractors and provides long-term operational resilience. The cost of the positions is offset through contractor savings and delivery efficiencies, making the proposal close to cost-

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		4) A reduction in contracted services. For example, approximately \$130,000 annual floodgate maintenance saving - Internal delivery of floodgate maintenance and clearance activities alone generates estimated annual savings. Disadvantages: 1) Increases permanent staffing establishment by 2 FTE. 2) Creates an ongoing salary commitment. These disadvantages are offset by contractor savings, improved service delivery, retention of expertise, and reduced operational risk.				neutral while improving service delivery and reducing organisational risk.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Not applicable.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Scheme Manager	Infrastructure	10	Recruitment of FTE
Scheme Unit Lead	Infrastructure	10	Recruitment of FTE
HR Business Partner	HR	5	Recruitment of FTE

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex							
Opex	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$700,000	\$1,400,000
Total Cost*	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$700,000	\$1,400,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$700,000	\$1,400,000
Total Revenue/Saving	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$700,000	\$1,400,000
Net	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low – Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium – Based on historical information ☐ Medium – Based on quotations ☒ High – Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	The expertise required to implement this proposal already exists within Waikato Regional Council and can be delivered through existing recruitment and employment processes. The roles require practical operational knowledge of flood protection and land drainage schemes, including asset maintenance, inspections, emergency response, and a working understanding of mechanical and electrical infrastructure associated with floodgates, pump stations, and drainage assets.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Key stakeholders include scheme ratepayers, landowners, leaseholders, and the communities that rely on flood protection and land drainage infrastructure across the Waihou-Piako Scheme. Internal stakeholders include the Infrastructure Section, Asset Management Team, Emergency Management personnel, and Council leadership responsible for maintaining agreed levels of service. The proposal does not introduce significant additional cost to scheme ratepayers, as ongoing contractor savings are expected to offset additional employment costs.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1) Council wishes to maintain current service levels and operational delivery outcomes across the Waihou-Piako Scheme. 2) Council is prepared to consider an increase to approved establishment numbers where there is a demonstrated operational, financial, and service delivery benefit. 3) Contractor savings and operational efficiencies will continue at levels consistent with those achieved since the fixed-term positions were established. 4) Existing fixed-term employees possess the skills and experience required to successfully transition into permanent positions.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1) Organisational establishment limits and approval requirements for permanent positions. 2) Budget availability and Council approval processes.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1) Approval of two additional permanent FTE positions within the Infrastructure Section establishment. 2) Availability of ongoing operational funding to support the positions. 3) Successful retention or recruitment of suitably qualified personnel with flood protection and drainage scheme experience.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 01 – Emergency Response Mitigation: Ensuring we have adequate resources to operate and maintain our assets and enables us to respond to emergencies effectively. How: Conversion of the current fixed term contract staff to full time equivalent employees ensures the availability of trained personnel for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities. STRAT 02 – Legislative Compliance Mitigation: Supporting Council's statutory responsibilities for flood protection and drainage infrastructure. How: Permanent staffing supports ongoing maintenance, inspections, and asset management activities required to achieve service and compliance obligations. STRAT 05 – Health and Safety Mitigation: Poorly maintained assets pose physical risks of increased flooding for the community and puts at risk contractors and council staff from an H&S perspective. How: The fixed term contract staff have made a significant impact on addressing H&S issues on site, and at times of severe weather events when support and cover has been required for operations. Bringing these resources on as FTE will help stabilise BAU activities and asset health improvements. STRAT 07 – Financial Sustainability

Doc # 37946938

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MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Mitigation: Reducing reliance on higher-cost external contractors and avoiding additional future asset renewal costs resulting from deferred maintenance. How: The fixed-term positions have contributed to measurable reductions in contractor expenditure, including savings (e.g. approximately \$130,000 per annum from floodgate maintenance and clearance activities alone). Converting the positions to permanent roles protects these ongoing savings and supports cost-effective service delivery.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk 1: Increase in approved FTE establishment The proposal requires an increase of two permanent FTE positions which may be inconsistent with any organisation-wide headcount caps. Mitigation: Demonstrate that the new positions are supported by operational efficiencies, contractor savings, reduced organisational risk, and increased service delivery capability. Risk 2: Ongoing salary commitment Approval of permanent positions creates an ongoing employment cost. Mitigation: Ongoing contractor savings and improved internal delivery capability are expected to substantially offset these costs. Risk 3: Recruitment and retention Difficulty attracting or retaining suitably skilled staff may reduce anticipated benefits. Mitigation: Conversion of existing experienced fixed-term staff provides continuity and retains institutional knowledge.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Multi Year Comparison of Asset condition	1	2020 - 2026 Condition data
Waihou Resourcing PIC	1	Waihou Resourcing PIC Download

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: How we Resource Public Events (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	8/3/2026 12:23 AM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	35.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	57.50
		Total Score LTP27	93.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Low

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Moderate
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	Moderate

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	9 Community Funding and Investment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Innovation
Iwi Māori Engagement	Collaborate

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Challenge to RTC

1. RTC is being asked to support more significant regional and national events.
2. RTC has no dedicated event resource and no available budget beyond existing commitments.
3. Event expectations extend beyond transport into relationships, politics, tourism, economic development, communications and whole-of-council risk.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Evidence of the challenge:

1. ELT, Council and committee discussions have already been triggered by Balloons Over Waikato, Raglan World Surf Championships and Te Matatini.
2. Reputational risk from poorly resourced event support has been identified. RTC is leading complex event transport negotiations without dedicated event resource. The existing events budget is already committed to Balloons Over Waikato and the rugby shuttle.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Benefit of having a coordinated whole of council approach:

1. Reduces reputational risk by ensuring event support is properly planned and resourced.
2. Brings the right expertise together across transport, communications, economic development, tourism and iwi relationships to name a few.
3. Supports better advice and planning for the Special Events Working Group.

Category: *In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?*

<i>Investment Category</i>	Innovation
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	1.Reputational risk from poorly resourced event support if more than the balloons and rugby shuttles are expected to be delivered under existing budget and resourcing arrangements. 2.RTC will continue to lead complex event transport negotiations without dedicated event resources. 3.The existing events budget is limited to Balloons over Waikato and Rugby shuttles.	\$60k per annum	Nil	No	Continue to support Balloons over Waikato and Rugby shuttles and no other events are considered or resourced by WRC. WRC comply with the Regional Public Transport Plan policy for Special Events.
Option 1(minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Opportunity for a coordinated WRC approach 1. Additional budget of \$100k to enable more support for event transport services. 2. Support creation of a cross-organisational Events Team to coordinate WRC's approach, led by the proposed Economic Development role. 3. Provide this team with integrated transport services advice and planning.	\$100k per annum	Strengthens the Productivity and Prosperity driver along with optimizing public transport.	Yes	Cross directorate organisational initiative, coordinated via a new Economic Development role. Opportunity to review the existing Regional Public Transport Plan policies in support of a cohesive coordinated whole of council approach that encourages economic development and prosperity.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Depends on the event. If this is the use of existing services and fleet and there is capacity /availability then a costing would be requested of the relevant operator, and a variation to the contract would be agreed.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
			Coordination would be delivered via a proposed new role in the Economic Development team.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Opex	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$100,000	\$1,000,000
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$1,000,000

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ ☐ ☐

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Event management, cross directorate expertise dependent on events being sponsored and/or resourced.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Dependent on the special event. Key stakeholders and participation will vary.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Regional Public Transport Special Events Policy will need to be reviewed, updated if WRC is to support commercial (ticketed) events.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Additional budget of \$100k to support WRC successfully contributing to more regional and national events that are within our region.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	The current RPTP policy would require policy amendment including consultation. Consultation would likely be targeted, but subject to further assessment may require special consultative process including hearings.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	As per strategic risks above.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: MSP Rapid Transit Corridors (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	1/08/2026 9:22 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	14.29
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	67.50
		Total Score LTP27	81.79

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Low

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	None
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	Low
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	Extreme
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: bus contracts
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Hamilton Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan (HWMSP) was developed by the FutureProof partnership and approved by each council and the NZTA Board in 2022.

The Hamilton-Waikato Metro Area is expected to experience significant population and employment growth over coming decades, increasing pressure on the transport network and requiring substantial improvements to public transport.

The 2024-27 investment has been focussed on a series of detailed studies and investigations as well as completion of a Hamilton Southern Links Investment Case. While the Metro Spatial Plan (MSP) identifies future rapid transit corridors and higher frequency bus networks as key components of the region's growth strategy, further investment planning is required to develop a robust funding case for service uplifts.

Planning for the 2027-30 period is well progressed and is due to be presented to the FutureProof Implementation Committee on 28 August. In this context, this SIP outlines Council's investment in the next phase of the MSP delivery provides an opportunity to develop a Detailed Business Case that supports future investment in rapid transit and enhanced public transport services, enabling delivery of MSP outcomes and Regional Public Transport Plan objectives.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The HWMSP and supporting PT planning work identify the need for significant increases in PT service levels to accommodate future growth, improve mode share, and achieve per-capita patronage growth targets. Existing service levels are unlikely to deliver the scale of patronage growth required without targeted investment in more frequent, direct and reliable public transport corridors. A DBC is required to provide the evidence base and investment case needed to support future NLTP funding bids.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The DBC will identify preferred rapid transit and public transport investment pathways, quantify costs and benefits, and provide the strategic, economic and financial justification required for future funding applications. This will position WRC and its partners to secure investment through the 2030-33 NLTP, support Metro Spatial Plan delivery, improve public transport patronage, and enable a more connected, accessible and sustainable transport network across the Hamilton-Waikato metro area.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

Investment Category	Strategic

<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Do nothing	Do not undertake a Detailed Business Case and continue pursuing individual service enhancements as standalone projects. Advantage: no upfront business case cost. Disadvantage: reduced ability to secure large-scale NLTP funding from NZTA, fragmented investment decisions, and risk of an ad hoc approach to service improvements that does not deliver an integrated metropolitan network.	\$0	Avoids DBC expenditure.	No	Does not provide the strategic evidence required to support significant future investment and increases the risk that planned metro public transport enhancements are delayed or not funded.
Option 1	Expanded Metro and Regional DBC	Expand the scope of the DBC to include both Hamilton metro and wider regional Metro Spatial Plan public transport service enhancements. Advantage: provides a comprehensive long-term investment case across the broader region. Disadvantage: higher cost, increased complexity, longer delivery timeframe, and greater risk of delaying readiness for the 2030-33 NLTP funding round.	~\$1.0M	Establishes a strategic case for a broader range of future public transport investments across the metro and regional networks.	No	While potentially delivering broader long-term benefits, the scope is larger than currently required and may reduce the ability to deliver a focused and timely funding application.
Option 2 (Preferred)	Metro BRT Detailed Business Case	Develop a Detailed Business Case focused on Hamilton metro rapid transit corridors and associated public transport service uplifts in Hamilton identified through the Metro Spatial Plan. Advantage: provides a robust evidence base for future funding, supports integrated network planning, and aligns with anticipated NLTP requirements. Disadvantage: requires upfront investment and does not directly deliver service improvements in the short term.	~\$500,000	Supports future funding bids for coordinated service enhancements, improved patronage growth, Metro Spatial Plan delivery, and a more integrated and efficient public transport network.	Yes	Provides the best balance of cost, strategic alignment and deliverability. It creates a credible pathway to secure future funding for multiple service improvements through a single programme rather than relying on piecemeal investment decisions.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	This DBC will be procured through normal WRC Open Competition procurement processes, likely requiring approval through the tenders board.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Programme Sponsor	RTC – Manager Transport Strategy and Delivery	36	Programme Sponsor – To provide programme management team oversight -estimated 3 hours per month for 12 months
Programme Manager	RTC – Team Leader Transport Planning	96	Programme Manager – To provide programme management team oversight -estimated 8 hours per month for 12 months
Transport SME	RTC – Senior Transport Planner	96	Transport SME – to provide transport technical knowledge - estimated 8 hours per month for 12 months
Procurement SME	RTC – Business Support Specialist	24	Procurement SME – to assist with the procurement of the project

Comment – this project will be procured and so bulk of the hours and work on this project will be undertaken by the winning contractor.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$263,860.00	\$263,860.00				\$	\$527,720.00
Total Cost*	\$263,860	\$263,860	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$527,720.00
Partner Funding	\$134,569	\$134,569	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$269,138.00
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$129,291	\$129,291	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$258,582.00

*Note *including resourcing costs*

Notes:

- Opex in each FY (\$263,860) is from \$250,000 opex cost + \$13,860 of internal labour cost
- Partner funding assumes 51% share of Total cost (Opex + labour) and is paid by NZTA

- Labour cost assumptions are an average of \$110/hr for all resources identified below. Labour costs for FY27/28 and FY28/29 is 252 hrs x \$110 = \$27,720. This cost has been split over the two years and added to the assumed \$250,000 annual Opex cost for FY27/28 and FY28/29. This is shown in both the Opex and 'total cost'.
- 'Net' = Total cost – partner funding

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Business case development (NZTA business case approach and investment case preparation). Public transport planning and network design. Transport modelling, demand forecasting and economic evaluation. Financial analysis and funding strategy development. Stakeholder engagement and programme governance.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Waikato Regional Council. Hamilton City Council and Metro Spatial Plan partners, including Future Proof Transport Working Group. NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Significant public transport service uplifts will be required to achieve Metro Spatial Plan growth outcomes and patronage targets. Future NLTP funding processes will require a robust business case and supporting evidence. Population and employment growth within the metro area will continue broadly in line with current forecasts. Partner funding will remain in place. WRC resources are available. A tender process will result in a preferred consultant undertaking the work to the scope of the project.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Funding is available for the business case but not yet for implementation of service enhancements. Delivery timeframes must align with development of the 2030-33 NLTP funding bid. Future investment decisions will remain subject to NZTA funding priorities and available NLTF funding.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Continued alignment with Metro Spatial Plan programme outcomes and partner organisations. Availability of patronage, growth and transport modelling data to support the business case. Agreement from NZTA and project partners on the preferred approach and investment pathway.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This project directly supports STRAT07 Financial Sustainability by developing a robust evidence base for future investment decisions and potential Crown funding opportunities. It aligns with STRAT03 Relationships through significant stakeholder engagement and STRAT09 Climate Change by identifying long-term rapid transit solutions that improve network efficiency and support emissions reduction objectives. The project also relies on STRAT04 People, Capability, Capacity and Culture through the availability of specialist technical resources and capability.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	The business case may not demonstrate sufficient benefits to secure future funding. Changes in government policy, funding priorities or growth projections may affect the relevance of recommendations. Delays in business case delivery could impact readiness for the 2030-33 NLTP funding round. Future implementation costs may exceed current assumptions, reducing affordability of recommended service enhancements.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Zero Emission Bus Depots - Next Phase (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	6/08/2026 10:07 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	53.55
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	55.00
		Total Score LTP27	108.55

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	Low
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Moderate
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	Moderate
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	Low
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: bus contracts
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Innovation
Iwi Māori Engagement	Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

In 2021 the government announced a public transport bus decarbonisation policy mandating zero-emission buses importation from 1 July 2025 and a target of zero-emission buses (ZEB) by 2035. Council's PT bus contracts are due for renewal in the following years of the LTP 2027 & 2028; 2031/2032 and 2036 & 2037. For the current contract (2027 & 2028) Council's approach is to allow the contracted operators to provide buses/charging infrastructure/depot and assurance of sufficient energy is supplied for each site. For future contract renewals, Council's due diligence will require this approach to be reviewed.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

In early 2025 Council completed a ZEB Technical Implementation Plan (TIP) which looked at strategic asset control (Fleet/infrastructure/operations/data/staging) for the Hamilton and north Waikato Bus Contracts renewal. The initial technical and economic modelling undertaken as part of the TIP suggests that Council control of the strategic transport assets, such as depots, would result in cost savings to council over the longer term.

Council decided in July 2025 that it wanted the market to determine the most efficient arrangements for new depots and instructed staff to proceed on this basis. In March 2026 the new Council supported this general direction but instructed staff to include an asset transfer clause in the bus contracts, and to seek funding in the 2027 Long Term Plan to undertake a second round of investigation into the best long term approach for depots ahead of the next batch of contract tendering in the mid 2030s.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Reduced barriers to entry for contract tendering & to support competition enabling faster realisation of wider benefits such as improved air quality and public health.

Longer term strategic control for metro networks to change and grow.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

Investment Category	Innovation
Mandatory Setting	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$*	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Public Transport Operator (PTO) provides land for depot & charging facilities, energy and assets.	\$513.8M	Minimal	May be suitable for regional networks	Limited number of sites for units (esp Hamilton) creates barrier to entry & potential for costs of transition to be transferred over the life of the contract, through contract costs.
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	PTA provides land only	\$550.84M	None	No	For Metro area: Owning land is the most strategic asset and PTA retains control of sites large enough to accommodate number of buses for an expanded network in locations that minimize “dead running” costs. Less so for regional network facilities.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	PTA provides land and energy	\$386.8 M	Cost savings/ability for reduce barriers to entry; support competition & ensure long-term strategic control	Maybe	For Metro area: Owning land is the most strategic asset and PTA retains control of sites large enough to accommodate number of buses for an expanded network in locations that minimize “dead running” costs
Option 3 (alternative)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	PTA provides land, depot and energy	\$433.8M	Cost savings/ability for reduce barriers to entry; support competition & ensure long-term strategic control	Maybe	For Metro area: Owning land is the most strategic asset and PTA retains control of sites large enough to accommodate number of buses for an expanded network in locations that minimize “dead running” costs
Option 4 (maximum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	PTA provides all assets. PTA funds and delivers capital improvements and is responsible for maintenance and renewals; or PTA is responsible but outsources to third party that is not the PTO. The third party will require a margin to be added to the cost.	\$434.8M	Cost savings/ability for reduce barriers to entry; support competition & ensure long-term strategic control	Maybe	For Metro area: Owning land is the most strategic asset and PTA retains control of sites large enough to accommodate number of buses for an expanded network in locations that minimize “dead running” costs.

* costs estimated for regional network based on TIP which looked at 85% of network (Hamilton & north Regional). Costs/benefits and rationale of progressing the ZEB next Phase.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Select consultancy services from Panel.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Transport SME	RTC -Transport Strategy & Delivery	240	Contract Management, network planning, Council reporting
Transport SME	PT Operations	200	Proof of Concept, data review
Legal	Corporate Services	40	Legal services

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex			\$130,000		130,000	\$	\$260,000
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$66,300	\$	\$66,300	\$	\$132,600
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$63,700	\$	\$63,700	\$	\$127,400

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	National Land Transport Fund (Government Grant) Funding Assistance
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Energy supply sector, land valuation, understanding of network operations.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Local Authorities, Tainui Group Holdings and other potential joint venture partners (potential land ownership/lease). Energy Sector (supply relationship) The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA)
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	That WRC will continue to operate as a public transport authority. (PTA) for all/parts of the region. Sector understanding, including sector understanding/readiness for hydrogen propulsion, will have advanced with more examples of other councils owning all or some of depots/charging infrastructure/ZEB fleets to draw at the time WRC undertakes first work in advance of the Regional Bus Contracts renewal. Barriers to entry and competitive tendering are likely to be lower for regional services due to lower cost of land/smaller fleet required for each Unit
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Future remit/function/organisation of WRC (including as a PTA).
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Technical Implementation Plan: Waikato Zero Emission Bus Technical Implementation Plan https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/32905926	Revision 3	32905926

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Te Huia Rolling Stock (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	3/08/2026 8:10 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	39.29
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	32.50
		Total Score LTP27	71.79

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Moderate
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Moderate
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Extreme

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	High
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	High
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	High
Subject Knowledge	High
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	High
Dependencies	High

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We will progressively improve Te Huia passenger rail services between Hamilton and Auckland
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: Te Huia
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Inform

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Council declined funding for this work as part of the 2026/27 Annual Plan on the basis that the future of Te Huia was required before it could commence.

If permanent funding for Te Huia is approved by NZTA and council as part of the 2027 LTP, council is required to develop an NZTA-required detailed business case to evaluate future fleet requirements, ownership and funding models, procurement pathways, operational requirements, and long-term investment options to support the future of inter-regional passenger rail between Waikato and Auckland. The business case will be informed by the outcomes of the Te Huia Future Services SSBC and subsequent NZTA investment planning processes.

Project Description - A detailed business case is required to ensure Te Huia has a fit-for-purpose, reliable, and scalable rolling stock solution that enables future service enhancements, including increased service frequency, improved reliability, network resilience, and potential service extensions.

Challenge or Opportunity - This business case is required as part of NZTA's process to inform future NZTA and council investment decisions. A business case is the appropriate process to identify a rolling stock solution capable of supporting anticipated passenger demand growth, improved service frequency, operational resilience and future network expansion opportunities.

Te Huia's current rolling stock consists of refurbished 1970's assets that were originally intended as a transitional solution. While the need to plan for replacement rolling stock has been recognised for some time, previous council consideration of this work concluded that a detailed rolling stock business case should be deferred until greater certainty existed regarding the long-term future of the Te Huia service. Since then, the Te Huia trial has been extended, and further work has progressed through the Te Huia Future Services SSBC to better understand future demand, service patterns and growth opportunities. This work will provide a stronger evidence base for determining future rolling stock requirements and investment needs.

A comprehensive rolling stock business case is now required to determine the optimal fleet solution, fleet size, ownership model, funding pathway and procurement approach.

Given the long lead times associated with rolling stock procurement (approx. five years) and the finite lifespan of the current fleet (running rights expire in 2036), it is appropriate to commence this work now in line with previous Council direction and the progression of Te Huia future service planning.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The current Te Huia rolling stock consists of refurbished assets that were always intended as a transitional solution rather than a long-term fleet. While the fleet has continued to perform its role, previous investigations identified that replacement planning would be required well in advance of the fleet reaching the end of its operational life. Long rolling stock procurement timeframes, potentially up to five years, mean future fleet requirements need to be assessed before replacement becomes critical.

The Hamilton-Auckland corridor continues to experience significant population and employment growth, increasing demand for efficient and reliable transport connections. Previous business case investigations identified growing demand for inter-regional travel and concluded that existing transport networks will face increasing pressure over time. Customer research and business case work also indicate demand for increased service frequency, improved journey times, additional station opportunities and improved rail connectivity between Waikato and Auckland.

Previous strategic investigations, including the Te Huia SSBC Addendum (2023), the Rolling Stock Detailed Business Case (2024), and the Te Huia Rolling Stock SIP developed for the 2026/27 Annual Plan, consistently identified the need to plan for replacement rolling stock well in advance due to procurement complexity, significant capital investment requirements and the importance of aligning future fleet decisions with long-term service aspirations. Further work was deferred at council request pending greater certainty regarding the future direction of Te Huia.

Since then, the Te Huia trial has been extended and the Future Services SSBC has advanced work on future demand, service frequency, network opportunities and long-term service scenarios. This provides a stronger evidence base to determine future fleet requirements, operational needs, ownership models, procurement pathways and funding options. Commencing the business case as part of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan aligns with previous Council direction and supports timely decision-making on future rolling stock requirements before replacement of the existing fleet becomes time-critical.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Outcomes

- Updated evidence base for future Te Huia rolling stock investment decisions – required by NZTA.
- Defined long-term rolling stock strategy aligned with the Future Services SSBC.
- Clear understanding of future fleet requirements and service capability needs.
- Assessment of funding, financing and ownership options.
- Preferred procurement and delivery pathway.
- Investment-ready business case to support NZTA and Council funding decisions.
- Improved understanding of future costs, risks and implementation requirements.

Benefits

- Supports informed decision-making on a potentially significant future rolling stock investment programme.
- Reduces strategic, commercial and procurement risks by investigating options before major funding commitments are made.
- Provides sufficient lead time to plan for replacement of ageing rolling stock and avoid future service continuity risks.
- Identifies the most effective and affordable pathway for meeting future passenger rail service requirements between Waikato and Auckland.
- Positions Waikato Regional Council and its partners to respond to future passenger demand growth and service enhancement opportunities.

- Provides a sound evidence base for discussions with NZTA, central government and other funding partners regarding future investment requirements.
- Improves confidence that future rolling stock, ownership and procurement decisions are aligned with long-term service aspirations, affordability considerations and regional transport objectives.
- Supports the long-term sustainability, reliability and resilience of inter-regional passenger rail services by enabling timely planning for future fleet replacement and service development.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

Comment: A previous rolling stock proposal was considered through the 2025/26 planning process and deferred pending greater certainty regarding the future of Te Huia. The options below assess how best to progress this work now that the Te Huia trial has been extended and the Future Services SSBC is providing additional evidence to inform future decisions.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Do Not Progress Further Work	Continue relying on existing business cases and previously completed investigations. Advantages: No additional cost. Existing investigations remain available to inform future discussions. Disadvantages: Existing evidence does not address future service scenarios, updated demand forecasts, funding arrangements, ownership models or procurement pathways. Decisions would increasingly rely on outdated assumptions.	\$0	Retains existing knowledge base and avoids short-term expenditure.	No	Does not address key information gaps or provide sufficient evidence to support future investment decisions. Increases the risk of delayed decision-making and future service constraints.
Option 1	Business Case Refresh	Update previous rolling stock business case assumptions using information from recently completed studies and emerging Future Services SSBC findings. Focus on validating existing assumptions rather than undertaking a full reassessment. Advantages: Lower cost than a full business case. Provides updated strategic context and refreshed demand assumptions. Builds on previous investigations. Disadvantages: Limited ability to assess alternative technologies, ownership models, funding	\$500k-\$750k	Improved evidence base and updated strategic context at lower cost.	No	Provides a useful update to existing work but may not provide sufficient evidence to support future investment decisions involving a potentially significant rolling stock procurement programme.

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Strategic Investment Proposal

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		pathways, commercial structures, procurement options and future service scenarios.				
Option 2	Comprehensive Te Huia Rolling Stock Business Case	Develop a comprehensive business case informed by the Future Services SSBC, updated demand forecasting and NZTA investment planning processes. Assess future fleet requirements, service scenarios, technology options, ownership structures, funding and financing models, procurement pathways, delivery staging, operational requirements and whole-of-life costs. Advantages: Provides a robust evidence base for future investment decisions. Identifies preferred fleet, ownership and procurement solutions. Supports engagement with NZTA and funding partners. Reduces strategic, commercial and procurement risk. Ensures future decisions are based on current evidence and future service aspirations. Disadvantages: Higher cost than a simple refresh. Requires specialist rail, commercial and financial expertise.	\$1M	Comprehensive evidence base, investment-ready business case, reduced future decision-making risk, and improved readiness for future procurement and funding decisions.	Yes	Best balances cost, risk and decision-making certainty. Provides sufficient analysis to support future rolling stock investment decisions while avoiding premature procurement activities before future service requirements and funding arrangements are confirmed.
Option 3	Business Case and early Market Engagement	Undertake the comprehensive business case together with supplier engagement, market sounding and procurement readiness activities. Advantages: Improves understanding of supplier capability, procurement risks and market	\$1.5M+	Business case outcomes plus enhanced market intelligence and	No	Could accelerate future implementation but brings forward expenditure and effort before key strategic decisions have been made. The additional

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		conditions. May reduce future procurement timeframes. Disadvantages: May be premature before preferred service outcomes, fleet requirements and investment decisions are confirmed. Risks undertaking procurement-related activities that may need to be revisited.		procurement readiness.		value does not currently justify the additional cost and risk.
Option 4	Immediate Rolling Stock Procurement Planning	Commence procurement planning activities before completion of updated business case investigations. Advantages: Potentially shortens future procurement programme timeframes. Disadvantages: Significant risk of progressing procurement based on incomplete information. Future service requirements, funding arrangements, fleet specifications and ownership models remain unclear.	\$2M+	Early procurement readiness	No	Creates substantial strategic, commercial and investment risk by moving into procurement activities before establishing a preferred service model, fleet requirement and funding pathway.

Comment: The preferred option is the Comprehensive Te Huia Rolling Stock Business Case as it provides the level of analysis and evidence required to support future investment decisions involving potentially significant rolling stock procurement costs. While higher-cost options may improve procurement readiness, they are considered premature until future service requirements, funding pathways and preferred fleet solutions have been confirmed. The option costing excludes the labour cost.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	Procure specialist rail, commercial, transport planning, economic, financial and business case expertise through an open market process or existing government procurement panels. Specialist support may be required for rolling stock strategy, rail operations, procurement, commercial structuring and funding analysis.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Programme Manager	Portfolio Delivery	700	Overall project leadership and coordination, governance and reporting, sponsor support, stakeholder management, rail operations interface, business case coordination, service planning inputs, risk management, and engagement with KiwiRail, NZTA, Auckland Transport, territorial authorities and iwi partners.
Transport Planning Specialist	Regional Transport Connections	250	Strategic transport planning, review and integration of Future Services SSBC findings, future service scenario assessment, network integration, benefits assessment, future rail service requirements, and technical review of business case outputs.
External Rolling Stock, Commercial & Financial Specialist	External	700	Rolling stock strategy, fleet requirements, technical assessment, ownership and leasing options, procurement pathways, commercial analysis, economic assessment, funding and financing models, affordability assessment and business case development support.
Finance Business Partner	Finance	80	Financial modelling, funding assumptions, LTP alignment and affordability assessment.
Procurement Advisor	Procurement	70	Procurement strategy, market engagement advice and future procurement readiness assessment.

Comment: Resource requirements and effort estimates are indicative only and have been developed for investment planning purposes. Actual resource requirements, specialist support, and effort allocations will be confirmed during project initiation and business case development. Internal resourcing will be subject to availability and prioritisation through the annual planning process.

This investment relates to the development of a comprehensive rolling stock business case and associated technical, commercial, financial and procurement investigations. Previous Te Huia rolling stock investigations identified that replacement rolling stock may represent a significant future capital investment, potentially exceeding \$100 million depending on fleet size, service requirements, ownership arrangements and procurement approach. Accordingly, specialist expertise is required to support assessment of future fleet requirements, procurement pathways, ownership models, funding arrangements, commercial structures and implementation options before future investment decisions are considered.

Resource and labour costs are indicative only and will be on top of the estimated project cost and have been developed for investment planning purposes. Therefore, estimate cost for the preferred option would be \$1,241,319m which includes \$1m (project cost) and \$241,319 labour cost.

Internal labour costs have been estimated using Waikato Regional Council's 2026-27 remuneration scale at 95% of the applicable salary bands, comprising Programme Manager (Band I), Transport Planning Specialist (Band H), Finance Business Partner (Band H), and Procurement Advisor (Band G).

Resource	Band	95% Salary	Hourly Rate
Programme Manager	I	\$132,837	\$63.86/hr
Transport Planning Specialist	H	\$115,091	\$55.33/hr
Finance Business Partner	H	\$115,091	\$55.33/hr
Procurement Advisor	G	\$99,695	\$47.93/hr

External specialist support for rolling stock, commercial, financial and procurement investigations has been estimated at an average consultancy rate of \$250 per hour. Actual resource requirements, specialist support, effort allocations, charge-out rates, and procurement costs will be confirmed during project initiation and business case development. Internal resourcing remains subject to organisational priorities and annual planning processes.

Resource	Team	Hours	Rate	Labour Cost
Programme Manager	Portfolio Delivery	700	\$63.86/hr	\$44,704
Transport Planning Specialist	Regional Transport Connections	250	\$55.33/hr	\$13,833
Finance Business Partner	Finance	80	\$55.33/hr	\$4,427
Procurement Advisor	Procurement	70	\$47.93/hr	\$3,355
External Rolling Stock, Commercial & Financial Specialist	External	700	\$250.00/hr	\$175,000
Total		1,800		\$241,319

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$0	\$
Opex	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00				\$0	\$1,000,000
Total Cost*	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000
Partner Funding	\$255,000	\$255,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$510,000
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$255,000	\$255,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$510,000
Net	\$245,000	\$245,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$490,000

*Note *including resourcing costs*

Comment:

The preferred option consists of the development of a comprehensive Te Huia Rolling Stock Business Case over FY27/28 and FY28/29. The estimated total cost is \$1.0 million, comprising specialist technical, commercial, financial, procurement and business case expertise, together with internal project management and governance support. Funding assumptions are based on a 51% NZTA Financial Assistance Rate (FAR), resulting in an estimated NZTA contribution of \$510,000 and a local share contribution of \$490,000 from Waikato Regional Council.

This investment does not include future rolling stock procurement costs. Previous investigations identified that replacement rolling stock may represent a significant future capital investment, potentially exceeding \$300 million depending on fleet requirements, service aspirations, ownership arrangements and procurement pathways. The purpose of this business case is to provide the evidence required to support future Council, NZTA and Government investment decisions before any commitment to procurement is made.

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Regional Transport Connections funding supported by NZTA co-investment, subject to approval through the National Land Transport Programme. Funding assumptions are based on a 51% Financial Assistance Rate (FAR) contribution from NZTA and a 49% local share contribution from Waikato Regional Council.
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	• Passenger rail strategy and operations. • Rolling stock fleet planning and technical specification. • Transport planning and demand forecasting. • Commercial, economic and financial analysis. • Procurement and market engagement. • Business case development. • Stakeholder engagement and partnership management. • Government funding and investment assessment expertise.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	• Waikato Regional Council. • KiwiRail. • New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). • Ministry of Transport. • Auckland Transport. • Auckland Council. • Hamilton City Council. • Waikato District Council. • Future territorial authority funding partners. • Iwi partners and Māori stakeholders. • Potential rolling stock suppliers and lessors
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	• Te Huia continues to be considered a strategic inter-regional passenger rail service and future investment decisions will be informed by the Future Services SSBC, Council planning processes and NZTA funding decisions. • Previous Council direction to defer detailed rolling stock planning until greater certainty regarding Te Huia's future can now be addressed through the extension of the trial and progression of the Future Services SSBC. • Demand growth and service enhancement opportunities identified through previous business cases remain broadly valid. • Funding partners remain willing to participate in future rolling stock investment discussions. • Future rolling stock procurement remains achievable through either direct procurement, leasing or alternative ownership arrangements.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	• Long rolling stock procurement lead times (up to five years). • Uncertainty regarding future Crown funding and co-investment arrangements. • Availability of suitable rolling stock solutions within the New Zealand rail environment. • Timing of future service decisions and strategic transport planning outcomes. • Market capacity and supplier interest. • Future investment decisions regarding Te Huia permanence and funding remain subject to Council, NZTA and partner approvals.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	• Completion of the Te Huia Future Services SSBC and confirmation of recommended future service scenarios. • Confirmation of long-term operational funding arrangements. • Stakeholder alignment on future service levels and growth aspirations. • Approval of NZTA co-investment and future funding pathways. • Confirmation of preferred operating, ownership and procurement models

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	• STRAT02 Legal Compliance – supports future planning and investment decisions required to maintain a safe, compliant and sustainable inter-regional passenger rail service. • STRAT03 Relationships – supports engagement and alignment across key transport partners including KiwiRail, NZTA, Auckland Transport, territorial authorities and iwi partners regarding the future of Te Huia. • STRAT07 Financial Sustainability – provides evidence-based analysis to support future investment decisions, funding strategies and affordability assessments associated with replacement rolling stock. • STRAT09 Climate Change – enables future investment decisions that may contribute to mode shift and lower-emission transport outcomes.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	• Business case outcomes may identify significantly higher investment requirements than currently anticipated. • Future funding support may not be available at expected levels. • Te Huia service assumptions or strategic direction may change during development. • Procurement and supply-chain constraints could affect future delivery options. • Demand forecasts may differ from current assumptions. • Government transport priorities may change over the planning period.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
ANNUAL PLAN 26-27. Strategic Investment Proposal. Te Huia Local Share Strategic Investment Proposal SIP - Rolling Stock		Discover # 38087768

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Additional Transport Planning Resource (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	5/08/2026 10:52 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	39.29
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	52.50
		Total Score LTP27	91.79

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Moderate
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	Moderate
Change Complexity	Moderate
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	Moderate

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	0 No alignment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Culture
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

1. With 5% of the organisational workforce, RTC spends 30% of council's annual budget and delivers both statutory responsibilities and a large number of public-facing activities (for example over 1,000 bus and train services every day).
2. Current staff resourcing levels are deficient and the RTC transport planning team requires more staff to be able to undertake and complete its duties and tasks.
3. RTC has remained within existing staff resourcing since establishment in 2021 (i.e. no new FTE - one new fixed term role was added in the 2024 LTP – this ends in mid-2027).
4. This SIP considers how to add new resources into the Transport Planning team to deliver existing and future workload pressure.

Council has asked several times how it can provide more resourcing to RTC to enable the work to be done (for example during the RTC Deep Dive in August 2026).

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

1. A Section 17A review completed in the second half of 2025 recommended 'conducting a resourcing review of the RTC directorate to support efficient future delivery of PT services'. The management response to the review (Attachment One) highlighted the 2025 restructure as the start of the response, establishing clearer team structures that are able to grow over time to match the increasing workload.
 2. Workload has increased markedly over the last five years since the Directorate was established as a result of service delivery growth, statutory obligations, national policy, and an evolving customer interface.
- In addition:
- NZTA funder requirements and expectations have grown (e.g. Sustainable PT Framework (changes to Land Transport Management Act), private share requirements).
 - Te Huia services commenced in 2021 and (LTP decision) may become permanent from mid-2027. While operational functions have been subsumed into BAU, there has never been capacity within the Transport Planning team for ongoing planning and project functions. WRC now has a national profile and significant planning and operations workload.
 - Many new regional and urban bus services introduced between 2022 and 2024 increased the daily operational load, contract management, reporting and customer tasks.
 - National and NZTA policy direction has increased demands on the whole team (e.g. NZTA annual work programme, PT Procurement Manual review).
 - The FutureProof and Hamilton Metro Spatial Plan delivery workload has been significant and ongoing.
 - The team has been asked to support a greater role in delivery of the new Waikato Regional Transport Model.
 - Total Mobility is becoming a regional service and is going through a national transition.
 - Community Transport has grown from a concept in 2021 to a \$500k annual fund and a national profile for WRC.
 - The introduction of PT National Ticketing (Motu Move) will change the PT customer interface.
 - Supporting development and delivery of the Regional Spatial Plan will require more resourcing from RTC (i.e. review of LTMA, changing role of RLTP's).

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

1. Enable workload to be delivered primarily using in-house resources.
2. Reduce pressure and stress on existing staff and enable successful delivery of current and future workload.
3. Improved councillor, customer and stakeholder engagement.
4. Potentially, no impact on budget.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Tactical
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Description: No change – functions are delivered by an under-resourced team. Advantages: In this option, staff continue to deliver excellent work but do so within an environment of constant under-resourcing. Disadvantages: This model relies on contracted services to deliver the annual programme and results in an inability to participate in the increasing number of organisational change initiatives, delivers deteriorating service to councillors, customer, stakeholders and funders, and creates ongoing stress for the team.	Zero	None	No	To continue within the same resourcing fails to take account of the different roles and workload the team now faces, and what the future demands will be (next 2-3 years).
Option 1(minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Description: Increase Transport Planning team FTE by one person (band H). This would allow RTC to work towards in-house delivery of the current and future workload. Advantages: Enables more staff to be recruited in key areas to fill capacity gaps. Will reduce reliance on contracted services. Disadvantages: Cost (general rates funded).	\$120,000	Better workload allocation. Increased ability to respond to councillor, customer, stakeholder and funder requests. Better support for RSP and RLTP processes.	Yes	Provides resources where the need is greatest.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Description: Review consultant and contractor spend and convert \$100k of this into labour to fund 1 new FTE within the Transport Planning team.	Zero	Better workload allocation. Increased ability to respond to councillor,	No	Can be delivered within existing budget.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Advantages: No overall increase in cost.		customer, stakeholder and funder requests. Better support for RSP and RLTP processes.		
		Disadvantages: Reduction in external funding as NZTA subsidy levels are lower for staff costs than for contracted services.				
Option 3 (alternative)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	In addition to identified options Broaden the review to commence consideration of the opportunities created at the time National Ticketing is launched in the Waikato region (currently November 2027). This change to the customer operating model (including the withdrawal of cash from bus services) changes the role of the customer counter at Hamilton Transport Centre and the function of the 24/7 call centre. There is a need to consider whether some or all of the these roles be refocussed into other priorities. For RTC, this includes the next phase of delivery of the Customer Experience Roadmap, and more focus on building patronage through valuable engagement with employers and the wide range of future customers.	zero	Builds on Option 1 and supports a transition of the customer operating model after NTS is launched at end 2027.	Later	Can be delivered within existing budget. Provides resources where the need is greatest.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k No procurement required (reduction of existing procurement).
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Recruitment of Transport Planner

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Project management and delivery	RTC	15	
Consideration of options, team planning	RTC	15	

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$1,200,000
Total Cost*	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$1,200,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$1,200,000

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council via general rates
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	A suitable and qualified candidate to be recruited.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Existing staff
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Labour budget and the cost to ratepayers
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1. RLTP development and other statutory obligations. 2. RSP requirements
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This SIP connects to Strategic Risk 04: People, capability, capacity and culture. <i>There is a risk that Waikato Regional Council does not enable a constructive organisational culture that may result in poor staff attraction, retention, engagement, and performance. This will in turn mean that we are not able to deliver on our strategic priorities and goals as we will not have the capacity, skillset, or relationships to effectively engage with communities, iwi partners and our key stakeholders.</i>
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	None beyond those already stated.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
RTC Section 17A review (2025) Management Response as shared with Council at February 2026 WRC Transport Committee meeting.		(discover id: 34490211)

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Trial - Pokeno - Drury (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	31/07/2026 1:34 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	10.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	72.50
		Total Score LTP27	83.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	None

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: bus contracts
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Pōkeno is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Waikato and has strong travel links with South Auckland for employment, education and access to the wider rail network. However, there is currently no direct public transport connection between Pōkeno and the emerging Drury transport hub. This proposal supports the RPTP objective of delivering an integrated public transport network that enhances accessibility and provides attractive alternatives to private vehicle travel, while improving cross-boundary connectivity between Waikato and Auckland.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The North Waikato Bus Network Review identified a direct Pōkeno-Drury express service as a medium-term network enhancement to support forecast growth in Pōkeno and employment growth in South Auckland. Consultation on the proposal found that approximately 40% of respondents indicated they would use the service, while technical assessments highlighted the opportunity to improve access to Drury Station and Auckland's rapid transit network.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The proposed weekday peak express service would provide a fast and convenient connection between Pōkeno and Drury Station, supporting access to employment, education and onward rail connections into Auckland. The service would improve transport choice for residents, reduce reliance on private vehicles, support planned population growth in North Waikato, and strengthen regional connectivity between Waikato and Auckland while establishing a foundation for future public transport network expansion.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Do Nothing	No new service between Pōkeno and Drury. Advantage: no additional operating costs particularly when demand is unknown and/or not yet proven. Disadvantage: no direct public transport connection to Drury Station, limited access to South Auckland employment opportunities, and reduced transport choices for a rapidly growing community.	\$0	Avoids the too-early implementation of a service when demand is not yet known	No	Does not address forecast growth, emerging travel demand to South Auckland, or the strategic opportunity to connect Pōkeno with the Drury transport hub.
Option 1	Enhanced Express Service (Peak + Off-Peak)	Provides the proposed peak express service plus additional off-peak return trips during the day. Advantage: greater flexibility and improved travel opportunities throughout the day. Disadvantage: significantly higher operating costs before demand is proven, with risk of low off-peak patronage.	~\$400,000 per annum	Greater service availability, improved access to employment, education, shopping and rail connections throughout the day.	No	While offering greater accessibility, the additional investment is difficult to justify until demand for the peak service has been established.
Option 2 (preferred)	Peak Express Pōkeno-Drury Service	New weekday express service between Pōkeno and Drury via SH1, operating two return trips per day during peak periods. Advantage: fast, direct connection to Drury Station and South Auckland employment areas at a relatively modest cost. Disadvantage: limited travel opportunities outside peak periods.	~\$200,000 per annum	Improves access to employment and education opportunities, supports rail connections into Auckland, provides greater transport choice, and responds to forecast growth in Pōkeno and Drury.	Yes	Provides the best balance between cost and benefit, delivers a strategic new connection to the Auckland rapid transit network, and allows demand to be tested before committing to a higher-frequency service.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	There is potential that this service may need to be procured / tendered with a new bus operator if a variation to an existing contract is not achievable. This would be at an annual operating cost. This process would follow the bus procurement strategy process and align with NZTA and WRC procurement processes.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Programme Manager	RTC – Project Manager	100	Programme Manager – To provide programme management team oversight. From July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Network Planner SME	RTC – Transport SME	68	Network Planner SME – to provide network planning work from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Transport Planner SME	RTC – Transport SME	114	Transport Planner SME – lead the transport planning work and coordination from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Comms SME	RTC – Communications SME	96	Communications SME – to lead any communications or consultation from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Operations SME	RTC – Transport Operations SME	56	Operations SME – To provide operational oversight and input from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Procurement SME	RTC – Procurement lead	32	Procurement SME – to lead the tender / procurement / contract variation work for the bus contract from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY31/32	FY33/34	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$0.00	\$251,560.00	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$	\$851,560.00
Total Cost*	\$	\$251,560	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$	\$851,560.00
Partner Funding	\$	\$128,296	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$	\$434,296.00
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$123,264	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$	\$417,264.00

Note *including resourcing costs

Notes:

- Assumed year 2 launch
- Opex in FY28/29 (\$251,560) is from \$200,000 bus operating cost + \$51,560 of internal labour cost

- Partner funding assumes 51% share of Total cost (Opex + labour) and is paid by NZTA
- The Opex cost does not include private share or fare revenue. Potential bus fare revenue has not yet been calculated or included.
- Labour cost assumptions are an average of \$110/hr for all resources identified below. Labour costs for FY28/29 (when the planning, communications and service launch work is undertaken) is 466 hrs x \$110 = \$51,260. This cost has been added to the assumed \$200,000 Opex operating cost for FY28/29 and showing in 'total cost'.
- 'Net' = Total cost – partner funding

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Public transport planning and service design. Public transport operations and contract management. Timetable planning and rail integration. Stakeholder engagement and cross-boundary coordination with Auckland Transport. Funding bid application.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Waikato Regional Council. NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. Auckland Transport (Drury Station connections). Waikato District Council. Public transport operator(s). Pōkeno residents, commuters, students and rail passengers travelling to South Auckland and Auckland.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Pōkeno population and travel demand will continue to grow. Demand exists for direct connections to Drury Station and South Auckland employment areas. Drury Station will continue to provide suitable capacity for connecting bus services Patronage forecasting, and therefore fare revenue, is not required at the time of writing the SIP. Partner funding will remain in place. WRC resources are available.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Limited funding availability for new public transport services. Reliance on peak-only service levels to maintain affordability. Uncertainty regarding the timing and scale of future growth in Drury and Pōkeno

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Securing NLTF and local share funding. Agreement on service integration and stop arrangements at Drury Station. Availability of an operator and vehicle resources to deliver the service.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This project supports STRAT03 Relationships through collaboration with Auckland Transport, NZTA and local authorities to manage cross-boundary transport challenges. It contributes to STRAT07 Financial Sustainability by ensuring investment is directed toward addressing growth-related transport demand, while supporting STRAT09 Climate Change through improved public transport connectivity and mode shift opportunities.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Patronage may be lower than forecast, reducing value for money. Growth in travel demand may occur more slowly than anticipated. Changes to rail services, station operations or Auckland transport planning could affect service attractiveness. Future operating costs may increase beyond current estimates.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Trial Cambridge local (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	29/07/2026 9:41 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	10.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	77.50
		Total Score LTP27	88.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	None

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: bus contracts
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Cambridge is one of the Waikato region's fastest-growing communities, with the population expected to increase from around 22,000 residents today to approximately 31,000 by 2037. While Route 20 provides a successful and growing connection between Cambridge and Hamilton, public transport coverage within Cambridge remains limited, particularly in northern growth areas. This creates an opportunity to improve access to employment, education, services and community destinations while supporting planned growth and increasing transport choice. The proposed Cambridge Local Service aligns with the Regional Public Transport Plan objectives to improve access, provide attractive alternatives to private vehicle travel, and establish stronger public transport connections within and between metro-area communities.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The Cambridge Local Service Assessment found that Route 20 is already a well-used and growing service, carrying around 110,000 passenger trips annually. Assessment of multiple options identified the C2 Regional Branch option as the preferred solution, providing the best balance of patronage growth, cost effectiveness, improved coverage and network integration, while extending access to an additional 4,800 residents in northern Cambridge.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The proposed C2 service and school assist route will improve access to employment, education and essential services, increase public transport coverage and frequency, and support future growth in Cambridge. The service is forecast to increase annual patronage to approximately 250,000 passenger trips by 2037 while providing a scalable foundation for future local public transport improvements.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

Investment Category	Strategic
Mandatory Setting	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo	Continue operating the existing Route 20 service with no network changes. Advantage: no additional operating or capital costs. Disadvantage: does not improve access to growth areas, does not increase network coverage, and is unlikely to keep pace with forecast population growth in Cambridge	\$0 additional cost	Maintains existing public transport access between Cambridge and Hamilton.	No	Does not address the identified service gap in northern Cambridge or support planned population growth and transport objectives.
Option 1 (alternative)	Supplementary Local Service (A2)	Introduces a new local Cambridge service connecting growth areas and key destinations while retaining the existing Route 20 service. Advantage: provides the greatest fixed-route coverage and supports local trips. Disadvantage: requires additional transfers for many Hamilton-bound passengers and has lower forecast patronage relative to cost.	~\$800,000 additional operating cost per annum	Improved local accessibility, expanded coverage, and approximately 98,000 annual boardings by 2037	No	Provides good coverage but delivers lower patronage and value for money than the preferred option, while creating a more complex customer journey for regional travel.
Option 2 (Preferred Option)	C2 Regional Branch Service with School Assist Route	Creates a northern branch of Route 20 while retaining service to Leamington, increasing frequency on the core Cambridge-Hamilton corridor and introducing a school assist service. Advantages: best balance of patronage, cost efficiency, connectivity and future flexibility. Disadvantage: requires new bus stop infrastructure and additional operating funding.	~\$750,000 additional operating cost per annum	Improves access for approximately 4,800 additional residents, increases service frequency, improves access to education and employment, and is forecast to increase annual patronage to approximately 250,000 boardings by 2037.	Yes	Recommended through the technical assessment as the most cost-effective and scalable option. It delivers the strongest patronage growth, supports Cambridge's future growth pattern, and can be implemented as an enhancement of the existing Route 20 service.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	As this is a bus contract, we would not need to specifically procure a new bus contract for this service but rather do a variation to the existing #20 Cambridge bus contract to make these changes to the bus contract.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Project Sponsor	RTC – Project Sponsor	26	Project Sponsor– To provide programme management team oversight -estimated 2-hours per week for 13 months
Project Manager	RTC – Project Manager	118	Project Manager – Provide project oversight and direction for 13 months
Transport SME	RTC – Transport SME	132	Transport SME for 13 months
Network Planner SME	RTC – Transport Network SME	96	Network Planning SME for 13 months
Comms SME	RTC – Communications SME	100	Transport Communications SME to help with any consultation and communications required for 13 months
Transport operations SME	RTC – Transport Operations SME	82	Transport Operations SME to provide operational input and oversight for 13 months

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY31/32	FY33/34	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex*	\$410,940.00	\$765,000.00	\$765,000.00	\$765,000.00	\$765,000.00	\$	\$3,470,940.00
Total Cost*	\$410,940	\$765,000	\$765,000	\$765,000	\$765,000	\$	\$3,470,940.00
Partner Funding	\$209,579	\$390,150	\$390,150	\$390,150	\$390,150	\$	\$1,770,179.00
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$201,361	\$374,850	\$374,850	\$374,850	\$374,850	\$	\$1,700,761.00

Note *including resourcing costs

Notes:

- *Opex in FY27/28 (\$410,940) is from \$350,000 bus operating cost + \$60,940 of internal labour cost
- The service is only expected to operate, at most, 6 months of the 27/28 FY hence the lower costs for that FY
- Partner funding assumes 51% share of Total cost (Opex + labour) and is paid by NZTA

- The Opex cost does not include private share or fare revenue. Potential bus fare revenue has not yet been calculated or included.
- Labour cost assumptions are an average of \$110/hr for all resources identified below. Labour costs for FY27/28 (when the planning, communications and service launch work is undertaken) is 554 hrs x \$110 = \$60,940. This cost has been added to the assumed \$350,000 Opex operating cost for FY27/28 and showing in 'total cost'.
- 'Net' = Total cost – partner funding

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☒ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Public transport planning and service design. Public transport operations and contract management. Community engagement and communications. Funding (NZTA/NLTF processes).
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Waikato Regional Council (service planning, funding and delivery). Waipā District Council (bus stop and supporting infrastructure delivery). NZTA (funding partner). Public transport operator. Cambridge residents, particularly residents in growth areas, public transport users, school students and Cambridge High School.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Cambridge's population will continue growing toward approximately 30,000-31,000 residents by 2037. Patronage growth will occur broadly in line with forecasts following service enhancements. Required bus stop infrastructure and road network improvements can be delivered in time to support implementation by Waipā District Council. Patronage forecasting, and therefore fare revenue, is not required at the time of writing the SIP. Partner funding will remain in place. WRC resources are available.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Availability of NLTF funding and local share funding. Delivery timing for bus stop infrastructure and growth area road connections. Public transport operating budget and fleet/resource availability.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Approval of NZTA co-funding and inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme. Delivery of bus stop infrastructure by Waipā District Council. Successful variation of the existing Route 20 contract and operator readiness to implement the service changes.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This project aligns with STRAT07 Financial Sustainability by ensuring investment decisions are supported by an evidence-based assessment of future demand, affordability and long-term funding implications. It also supports STRAT03 Relationships through engagement with local communities, territorial authorities and NZTA, and STRAT09 Climate Change through improving access to lower-emission travel options. Failure to progress the project could limit Council's ability to respond to changing transport demands and community expectations.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Patronage growth may be slower than forecast, reducing value for money in the short term (actual figures not yet determined). Delays in infrastructure delivery could postpone service implementation. Increased operating costs may place pressure on future transport budgets if funding levels change. Community concerns regarding route alignments, stop locations or service changes may affect implementation timelines.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Trial Taumaranui to Hamilton (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	31/07/2026 9:33 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	10.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	75.00
		Total Score LTP27	85.71

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	None

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	Moderate

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Public transport: bus contracts
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The cessation of the publicly accessible Taumarunui health shuttle has left Taumarunui and surrounding communities with limited public transport options to access Hamilton, employment, education, specialist health services and regional connections. This presents an opportunity for WRC and Horizons Regional Council to work together to establish a new cross-boundary public transport service that improves access, connectivity and transport equity for rural communities. The proposal aligns with Regional Public Transport Plan objectives to provide access to essential services, improve regional public transport connections, and support communities that have limited transport choices.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The previous Route 25 service demonstrated demand for travel between Taumarunui and Hamilton, providing access to health appointments and other trip purposes. With Health NZ moving to a dedicated patient shuttle, the PT component of the service has ceased, leaving InterCity as the only direct public transport option from Taumarunui. Assessment of replacement options found that a direct Taumarunui-Hamilton service would provide the most convenient and effective connection to key destinations.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

A direct Taumarunui-Hamilton bus service would restore public transport access for rural communities, improve connections to healthcare, education, employment and social opportunities, and strengthen connectivity between the Waikato and Horizons regions. The service would support transport equity for people without access to private vehicles while maintaining regional access to Hamilton's major services and transport network.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Do nothing	No replacement public transport service is introduced following the cessation of the existing Route 25 service being open to the public. Advantage: no additional operating costs. Disadvantage: loss of public transport access between Taumarunui and Hamilton, reduced access to health, education, employment and social opportunities for those without private transport.	\$0	No additional benefits beyond avoiding costs. Existing public transport users must rely on limited alternative services.	No	Does not address the transport accessibility gap created by the withdrawal of the current service and provides no contribution to regional connectivity objectives.
Option 1 (preferred)	Direct Taumarunui to Hamilton Service	Operates a direct public transport service between Taumarunui and Hamilton, with stops at Te Kūiti, Ōtorohanga, Kihikihi, Te Awamutu, Waikato Hospital and Hamilton Transport Centre. Advantage: direct connection, no transfers, improved access to key destinations and integration with the wider regional network. Disadvantage: higher operating cost and requires agreement between Waikato Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council and potentially NZTA if both Regional Councils did not want to fully fund the service from rates.	~\$150,000 per annum	Restores direct public transport access between Taumarunui and Hamilton, improves access to specialist healthcare, education, employment and regional connections, and supports transport equity for rural communities.	Yes	Provides the greatest customer benefit and strongest regional connectivity outcome while delivering direct access to key destinations without the need for transfers. It best addresses the transport gap created by the cessation of the existing service.
Option 2	Taumarunui to Te Awamutu Connector	Introduces a service between Taumarunui and Te Awamutu, with passengers transferring to Route 24 to access Hamilton. This option could also include an additional midday return service (at a higher cost). Advantage: lower operating cost than a full service and provides access to the wider Busit network (for the single trip return option). Disadvantage: requires transfers, increases journey time and may reduce attractiveness and ease of use.	~\$163,000 per annum (single return trip option) OR ~\$326,000 per annum with additional midday return trip.	Restores some public transport access for Taumarunui communities and provides connections to Hamilton via Te Awamutu.	No	Provides improved access at lower cost but requires passengers to transfer, making it less convenient and less likely to meet the needs of health, education and employment travellers.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☒ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	There is potential that this service may need to be procured / tendered with a new bus operator if a variation to an existing contract is not achievable. This would be at an annual operating cost. This process would follow the bus procurement strategy process and align with NZTA and WRC procurement processes.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Programme Manager	RTC – Project Manager	30	Programme Manager – To provide programme management team oversight. From July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Network Planner SME	RTC – Transport SME	36	Network Planner SME – to provide network planning work from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Transport Planner SME	RTC – Transport SME	35	Transport Planner SME – lead the transport planning work and coordination from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Communications SME	RTC – Communications SME	37	Communications SME – to lead any communications or consultation from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Operations SME	RTC – Transport Operations SME	36	Operations SME – To provide operational oversight and input from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)
Procurement SME	RTC – Procurement lead	32	Procurement SME – to lead the tender / procurement / contract variation work for the bus contract from July '27-June'28 (assumed launch)

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex*	\$172,660.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$	\$772,660.00
Total Cost*	\$172,660	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$	\$772,660.00
Partner Funding	\$86,330	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$	\$386,330.00
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$86,330	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$	\$386,330.00

Note *including resourcing costs

Notes:

- *Opex in FY27/28 (\$172,660) is from \$150,000 bus operating cost + \$22,660 of internal labour cost
- Partner funding assumes a 50% share of Total cost (Opex + labour) to be paid by Horizons Regional Council

- The Opex cost does not include private share or fare revenue. Potential bus fare revenue has not yet been calculated or included.
- Labour cost assumptions are an average of \$110/hr for all resources identified below. Labour costs for FY27/28 (when the planning, communications and service launch work is undertaken) is 206 hrs x \$110 = \$22,660. This cost has been added to the assumed \$150,000 Opex operating cost for FY27/28 and showing in 'total cost'.
- 'Net' = Total cost – partner funding

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Public transport planning and service design. Public transport operations, procurement and contract management. Funding applications and arrangements, including inter-regional funding arrangements. Stakeholder engagement and partnership management across multiple organisations. Timetable planning and network integration.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Waikato Regional Council. Horizons Regional Council. NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. Ruapehu District Council and other affected territorial authorities. Bus operator(s). Current and potential users.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Sufficient demand exists to support a direct public transport connection between Taumarunui and Hamilton. Horizons Regional Council is willing to participate in funding and governance arrangements. Required funding can be secured from participating councils and/or NZTA. Patronage forecasting, and therefore fare revenue, is not required at the time of writing the SIP. Partner funding will remain in place. WRC resources are available.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Funding is not currently budgeted and may require future RLTP, NLTP and LTP processes. The service crosses regional boundaries, requiring agreement between multiple organisations. Availability of suitable operators and vehicles to deliver the service.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that</i>	Agreement between Waikato Regional Council and Horizons Regional Council on service scope, funding and delivery responsibilities. Securing funding approvals from councils and potentially NZTA. Procurement or variation of an appropriate public transport contract.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
<i>must occur to enable success.</i>	
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This project aligns with STRAT03 Relationships through collaboration with Horizons Regional Council, NZTA and local communities to deliver an inter-regional public transport solution. It also supports STRAT07 Financial Sustainability by assessing the most effective use of public funding and STRAT09 Climate Change by providing an alternative to private vehicle travel. Delivery is dependent on maintaining strong partner relationships and securing ongoing funding support.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Patronage may be lower than anticipated, reducing value for money. Failure to secure co-funding from Horizons Regional Council and/or NZTA could prevent implementation. Ongoing operating costs may create affordability pressures for participating councils. Changes to operator availability, fuel costs or contract pricing may increase service costs over time. Cross-boundary governance and decision-making processes may delay implementation.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Maritime Safety FTE (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Resource Use
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	23/07/2026 11:54 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	42.86
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	67.50
		Total Score LTP27	110.36

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	Low
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Low
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Low
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Low
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	Low
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	High
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	High

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	2 Coast Marine
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Current staff resourcing levels are deficient for the scale of the Maritime activities in the region meaning we cannot meet community expectations of proactive presence and response to incidents and have insufficient resources to monitor our compliance activity as it relates to Temporary Maritime Events (TME).

Our current operational team members are often over prescribed in the ongoing maintenance of our approximately 1000 aids to navigation and signs, responding to vessel incidents, dealing with derelict vessels, wrecks and oil spills, managing the mooring fields that contain more the 800 moored vessels, as well as some recreational boating education and enforcement patrols.

Maritime Services has a KPI to provide a 24/7 on call facility to receive calls from the public. This responsibility is shared across the operational team, but we have limited capability to attend incidents as they are occurring.

We rely on goodwill of our limited staff to attend serious incidents outside of business hours. Staff are often working unsustainable hours due to severe weather events or during operational deployments. We have insufficient numbers to roster weekend work as well as keep up with weekly scheduled maintenance tasks.

Operational deployments require minimum manning of two-up on vessels and some navigation aid maintenance requires three-up operations. This requires all operational staff to be present to safely deliver the task.

This small team is heavily impacted on by even a single member being away sick, on leave, training or resigning. A resignation can result in a loss of capability for more than three months not accounting for induction and training.

Council could be subject to compliance action from Maritime New Zealand under HSWA through our TME process. We approve safety plans allowing event organisers to operate outside the Bylaw rules. Maritime Services does not have current capacity to conduct regular compliance audits on weekends increasing risk to council of compliance activity by WorkSafe or Maritime NZ.

The opportunity presented from an extra FTE based in Hamilton allows for rostering weekend deployments for TME audit purposes reducing the risk of exposure to council, as well as increasing our capacity to deploy every day allowing for illness, leave, and training.

Complaints of “we never see the Harbourmaster” are a regular subject coming through letters, complaints, or comments on social media posts from the public on our numerous lakes and harbours. During the summer months the on-call Maritime Officer can receive multiple calls in a day for a service we are unable to supply. Having increased capacity will reduce the incidents of failing to meet expectation of the public.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

We have a very large region, over 1100 kilometres of coast, many harbours, rivers, and lakes. We host a vast recreational boating sector of more than 160 000 users annually. We have one of the busiest recreational boating regions in NZ.

We have more than 800 Moorings in the region requiring management to ensure ongoing safety of the vessel and monitoring of vessel condition to prevent avoidable sinking and subsequent oil spill.

We have the responsibility for reviewing and approving the safety plans for more than 100 Temporary Maritime Events (TME's) across the region annually. We currently have no capacity to audit the TME organisers on weekends to ensure they are meeting the minimum safety requirements. This increases risk to Council under HSWA as we approve the safety of these events but have no capacity to monitor compliance.

Our region has an increasing number of severe weather events resulting in increasing workloads for the team at times outside normal business hours. We rely on goodwill of team members to deploy outside hours and have very few available officers at any given time.

There are regular requirements for our team to deploy on the weekends despite only one member being on call.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Councils Maritime Services Team is responsible for navigational safety and environmental protection. An increase in Maritime Officer FTE would allow for year-round enforcement patrols, regular weekend deployments when the public are on the water, and to attend and audit TME's.

This will allow for better coverage seven days a week. It will allow for some weekend rostering. Maritime Services receives regular commentary from the public that they expect to see patrols on the waterways during weekends and public holidays. Would also allow for better coverage during emergencies (e.g. Sunken vessels, oil spills, severe weather).

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Mandatory
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Requirement is written into primary legislation or national direction; requirements are clear and unambiguous. Some discretion as to HOW and / or WHEN compliance actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Option 1	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Status quo leaves the team operationally restricted in meeting minimum crewing levels for vessel deployments and an ongoing reliance on current staff working unsustainable hours to ensure emergency deployments are appropriately attended or to deliver on the public expectation of enforcement patrols during busy boating periods. Staff retention challenges are anticipated. An inability to deploy vessels during recruitment after resignations, periods of sick or annual leave, or training.		None	No	Would maintain current operational capacity and continue to deliver below public expectations.
Option 2	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Increase Maritime Officer FTE's (Band G) by one based in Hamilton. This would allow Maritime Services to work towards meeting minimum crewing requirements on vessel deployments and provide extra operational capacity to conduct regular weekend safety patrols, and audits of TME's. Currently TME's are not audited during weekends, creating a risk to council of non-compliance with HSWA obligations created by the TME process.	\$100000 annually	Better to meet public expectations on the west coast and inland waterways increasing visibility and safety in the region. A reduction in risk to council from unaudited TME's		This Hamilton based role would allow for sufficient manning on the west coast and inland waterways and the ability to roster deployment during weekends for the audit of TME's and increasing visible safety patrols.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Recruitment of Maritime Officer

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
e.g. - Jo Bloggs	Enterprise Portfolio Office	400	Programme Manager – To provide programme management team oversight -estimated 2-days per week.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$	\$500,000
Total Cost*	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$	\$500,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	A suitable and qualified candidate to be recruited.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	• Ratepayers • Temporary Event organisers • Recreational vessel operators
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	• Suitably qualified candidates available for the role. • Current operational resources (Utes, vessels, tools etc) are sufficient for deployment
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Labour Budget and the cost to ratepayers
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Human Resources Policy
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 01 – Emergency Response • Mitigation: Having sufficient staff to attend emergencies strengthens WRC's ability to respond effectively to emergencies. • How: Having more people resource allows for more capacity and capability to respond to emergencies. Less reliance on the goodwill of a small number of staff outside business hours. STRAT 02 – Legislative Compliance • Mitigation: TME's require WRC to approve uplifts to bylaw rules and reserve waterways for events and races. WRC assumes some liability for the safety of the event in approving safety plans and an expectation would be, that compliance with the safety plans is monitored. • How: Conducting TME audits on weekends when events are taking place would demonstrate due diligence and reduce the risk of legal penalties and reputational damage to WRC. STRAT 03 – Relationships • Mitigation: Communities, iwi, and stakeholders expect council to maintain safe and navigable waterways and conducting safety patrols during busy weekend periods or responding appropriately to emergency situations shows responsiveness to public concerns and builds trust.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	• How: Demonstrates a commitment to public safety, reinforcing positive relationships with stakeholders. STRAT 05 – Health and Safety • Mitigation: Sufficient manning of our vessels in deployments is a legislative requirement. Providing sufficient resource to roster weekend patrols and audits will reduce the requirement for unsustainable hours and demands on few key tasks. • How: Ensures safe waterways and work environments for all affected parties, staff, and the public.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Low risk- as systems are well established for recruiting and training Maritime Officers

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Attachment 5 – Discretionary Cost Centres

Directorate	Cost Centre	Description	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget
Customer and Corporate Directorate (CSS)	Business Advisory Services	This cost centre captures the costs associated with the provision of management of the Fleet and Property team, legal services team, risk management team and direct costs for the provision of procurement services, funding services and insurance to the organisation.	\$12,000
	Community Partnerships	This cost centre consolidates sponsorship and funding support provided by Council in line with its Funding Policy (reviewed December 2023). Included within this is: - Rural Support Trust - Farm Environment Awards – Enviroschools - University scholarships - (Dr Stella Francis, Roger Harris, Te Arikini Dame Atairangikaahu) - Water Science Prize - Waikato University - NIWA Water Science Fair.	\$148,000
	Corporate Info System Replacement	This cost centre captures the repayment of the loan associated with the implementation of Council's enterprise system for Finance, asset management and HR. The loan is currently in place until 2036/37.	\$0
	Customer Services	This cost centre includes total direct costs of \$160,000 predominantly representing the centralised (organisation) budgets printing and stationery (\$28,000); postage and courier (\$56,000); Yellow / White Pages listing costs (\$4,000); After hours call centre (\$40,000).	\$160,000
	Internal & Corporate Communications	This cost centre captures the staff costs for the delivery of all Corporate communication services. The direct cost budget of \$25,000 provides for annual staff events.	\$25,000
	Internal Audit & Risk	This cost centre holds the funding and resourcing for the delivery of Council's internal audit and risk function, including the externally delivered internal audit programme.	\$164,000
	Portfolio Management	Through the Enterprise Portfolio Office, oversight, reporting and guidance is provided to the organisation on good practice project, programme and portfolio management. These disciplines aim to ensure that investment made by Council are well managed, and aligned with key strategies and priorities.	\$32,000
	Regional Communications	This cost centre reflects costs for the maintenance of Council's website, organisation advertising and promotion (including public notices).	\$223,000
	Regional Services Fund	This cost centre manages the distribution of grant funds under the Regional Emergency Service Fund. Funding deeds are currently in place with recipient organisations through to June 2027.	\$727,000
	Vehicles - General	This cost centre relates to the costs associated with the management and operation of Council's vehicle fleet.	\$1,245,000
	Total		\$2,735,000

Directorate	Cost Centre	Description	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget
Integrated Catchment Management (ICM)	Advocacy and Partnership	Provide advice, support and guidance to community groups, facilitate events. Operational costs for Kete Taiao Waikato. Operational support to science initiatives to that will help deliver biodiversity outcomes. Delivery of Collective Impact Initiative.	\$336,000
	Hazard/Emergency Management	The Emergency Management Office (EMO) of 3 staff leads WRC to become “response ready and capable at all times” and has an Emergency Response Framework (ERF) manual to guide the organisation through any emergency event. Training and exercising are a key component, so staff feel confident and competent during events. The EMO also leads out the 24/7 standby rosters for Flood response, Weather events, Tsunami alerts, Marine Oil Spill occurrences and the Emergency Management phone for any other responses/events that could impact WRC ability to execute its functions.	\$0
	LINZ Projects	Budget code for external LINZ funding to contribute to collaborative pest plant management.	\$0
	Natural Heritage Fund	Mana Koiora Mana Whenua - Protecting Biodiversity on shared Mana Whenua	\$2,026,000
	NHPP	Contestable funding for community groups and landowners to undertake activities related to biodiversity.	\$2,658,000
	Regional Catchment Management Strategy		\$0
	Regional Priority Biodiversity Sites	PBS: Deliver targeted, collaborative and innovative restoration work at priority biodiversity sites, delivered via landowner and multi-partner projects to meet agreed outputs and deliver biodiversity outcomes. Coastcare: Deliver collaborative, community focussed and innovative coastal dune restoration, delivered via Beachcare groups to meet agreed outputs and deliver biodiversity, more resilient coastal ecosystems and community participation.	\$646,000
	Regional Priority Possum Control	Direct control implemented under the RPMP. Areas formally designated under the RPMP 2022 - 2032 and make control in PPCA's mandatory on all landowners.	\$4,417,000
	Wilding Conifers - Taupo	The Wilding Pine Programme is fundamentally focused on protecting New Zealand’s land, water, ecosystems, and economic assets from the impacts of invasive conifer species. National cost-benefit analyses consistently demonstrate exceptionally high returns on investment, estimated at approximately 20:1. In contrast, a “do nothing” approach is projected to result in significant national losses, estimated at around \$3.6–\$3.8 billion over a 50-year period. Within the Waikato region, the programme primarily targets two key areas: the Coromandel Peninsula and the Central North Island. In the Coromandel, efforts are concentrated on safeguarding threatened ecosystems, particularly coastal forests that support, or have the potential to support, kauri. In the Central North Island, the programme focuses on protecting the integrity of iconic national park landscapes from the spread of invasive conifers. This includes preserving highly sensitive and rare ecosystems, such as frost flats and geothermal environments, which are especially vulnerable to ecological disruption. This work builds on a strong foundation of more than 70 years of community-led management and stewardship.	\$0
	Total		\$10,084,000

Directorate	Cost Centre	Description	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget
Regional Transport Connections (RTC)	Metro Spatial Plan WRC Components	The Metro Spatial Plan aims to integrate land use and transport planning across the Waikato metropolitan area. The work supports stronger alignment between regional strategies (MSP, RLTP, RPTP) and future investment decisions. Enhanced public transport networks and mode shift outcomes, reducing reliance on private vehicles. Better evidence-based decision-making through modelling and scenario analysis.	\$511,000
	Regional Rail Transport		\$200,000
	Total		\$711,000
Resource Use (RUD)	Educ/Promo-Non Comp Airsheds	Funding supports a project providing education, and dry wood fuel to low income households, to reduce emissions and improve air quality in non-complying airsheds.	\$35,000
	Formal Education	Delivery of Enviroschools programme, youth & secondary programme and Kura Waihi ki Kura Waita programme. Significant support funding from third parties enables these programmes.	\$720,000
	Lake Taupo Implementation	Advisory services for landowners in Lake Taupo catchment who are subject to Variation 5to the Regional Plan.	\$0
	Total		\$755,000
Science, Policy and Information (SPI)	Aquaculture	Attend aquaculture forum, provide policy advice on aquaculture to support to provide for staff to attend the Aquaculture forum and provide policy advice to Council.	\$2,000
	Biodiversity Tools and Innovation	Identification of new ways of operating, new technology or methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness.	\$85,000
	Business Planning and Compliance	To ensure Policy complies with all statutory obligations and this work is planned out. to support to ensure Policy business is planned and meets all statutory obligations.	\$0
	Central Govt Advocacy	Influencing consultations at a central government level, and also as an advocacy platform for WRC strategies.	\$7,000
	Coastal Matauranga Maori	Undertake monitoring to comply with requirements of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.	\$60,000
	Coastal Planning	Provide for policy advice on coastal issues, attendance at forums, e.g. Hauraki Gulf Marine Park forum meetings to support to assist with implementing the coastal plan and coastal related topics.	\$1,000
	Land and Water Portfolio	Advisory funds to support numerous initiatives related to land and water management to support other work in the directorate and organisation.	\$33,000

Directorate	Cost Centre	Description	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget
	Library	Provision of library services- coordinating and distributing serials, online and physical subscriptions, and texts, and cataloguing and tracking these. Proactive environment scanning and connection to NZ libraries network for information trends and relevant new material and distributing to subject matter experts for most efficient use of time. Supports the full organisation.	\$30,000
	Requests for Input into Policy and Strategy	Labour only, economic advice and input to policy and strategy to support legislation- RMA and LGA and others.	\$0
	Spatial Analysis & Modelling	Design and implement spatial solutions to business challenges across the organisation.	\$0
	Spatial Information & Data Management	Provide spatial information services, advice, and outputs to both internal and external clients. Property and Rating data maintenance. Data Management: Acquire, manage, and update spatial and non-spatial data sets. Respond to internal and external requests for data. Provision of data externally through the Waikato Data Portal and the WRC Data catalogue. Quality control and quality assurance of corporate datasets. Create and maintain metadata to Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) standards. Property & Rating: Respond to enquiries relating to valuation data and properties, undertake rating scheme modelling, and maintain the regional property dataset. Spatial Information & Analysis: Undertake requests for spatial information and provide various spatial outputs such as map production, visualisations and spatial analysis, internally and externally.	\$58,000
	Spatial Systems & Technology	Provide spatial information services, advice, and outputs to both internal and external clients. Property and Rating data maintenance. Data Management: Acquire, manage, and update spatial and non-spatial data sets. Respond to internal and external requests for data. Provision of data externally through the Waikato Data Portal and the WRC Data catalogue. Quality control and quality assurance of corporate datasets. Create and maintain metadata to Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) standards. Property & Rating: Respond to enquiries relating to valuation data and properties, undertake rating scheme modelling, and maintain the regional property dataset. Spatial Information & Analysis: Undertake requests for spatial information and provide various spatial outputs such as map production, visualisations and spatial analysis, internally and externally.	\$116,000
	SS Policy Implementation	Service provided is advice on interpretation of policy and implementation of plans and attendance at forums. to support this activity is separate from policy development and is focused on implementing the plans.	\$0
	Submission Coordination and Writing	Facilitating cross organisational input into formal submission and advocacy programme.	\$0

Directorate	Cost Centre	Description	2026/27 Direct Cost Budget
	UNISA	Input and staff support to participate in Upper North Island Strategic Alliance of regions and main districts - coordination on infrastructure priorities and transport and biosecurity links in particular. Supports regional spatial planning. to support corporate decision on collaboration and advocacy.	\$20,000
	Waikato Futures	Waikato Integrated Scenario Planning Tool - historically used as a tool to integrate population projections across the region to inform growth and infrastructure planning.	\$131,000
	Waikato Progress Indicators (WPI) and Wellbeing	Coordination of information to produce the annual Waikato Progress Indicators.	\$0
	Working with TAs for policy consistency	Coordination and maintenance of regional biodiversity strategy as required by national direction.	\$30,000
	Total		\$571,000
Tai-Ranga-Whenua and Democracy	External Iwi Capacity and Support	Supports iwi participation, capacity, and capability through relationship-based engagement, partnership work, administration of Iwi capacity funding, and consistent tracking and reporting of funded initiatives.	\$304,000
	Internal Development Iwi Māori	Provides enterprise-wide Māori leadership, advice, cultural competency support, engagement coordination, ServiceNow request management, strategic Māori outcomes support, and assurance across Council through a business-partner model.	\$7,000
	Total		\$311,000
TOTAL			\$15,167,000

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Discretionary funds - other (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Customer Community and Services
		Project, Programme or BAU:	BAU
Date Created:	8/4/2026 1:16 AM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	3.57
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	92.50
		Total Score LTP27	96.07

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Low

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Low
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	None
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	No alignment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill proposes to change the purpose of local government, removing reference to wellbeings and providing focus on "good quality, cost-effective, and local infrastructure, public services, and performance of regulatory functions; and to support local economic growth and development.

Local government must have particular regard to the contribution that the following core services make to its communities:

- network infrastructure
- public transport services
- waste management and minimisation
- civil defence emergency management
- libraries, museums, reserves, and other community and recreational facilities.

The refocussing of the purpose of local government calls for a reconsideration of the discretionary grants currently funded by Council that do not directly align with the revised purpose that is proposed.

In line with this change, and Council's signalled direction with regards to focussing on expenditure that is legislatively required only, it is timely to review the scope and purpose of the discretionary funds that Council currently administers and distributes.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Scholarships, sponsorships and grant funds provide support for Council's work through the promotion of excellence in tertiary study, recognition of on-farm performance and innovation, and promotion of Council's role through grants.

Current funding arrangements under this cost centre include a mix of scholarships and discretionary funds:

Scholarships:

- Dame Te Atairangikaahu scholarship established 1991. \$5,000 per annum co-funded with the University of Waikato
- Stella Francis scholarship established 2006. \$3,000 per annum co-funded with Department of Conservation
- Roger Harris (Waihou Valley Scheme) scholarship. \$6,000 per annum
- University of Waikato Water Science prize. \$500 per annum

Sponsorships:

- Rural Support Trust \$50,000 per annum. Introduced to help support farmer wellbeing.
- Ballance Farm Environment Awards \$26,000 per annum.
- University of Waikato School of Science Postgraduate conference \$500 per annum
- NIWA Waikato Science and Technology Fair. \$1,250 per annum

Grants:

Enviroschools \$25,000 per annum as one-off grants for environmental projects that directly enhance and/or benefit the environment or support environmental education

See attachment for further detail on all funding distributed.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Discontinuation of some, or all, of the discretionary funding provides the opportunity to reduce expenditure by up to \$147,000 per annum and reduced staff administration.

There may be relationship risks with the discontinuation of some funding – in particular, those of long duration and undertaken in partnership.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

Investment Category

Wildcard

Mandatory Setting

Not Mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue with the Community Partnership Fund. Advantage: continues to support scholarships and sponsorships within the community and maintain historical agreements. Disadvantage: Discretionary cost which often doesn't align with funding requests and/or strategic direction.	\$738,000 over 5 years	nil	No	Discretionary funding
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Discontinued provision of the community partnerships fund. Advantage: Generate savings and reduce administration of funding deeds. Disadvantage: Management of relationships and future funding requests. However, future funding is not guaranteed outside of the current agreements. Management of historical agreements.	nil	\$(738,000) over 5 years	No	Saving benefits, discretionary funding with future funding not guaranteed outside of the current agreements.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Discontinue sponsorships but continue scholarship arrangements. Advantage: Honours historical arrangements and respects named individual scholarships and co funding arrangements. Disadvantage: some savings benefits not realised.	\$70,000 over 5 years	\$(670,000) over 5 years	Yes	Saving benefits, discretionary funding maintaining historical scholarship arrangements

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
			No resource requirement if discontinued

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	\$	\$(670,000)
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	(\$134,000)	\$	\$(670,000)
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Communications support required to support clear rationale for discontinuation of fund
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Scholarship co-funders - Waikato University and DOC Sponsorship recipients
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Savings benefits identified from current LTP budget.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	None
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Communication with co-funders on any potential withdrawal of funding
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	May impact relationships risk – management of potential negative perception from fund recipients and community
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	None

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Discretionary Funds background Info	1	38093954 Download

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Discretionary funds - RSF (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Customer Community and Services
		Project, Programme or BAU:	BAU
Date Created:	8/3/2026 11:19 PM	Attractiveness Score LTP27	7.14
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	87.50
		Total Score LTP27	94.64

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	None
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Moderate
Organisational Impact	None
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Low
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	None
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	No alignment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	None

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill proposes to change the purpose of local government, removing reference to wellbeings and providing focus on "good quality, cost-effective, and local infrastructure, public services, and performance of regulatory functions; and to support local economic growth and development.

Local government must have particular regard to the contribution that the following core services make to its communities:

- network infrastructure
- public transport services
- waste management and minimisation
- civil defence emergency management
- libraries, museums, reserves, and other community and recreational facilities.

The refocussing of the purpose of local government calls for a reconsideration of the discretionary grants currently funded by Council that do not directly align with the revised purpose that is proposed.

The current Regional Emergency Services Funding deeds expire at the end of the 2026/27 financial year, meaning that a review through the Long Term Plan process is required to inform any new funding deeds that Council wishes to enter into.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The Regional Emergency Services Fund (established 2016) is a centralised, regional process for funding selected organisations (i.e. Surf Lifesaving New Zealand) endorsed by councils across the Waikato region. Other services receiving funding have been determined by Waikato Regional Council, based on alignment with the work undertaken by the Council (i.e. Coastguard NZ support for maritime services).

The fund enables organisations to access funding for operating costs. Funding deeds are renewed every 3 years, with the current term expiring in June 2027. There is no contractual or mandatory requirement to continue the fund other than historical precedence.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

There are potential savings of \$730,000 to \$780,000 per annum.

Current recipients (Surf Lifesaving NZ, NZ Coastguard, Coromandel Rescue Helicopter, Phillip's Search and Rescue, NZ Land Search and Rescue) would no longer have access to Council funding. There may be relationship risks associated with this decision – in particular in relation to the funding for Surf Lifesaving NZ which has been centralised with WRC on behalf of councils in the region in order to simplify administration and support clarity of funding.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	Wildcard
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Not mandatory

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue with the Regional Emergency Services Fund. Advantage: continues to support emergency services within the community in line with historic cross council agreements (for Surf Lifesaving NZ only). Disadvantage: significant cost which often doesn't align with funding expectations of emergency service providers.	\$3.801m over 5 yrs	nil	No	Discretionary funding
Option 1(minimum)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Discontinued provision of the Regional Emergency Services Fund. Advantage: Generate savings and reduce administration of funding deeds. Disadvantage: Management of fund recipient relationships as they will need to source other options for funding, however future funding is not guaranteed outside of the current 3-year agreements. Management of historical cross council agreements and expectations of local government partners.	nil	\$(3.801m) savings over 5 years	No	Discretionary funding that does not align with the proposed new purpose of local government.
Option 2 (intermediate)	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Review organisations eligible for funding through the Regional Emergency Services Fund to ensure they best align with support Council's strategic priorities. Advantage: Allows Council to reconsider benefits expected through the funding deeds and alignment with strategic priorities. Disadvantage: Same as Option 1. Management of fund recipient relationships as they will need to source other options for funding, however future funding is not guaranteed outside of the current 3-year agreements. Management of historical cross council agreements and expectations of local government partners.	<\$3.801 million over 5 years	nil	Yes	Discretionary funding that does not align with the proposed new purpose of local government. Opportunity to re-test the rationale for the provision of funding to current recipients.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
			No resource required if fund discontinued

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	(\$369,000)	(\$374,000)	(\$380,000)	(\$385,000)	(\$392,000)	\$	\$(1,900,000)
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$(369,000)	\$(374,000)	\$(380,000)	\$(385,000)	\$(392,000)	\$	\$(1,900,000)
Total Revenue/Saving	\$(369,000)	\$(374,000)	\$(380,000)	\$(385,000)	\$(392,000)	\$	\$(1,900,000)
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Communications support required to support clear rationale for discontinuation of fund
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Regional Emergency Services Fund recipients Councils across the Waikato region Current Regional Emergency Services fund recipients would be most impacted as would be no longer eligible for funding.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Savings benefits identified from current LTP budget – they do not consider any potential changes in the level of funding that Council may consider, or recipients may seek through advocacy / formal submission. Benefit assumed is based on a 50 per cent reduction in the size of the fund. The actual benefit achieved would be dependent on the review of funding recipients.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	None
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Awareness of Councils across the region due to historical agreement in relation to some funding arrangements.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	May impact relationships risk – management of potential negative perception from emergency services fund recipients and community
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	None

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Biodiversity work programme (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Programme
Date Created:	31/07/2026 1:10 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	24.99
Finance Code (Infor)	50460, 50461, 50469, 50466, 50467, 50203, 50209	Achievability Score	57.50
		Total Score LTP27	82.49

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Low
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	Moderate
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	High
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	Low
Dependencies	High

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We work with landowners and others to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity
Measure	Number of on-the-ground projects on private land within the top 30% of priority ecosystems delivering biodiversity restoration action <i>NB: Applies only to Priority Biodiversity Sites</i>
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Biodiversity strategy
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	3 Biodiversity & Biosecurity
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Collaborate

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Biodiversity work programme

- takes a collaborative approach through partnerships to support others to deliver biodiversity outcomes,
- provides technical advice and support (including incentives) to landowners, community groups and
- delivers collaborative restoration projects at site, and
- maintains minimum lake levels as required in the Waikato Regional Plan.

The historic and ongoing decline of biodiversity in our region is well documented (e.g. [What is biodiversity | Waikato Regional Council](#)) and the biodiversity work programme takes a non-regulatory approach to deliver biodiversity and associated outcomes (e.g. soil conservation and erosion control) designed to halt this decline.

The Biodiversity work programme complements the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme (SIP: [38049311](#)) and together formed part of a multi directorate business case in LTP2024 for biosecurity and biodiversity related activities. This integrated approach relies on investment in each part of the system if we are to have any chance of reversing the decline of biodiversity in our region.

The biodiversity work programme and the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme are key programmes to deliver the draft Waikato Biodiversity Strategy (related document #1) as required by the National Policy Statement Indigenous Biodiversity and contributes to mitigations to offset the impacts of climate change.

Biodiversity work programme

- **Advocacy and Policy Development (50460)** – a joint ICM/SPI cost centre designed to support initiatives to strengthen our ability to advocate for indigenous ecosystems and species in environment court and support community groups.
- **Partnerships and Coordination (50461)** – supports community hubs to lead the SSCIF hub funding trial, to deliver workshops aimed at upskilling community groups and includes our contribution to the [Waikato Biodiversity Forum](#).
- **Collective Impact (50469)** – aims to empower communities and enhance the collective effort of groups, iwi, agencies and others to amplify biodiversity outcomes at a landscape scale.
- **Priority Biodiversity Sites (50466)** – supports willing landowners and others to maintain, protect and restore indigenous ecosystems and threatened species on private land.
- **Coastcare (50467)** – is a partnership with local communities, iwi, and agencies that protects and restores coastal environments.
- **Lake Level Setting (50203)** – oversees the sustainable management of minimum lake levels.
- **Shallow lake restoration (50209)** – takes a collaborative approach to restore lakes.

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*



Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Recent consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy has confirmed consistent support for council to take a leadership role and to provide funding to improve biodiversity across the region.

Partnership programmes – high interest and support via public consultation for the 2024 LTP and 2021 LTP and strong support for the collective impact initiative. Community uptake of Kete Taiao Waikato a spatial platform where community groups can record, manage and report on their projects has been faster than expected with positive feedback from community groups, the Community Representatives Working Group and Steering Group.

Site based programmes (priority biodiversity sites, shallow lakes) are strongly aligned to our catchment and river management programmes. In 2025 a survey of Waikato landowners, funding was identified as a major consideration for landowners to undertake restoration projects with only 16% of landowners reporting that they could have been able to undertake their projects without council support and 100% of respondents stating they would be happy to work with council staff again. Given the priority biodiversity sites and shallow lakes programmes often co-fund catchment programmes, it can be inferred that there is good support for landowners for these programmes.

This funding enables us to leverage funding from external sources. For example, the shallow lakes programme has attracted investment through shovel ready, MfE's Freshwater Improvement Fund and the WRA. The Te Hokinga ki Maratoto project has a total cost of \$638,167 with WRA and WRC each contributing \$255,266 and the landowner contributing \$127,634.

These programmes have contributed to meaningful improvements at sites high biodiversity value for example, in 2025/26 the priority biodiversity sites programme funded 13.5km new and upgraded fences, undertook pest plant control at 15 sites covering 1752ha, purchases traps and trap supplies for 1477ha across 23 sites and undertook restoration plantings across 25ha at 13 sites (related document #2).

Coastcare is both a site based and partnership programme that has operated for over twenty years. A programme such as this would not have endured if local communities did not strongly value and support the programme. In the Coromandel it has been so successful that TCDC now funds coastal restoration work far in excess of our funding enabling us to achieve more projects than would have been possible without them.

Lake level programme – continued drainage of peat lakes led to the development of the Waikato District Lakes and Freshwater Wetlands Memorandum of Agreement and the Waipā Peat Lakes and Wetlands Accord. These agreements have supported iwi and key agencies to coordinate their efforts and led to methods and rules in the Waikato Regional Plan. Without this continued investment peat lake levels would not be maintained and we would see further loss and degradation of these unique ecosystems.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Continuing to invest in the biodiversity work programme will result in environmental, social and economic outcomes as:

1. Biodiversity underpins essential ecosystem services by improving water quality by filtering sediments and nutrients, reduces flood risk, stabilises soils and reduces erosion, and increasing resilience to climate change and extreme weather events.
2. Biodiversity supports economic prosperity with agricultural benefits from healthy soils, clean water etc, tourism benefits from native ecosystems, intact and connects natural landscapes and associated recreational ecosystems.
3. There are policy and legislative requirements, such as the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) which requires councils to:
 - a. Protect, maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity.
 - b. Monitor native species.
 - c. Work with tangata whenua.
 - d. Develop regional biodiversity strategies.
4. Further biodiversity loss continues to be an issue.
5. Biodiversity is intertwined with cultural identity and Treaty responsibilities with native species and ecosystems consider taonga.
6. Increased biodiversity delivers broader community benefits e.g. social cohesion through volunteering, public health and wellbeing benefits, recreational opportunities, etc.

In summary:

- Biodiversity loss ultimately results in increased costs for ratepayers, landowners and businesses through reduced productivity, increased flood damage, and loss of ecosystem services.
- Biodiversity investment builds economic prosperity, environmental health, cultural identity, long term resilience and community wellbeing.
- Preventing further loss is more cost-effective than attempting large-scale restoration after ecosystems have significantly degraded.
- The biodiversity work programme helps the council meet its statutory obligations and reduces future compliance risks.
- The wellbeing of people and the natural environment are inseparable, and biodiversity restoration is delivered best when done in partnership with iwi and communities.
- Council funding can leverage co-funding to multiple the scale and impact of our investment.

The benefits of investing in biodiversity extend beyond an environmental programme, it is a strategic investment in the region's economy, communities, Treaty responsibilities, regulatory obligations, and long term resilience.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken. <i>NB this setting has been applied for most of the cost centres covered by this SIP. The mandatory setting for the Lake level setting programme would be: Compliance required in accordance with council's own regulations or regional policy statement.</i>

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo - without planned increases from the 2024 LTP	<i>Description</i> - continue to deliver the biodiversity work programme as per the 2024 LTP and absorb material increases in priority biodiversity sites, shallow lakes and lake level programme. AP2027 LTP figures are: • Advocacy and Policy Development (50460) – OPEX \$104,500 • Partnerships and Coordination (50461) – OPEX: \$109,611 • Collective Impact (50469) – OPEX \$22,000 • Priority Biodiversity Sites (50466) – OPEX \$404,000 • Coastcare (50467) – OPEX \$242,000 • Shallow lake restoration (50209) – OPEX \$210,000 • Lake Level Setting (50203) – OPEX \$76,000 <i>Advantages</i> – council maintains its investment in biodiversity, signals its commitment to implement the Waikato Biodiversity Strategy, leverages funding and buildings on existing partnerships and collaborative projects. <i>Disadvantages</i> – increases approved in the 2024 LTP for priority biodiversity sites, shallow lakes and lake levels are not realised. These savings may not be sufficient to meet council savings targets. Increased investment is needed to halt biodiversity decline, and current investment will not achieve better biodiversity outcomes or fully implement the Waikato Biodiversity Strategy.	\$1,168,111	No new benefits. Level of service mostly maintained.	Yes	Recent public consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy consultation indicates council investment in biodiversity related programmes is highly valued. Strong support for incentives for landowners to protect, restore and maintain biodiversity on private land. Strong public support for biodiversity partnership programmes.
Option 1(minimum)	Reduced biodiversity work programme	1. Reduce current and future funding by: • Reducing Advocacy and Policy Development by \$48,721 to \$60,000. 2. Maintain the following budgets at 2026/27 levels and only factor in inflationary adjustments as per the figures in the 2024 LTP: • Partnerships and Coordination to \$109,611 • Collective Impact to \$22,000 • Priority Biodiversity Sites \$404,000 • Coastcare to \$242,000 • Shallow Lakes \$210,000 • Lake level setting \$76,000 Note this has assumed that budgeted and approved increases in the 2024 LTP for priority biodiversity sites (50466), shallow lakes (50209) and lake level (50203) are not going ahead and there is no new FTE for shallow lakes.	\$1,119,390	Cost savings of \$48,721.	No	Advocacy and Policy development work can be stopped and met in part by other cost centers. Reducing budgeted increases to maintain existing programmes is preferable to cutting entire programmes. This approach will have the least impact on associated programmes e.g. SPI's Tier 1 and Tier 2 monitoring programmes which support this work programme.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		<i>Advantages</i> – current multi year commitments to collaborative projects in the Coastcare and shallow lakes programme can be met. The current level of service will largely be maintained. This will contribute to cost savings required by Council. The continued pressure to deliver lake restoration projects with partners who are unable to fund projects as they once did will be eased. Will have a minimal impact on programme delivery. <i>Disadvantages</i> – this will slow our progress in delivering outcomes sought in the Waikato Biodiversity Strategy and planned increases to priority biodiversity and lakes programmes will not be realised. Programmes such as Coastcare that have cost pressures will have to reduce its outputs to meet budget constraints.				

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	The biodiversity work programme has a mix of procurement models ranging from direct appointment, to working in partnership on co-funded projects. All procurement follows the corporate procurement policy and guidelines.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Advocacy and Policy	Total	150	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>150</i>	Oversight and coordination
	<i>SPI - Science</i>	<i>80</i>	Oversight of contracts
Partnerships	Total	3,330	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>2,640</i>	Supporting others with
	<i>GIS, Business support</i>	<i>300</i>	Development of maps, contract administration etc
Collective Impact	Total	390	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>390</i>	
Priority Biodiversity Sites	Total	3,500	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>3,340</i>	Delivery of restoration projects with landowners
	<i>Business support</i>	<i>160</i>	Contract administration, PO's etc
Coastcare	Total	1,490	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>1,490</i>	Oversight of Coastcare coordinators and restoration and monitoring programme.
Lake level	Total	1,150	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>1100</i>	Delivery of the programme – inspection and maintenance of assets, resource consent management, overseeing construction of new assets etc
	<i>SPI – Science</i>	<i>100</i>	Scientific advice and interpretation to support the programme
	<i>SPI – Environmental Monitoring</i>	<i>300</i>	Lake level monitoring
Shallow lake restoration	Total	1,390	
	<i>Biodiversity Team</i>	<i>1,390</i>	Delivery of restoration of projects with partners and stakeholders
	<i>SPI – Science</i>	<i>100</i>	Scientific advice and interpretation to support the programme
Total biodiversity work programme hours		11,379	

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE for Status Quo							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex							
Opex ¹							
Advocacy and Policy (50460)	\$104,500	\$104,500	\$104,500	\$104,500	\$104,500		\$522,500
Partnerships and Coordination (50461)	\$109,611	\$109,611	\$109,611	\$109,611	\$109,611		\$548,055
Collective Impact (50469)	23,000 ²	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000		\$110,000
Priority Biodiversity Sites (50466)	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$404,000		\$2,020,000
Coastcare (50467)	\$242,000	\$242,000	\$242,000	\$242,000	\$242,000		\$1,210,000
Shallow lake restoration (50209)	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000		1,050,000
Lake level setting (50203)	\$76,000	\$76,000	\$76,000	\$76,000	\$76,000		\$380,000
Total Cost*	\$1,168,111	\$1,168,111	\$1,168,111	\$1,168,111	\$1,168,111		\$5,840,555

*Note *excluding resourcing costs and co-funder/landowner contributions*

¹ FY28 figures obtained from INFOR via <https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/36239118> and are based on 2026/27 budgets and have not had a CPI adjustment added.

² This is boosted with \$50,000 from the Natural Heritage Partnerships Programme through the natural heritage targeted rate.

Co-funding for Partnerships (e.g., Waikato Biodiversity Forum), shallow lakes (e.g., Lake Maratoro WRA project and Coastcare (e.g., TCDC contribution) have been excluded from these figures. Co-funding can make significant contributions to projects and enables us to achieve additional outcomes than we could achieve on our own.

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☒ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	- Experienced Biodiversity Officers, Scientists and support staff to deliver the programme and manage relationships and collaborative projects. - Experienced Unit Leads, Team Leads and Manager to deliver the programme and undertake project management, financial management and staff management. - Some expertise is contracted in e.g. Coastcare coordinators, Waikato Biodiversity Forum coordinator but council staff hold the majority of the expertise and relationships to deliver this programme effectively.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	Contractors to deliver services such as plants, pest plant control, fencing.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	- Landowners - Community groups - Iwi - Agencies such as Department of Conservation, Territorial Authorities, Fish and Game - Co-funders
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	- NPS-IB remains in place following RMA reform. - That the biodiversity work programme continues in some form by one or more entities following local government reform. - That the council continues to employ non regulatory mechanisms to implement the Environment Bill once it becomes law and the NPS-IB.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	- That Territorial Authorities have limited funding to deliver biodiversity related programmes and there are limited compliance activities undertaken, making non regulatory programmes our best tool to achieve biodiversity outcomes. - Current funding is not sufficient to maintain the existing programmes e.g. the Coastcare programme is being resized based on a new Operational Plan and is already prioritised e.g. the PBS programme only funds sites that are in the top 30% of sites in the region and is not sufficient to fund all of those sites. It is a 'seed fund' used to encourage landowners to begin and/or get pest animals and pest plants under control so they can be managed by landowner. - Financial constraints – landowner uptake may reduce or smaller projects over longer time periods if the economy remains under pressure.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	- Support and investment from other parts of the organisation including SPI and the catchment and river management programmes. - Willingness of community groups and landowners to want to undertake biodiversity related work. - Policy and legislation that promotes non regulatory actions to achieve biodiversity outcomes beyond what is required by regulation.
Strategic risks <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT-03 Relationships – maintaining a comprehensive biodiversity work programme will ensure we maintain the confidence and trust of our stakeholders, iwi and communities. Biodiversity is not the sole responsibility of one agency or group and relationships that form meaningful partnerships are fundamental to achieving biodiversity outcomes. STRAT-09 Climate Change – the biodiversity work programme supports nature based solutions, landscape/catchment scale responses to increase resilience of our natural ecosystems and our communities.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	- Current investment not enough to halt biodiversity decline. - Reducing investment in one part of the organisation (ICM) puts other biodiversity work at risk – e.g. Tier 1 and Tier 2 monitoring programme. - Operational risk includes weather events/drought, financial constraints of partners/landowners etc.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
1. Biodiversity Strategy	Draft for public feedback (May 2026)	Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy – DRAFT MAY 2026
2. Biodiversity Annual Report for 25/26	Final draft – currently in design phase	34717861

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Natural Heritage Partnership Programme (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Programme
Date Created:	31/07/2026 12:50 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	24.99
Finance Code (Infor)	50462, 50463, 50468	Achievability Score	50.00
		Total Score LTP27	74.99

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Low
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Low
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	High
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Moderate
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	Moderate
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	Extreme
Subject Knowledge	Moderate
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	Low

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We work in partnership with communities to educate on, maintain, and enhance indigenous biodiversity.
Measure	Number of community groups and individuals funded through the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme that undertake restoration activities as per their funding agreement
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	Biodiversity strategy
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	3 Biodiversity & Biosecurity
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Empower

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Community restoration funds provided through the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme are utilised to fund and co-fund biodiversity projects led by community groups and landowners.

The demand for funding continues to be greater than the funds available and the Regional Council is seen as a reliable and well-respected funder. Community groups value our multi year funding and that we fund more than just material costs.

Recipients of the three funds (Natural Heritage Fund, Environmental Initiatives Fund, Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund) use Council funding to leverage and secure funding from other sources, resulting in biodiversity outcomes beyond what Council could find and support alone.

The SSCIF community hub funding trial (30% of the fund is distributed by community hubs) is demonstrating strong potential to streamline funding processes and empower community-led biodiversity outcomes to increase the efficiency and impact of biodiversity investment in the Waikato region.

While funding is contestable we provide more than just funding with a partnership approach at the core of this programme as we also provide technical advice and support to community groups.

The current and signalled policy and legislative framework (e.g. Regional Policy Statement, NPS-IB, Environment Bill) requires councils to apply non regulatory mechanism such as incentives, partnerships in addition to regulation.

Other funders are under pressure and/or have a broader focus than just biodiversity.

Volunteers and community groups want to deliver biodiversity projects at landscape scale.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Consultation through the 2021 and 2024 LTP consistency demonstrate the value the community place on this programme.

The number of groups we support financially and with technical advice has increased since the targeted rate was increased (96 groups supported in 2025/26), exceeding the KPI of 65 groups.

The number of groups is a proxy measure and while useful doesn't measure biodiversity outcomes. Two initiatives are in development; outcome monitoring which is being trialled through the SmartyGrants software system we use to manage applications and Kete Taiao Waikato, a spatial platform that will help community groups record, manage and report on their work and will enable the council to quantify biodiversity outcomes across the region.

Applications received across all three funds consistency exceed the amount of funding we have to distribute this demonstrating demand for this programme. In the most recent funding rounds for the 2026/27 financial year:

- NHF – requested: \$3,277,797, available: \$2,021,122
- EIF – requested: \$1,109,977, available: \$436,880
- SSCIF – requested: \$422,998, available: \$136,500.

Note the 'available' figures don't match the figures provided in the Cost Estimation and Funding Table on page 6 for the following reasons:

- *NHF/EIF – adjustments are made to the amount available to be allocated based on actual revenue (cf budgeted revenue) and reserve balances. The removal of internal borrowing (when the policy was reviewed in 2024) has reduced future years commitments and the requirement to reduce the amount available each funding round based on these commitments.*
- *NHF – the contribution to the Collective Impact project comes off the amount available for distribution.*
- *SSCIF hub trial funding is excluded from this figure (additional \$58,500).*

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The Natural Heritage Partnership Programme contributes to meeting our obligations under legislation and the Regional Policy Statement (see Appendix 1 of related document #2 for a description of council's role in indigenous biodiversity. It will also help to deliver outcomes described in the draft Waikato Biodiversity Strategy.

The objectives of the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme are:

- Increasing positive biodiversity outcomes across the region.
- Supporting the community to develop and lead their own biodiversity projects.
- Inspiring and educating people in the region to either be involved or supportive of biodiversity work and to understand and place value on it.

Continuing to maintain investment in the NHPP will deliver long-term environmental, social and economic benefits by helping to maintain, protect and restore biodiversity, leveraging external investment and supporting statutory obligations.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	The Natural Heritage targeted rate was increased to \$15 per property in the 2024 LTP because of strong support through consultation on the LTP proposal. The NHPP is highly valued by our community, and the money the council contributes to these projects leverages additional investment from other funders. Analysis from the 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 NHF funding rounds show that every dollar council funds community groups leverage \$2-3 additional funding. For EIF, community groups leverage an additional \$1 for every \$1 the council contributes (see Related Document #2). Supporting community groups to deliver biodiversity outcomes means we can deliver better outcomes for biodiversity than the council could achieve on its own. Council has supported 59 (23/24), 64 (24/25) 96 (25/26) community groups and landowners through this programme over the last three years.	\$2,653,854	Financial benefit is up to three times our investment	No	- The NHPP has strong community support. - The council has invested in this partnership programme with the community for more than 20 years. - Biodiversity gains are often realised after sustained multigenerational investment.
Option 1	Reduce the natural heritage targeted rate	The targeted rate could be reduced. The size of reduction can be scaled to the size of the saving required. For every \$1 the targeted rate is reduced, this equates to approximately \$200,000 less revenue that is available for distribution to community groups. For example, if the targeted rate was reduced to \$12 per property per annum, a financial saving of approximately \$600,000 per annum could be realised. The KPI relating to the number of community groups and landowners supported through this programme would need to be reduced. Community groups will be less able to use our funding to leverage additional funding as we will be providing less funding. Any change to the targeted rate will need to be consulted on through the proposed LTP and there is likely to be strong community opposition to a reduction.	Dependent on size of reduction of targeted rate.	Financial saving dependent on size of reduction of targeted rate.	No	- The NHPP has strong community support. - The targeted rate was only increased in the 2024 LTP and the community will be disappointed to see this reduction lost so soon.
Option 2	Implement operational efficiencies	As part of the forthcoming review of the NHPP Policy, consider the following matters that would improve the efficiency of the NHPP in providing support to the community: Whether the Moderation Panel, rather than ICMC, makes decisions on the NHF. This would reduce the time between applications closing and decisions being notified as well as	Reduced labour allocated to NHPP and is instead available to other	Streamlined process. Decisions made faster.	Yes	- Labour costs allocated to the NHPP can be reduced and savings available for distribution to recipients. - Time between application and decisions will be reduced by at least 7 weeks.

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Strategic Investment Proposal: NHPP 2027 LTP

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		reducing staff time in preparing the committee report and attending ICMC; and 2. increasing the percentage of the SSCIF distributed by community hubs from 30% would result in a reduction of staff hours in administration of the fund (see Related Document #3).	biodiversity work programmes. Some additional funding would be required due to this labour reallocation.			

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	- Recipients are funded through funding deeds. - NHF – decisions on which groups and the amount of funding for each group is made at ICMC based on the recommendation of the Moderation Panel. - EIF/SSCIF – decisions on which groups and the amount of funding for each group are made by a Moderation Panel.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Natural Heritage Fund Manager	Biodiversity Team	1100	
Environmental Initiatives Fund Manager	Biodiversity Team	1100	
Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund Manager	Biodiversity Team	900	
Partnerships Unit Lead - Oversight of NHPP	Biodiversity Team	300	
Oversight of Biodiversity work programme and Moderation Panel member.	Biosecurity and Biodiversity Section Manager	40	
Business support	Business Support Team	160	
Oversight of Biodiversity Team work programme and Moderation Panel member.	Biodiversity Team	80	
Moderation Panel member	Business Advisory Services Team	40	
Totals		3,720	

NB. The total number of hours is based on the AP2027 figure and is unlikely to change considerably if the targeted rate is reduced as there will be similar work in assessing applications, managing funding deeds and providing technical advice and support to recipients.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Opex¹	\$2,653,854	\$2,701,712	\$2,745,979	\$2,787,489	2,830,407	\$2,830,407	\$13,719,441
Total Cost*	\$2,653,854	\$2,701,712	\$2,745,979	\$2,787,489	2,830,407	\$2,830,407	\$13,719,441

*Note *excluding resourcing costs*

¹ Figures obtained from INFOR via <https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/36239118>

² To provide context, the amounts available per fund to be allocated to community groups in AP27 (\$2,758,252) are:

- SSCIF = \$195,000
- EIF \$428,543
- NHF = \$2,134,709

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
	NB Noting that funding provided by the council is used to leverage funding from other funders.
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	• Experienced staff to run and support the three funding rounds. • Experienced staff to provide technical advice and support for project delivery. • An external assessor is used to review NHF applications to provide a level of independence. • Appropriate software to manage applications and management of funds.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	• NHF/EIF – community groups undertaking restoration projects. • SSCIF – community groups and individual landowners undertaking restoration projects. • Community hubs delivering the SSCIF community hub funding trial. • Other funders – e.g. Trust Waikato, Lotteries Commission, WCEET, WRA
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	• That SSCIF continues to be funded through the UAGC. • That NHF and EIF continues to be funded through the Natural Heritage Targeted Rate.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	• Demand for community led biodiversity projects is likely to always exceed funding available. • Other funders cannot meet the needs of community led biodiversity projects alone.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that</i>	• Relevant and current NHPP Funding Policy (see Related Document #1).

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
<i>must occur to enable success.</i>	
Strategic risks <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	• STRAT-03 Relationships – the NHPP helps to effectively manage relationships with its communities and key stakeholders to deliver biodiversity outcomes across the region. • STRAT-09 Climate Change – the NHPP contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change by supporting projects that maintain and enhance biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems across the region.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	There are limited risks associated with implementing the NHPP as per the preferred option. Risks could include: • Not enough applications for funding are received (has never happened over 20 years) • Weather events could prevent projects being completed (delays more likely) • Community groups do not have the skills or cannot access the skills required to support project delivery (the Biodiversity work programme has multiple initiatives to support community groups to undertake biodiversity projects) Taking this approach will minimise the risks of not delivering biodiversity outcomes across the region, that previous council investment in these groups and projects are not lost and it reduces the reputational risk to the council in not supporting the community-led biodiversity projects which we have a long track record of doing through a valued partnership programme.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
1. Natural Heritage Partnership Programme Funding Policy		28557027
2. NHF and EIF analysis – percentage of WRC contribution		35953218
3. SSCIF community hub funding distribution analysis and recommendation memo		35861944

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Catchment New Works (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Integrated Catchment Management
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	30/07/2026 4:09 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	35.7
Finance Code (Infor)	50096 Piako HCEF, 50128 Waihou HCEF, 50449 Coromandel HCEF, 51000 Central Waikato CNW, 51031 Central Waikato WRA, 51154 Lower Waikato CNW, 51247 Coromandel NW General, 51278 Upper Waikato CNW, 51309 Lake Taupo CNW, 51340 Waipā CNW, 51371 Waipā Catchment Plan HCEF, 51402 Piako CNW, 51433 Waihou NW General, 51464 West Coast CNW, 51495 West Coast HCEF.	Achievability Score	75.00
		Total Score LTP27	110.7

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Moderate
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	High
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Moderate
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	Extreme
Level of procurement required	Low
Dependencies	None

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We implement agreed plans (new catchment works) with landowners and land managers to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	Across the 15 cost centres there are multiple aligned pathways: 2 Coast and Marine 3 Biodiversity and Biosecurity 4 Regional Resilience 6 Afforestation and Planting 7 Agriculture and Soils
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer and Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Consult and Involve

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

ICM's catchment management programmes are the Council's primary non-regulatory mechanism for delivering environmental outcomes at a catchment scale. Through incentives, partnerships, engagement and on-the-ground works this investment supports erosion control, riparian fencing and planting, wetland restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and advisory support for landowners and communities to improve catchment outcomes. Continued investment is needed because significant environmental challenges remain across the region. More than half of monitored river sites fail national sediment bottom lines, and sediment loads remain high in many catchments, demonstrating an ongoing need for intervention that targets the highest risk and benefit areas. Investment is needed now because the policy and legislative landscape is increasingly reliant on voluntary catchment action to achieve environmental outcomes. Proposed replacement resource management legislation, including the Natural Environment Bill, creates a clear expectation that councils will consider and apply non-regulatory mechanisms such as incentives, partnerships, and education alongside regulation.

Key drivers include:

- Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941 (SCRCA). The SCRCA establishes Council's role in promoting soil conservation and minimising erosion and flood damage and remains a key statutory driver for maintaining investment in non-regulatory catchment management programmes.

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

- Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato: requires action to improve water quality, reduce contaminant losses and restore the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā rivers;
- the Waikato Regional Plan: gives effect to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and national directions relating to the council's mandatory responsibility to address water quality issues, providing for a mix of responses (policy, regulation and non-regulatory actions). ICM's catchment new works programmes are a key component of the non-regulatory response.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Key findings of a recent review support continued investment in catchment programmes. Evidence includes:

- Funding support is a key determinant of landowner action. In 2025, a survey of Waikato landowners consistently identified funding as a major factor influencing the uptake, scale and timing of works on farm, noting it enabled them to achieve outcomes that would have been unaffordable without council's financial support. Only 16% said they would have been able to complete their catchment projects without WRC funding support. 100% said they would be happy to work with staff again in future.
- Council investment leverages substantial external and private investment. WRC programmes are co-funded by landowners, central government agencies and organisations such as the Waikato River Authority. Between 2012 (WRA funding begins) and 2025, WRC contributed \$21.6m in direct costs to catchment programmes valued at \$62.6m. This demonstrates the significant funding committed from external sources and landowners when council is able to incentivise works and support landowners to develop and implement projects. Co-funders interviewed in 2025 emphasised the value of council programmes for leverage of their own funding, and the benefit provided by council staff bringing multiple funding streams together into a cohesive package of support for landowners.
- Outside of WRC applications to external funders, catchment new works budgets also support projects that leverage funding for restoration programmes led by external groups. For example, for the 2026 funding round of the Waikato River Authority, council contributions of \$125,000 across the Waikato and Waipā River catchments are supporting \$1.3m in applications by external groups.
- Catchment management programmes have delivered substantial on-the-ground change. Since 2013, WRC-supported programmes have assisted in the construction of more than 2,200 km of fencing, retirement of almost 13,000 ha of erosion prone land and critical source areas, and over 6,000 ha of planting, with an increasing proportion of this work over time targeted to priority catchments (now >90%).
- WRC's catchment environmental monitoring programme is designed to measure long term impacts of the works funded by our catchment programmes in priority catchments. Four catchments regionally are monitored however the Matahuru catchment in the Lower Waikato has the longest record. Analysis of data from the Matahuru stream from 2007 to 2026 shows a declining trend in suspended sediment loads in the catchment despite the number of storm events impacting the area in recent years.
- Modelling by Manaaki Whenua indicates that catchment new works funding targeted to the region's highest-risk land will significantly reduce climate change-driven erosion and sediment loss to waterways.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Maintaining investment in catchment management programmes delivers long-term environmental, social and economic benefits by protecting and restoring catchments and waterways, leveraging external investment, meeting statutory obligations, and improving catchment and river health where regulation alone is insufficient. The funding enables targeted action to promote sustainable land use, reduce erosion and

sediment loss, improve water quality and biodiversity, and build the resilience catchments and communities to future environmental pressures.

Expected benefits are:

- Reduced erosion and sedimentation, helping protect productive land, infrastructure, waterways, harbours and coastal receiving environments from the impacts of accelerated erosion.
- Improved freshwater outcomes through riparian protection, wetland restoration, stock exclusion and targeted catchment mitigations that help reduce sediment, nutrient and pathogen losses to waterways.
- Increased catchment resilience by reducing vulnerability to erosion and extreme weather events, consistent with the intent of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act and Council's Waikato Resilience Framework.
- Leveraged investment and partnerships, with Council funding continuing to attract significant contributions from landowners and funding partners. This in turn supports economic activity through nurseries, planting teams, fencing contractors and pest control operators, including in some of the most economically deprived parts of our region such as Te Kuiti, Huntly and parts of the West Coast.
- Support of integrated catchment management where addressing upper catchment risks contributes to reducing long-term flood and river management risks.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Two setting apply across these cost-centres Either: It is not required under legislation but is a council direction or contractual obligation. (applies to budget attached to Deeds of Funding). OR Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are taken. Note: The programme is not directly a mandatory requirement, but the work forms part of WRC's response to mandatory freshwater requirements.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo - BAU	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue to deliver programmes as per the 2026/2027 annual plan. The budgets for each zone vary according to community demand, environmental need, previous catchment committee recommendations and staffing levels. Advantages: This provides funding for priority catchments, leverages external funding, and supports landowners to invest in non-regulatory environmental protection and resilience programmes. Also provides council the ability to support catchment groups, iwi entities and others undertaking work outside priority catchments where there are strong social, educational, cultural and/or community benefits. The current programme provides for multi-year landowner agreements linked to co-funding contracts, which helps to build and maintain momentum and provides funding certainty to landowners. Disadvantages: Doesn't provide for savings that council is seeking. Risks underspend in the Waipā catchment.	WRC cost \$2,831,253 No increase from 26/27	No new benefits	No	Not preferred because uptake of works has become challenging in priority Waipā catchments. Underspend may continue with current budgets (albeit we now have a full zone team for the first time since 2020).
Option 1 (minimum)	Remove incentives for catchment works	Support for landowners and groups is limited to information and advice. Council doesn't apply for further co-funding for programmes and withdraws existing applications to MPI and WRA. Advantages: There would be reductions to zone rates and some general rates regionally. Disadvantages: Non-regulatory programmes almost certainly decrease in priority catchments. It would be more difficult for council to demonstrate the use of non-regulatory approaches to meeting limits before applying regulations as per the requirement in the Natural Environment Bill. Although the existing programme is not directly a mandatory requirement, the work forms part of WRC's freshwater response to mandatory requirements. If it was removed, increased regulation would need to be considered to meet the freshwater outcomes sought. Council would be moving away from a whole of catchment approach to resilience, natural hazard risk and flood protection. This option is not aligned to the Waikato Resilience Framework's approach of increasing the scale and uptake of nature-based solutions to address multiple risks and deliver multiple outcomes.	\$0	Cost savings	No	Not preferred because programmes are highly valued by landowners, stakeholders and co-funders. High reputational risk if they are ceased. Programmes enable council to leverage significant funding to support farmer investment regionally in sustainable land management and catchment resilience. Not aligned to either the Regional Catchment Management Framework or Waiakto Resilience Framework.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option 2 (reduce level of service in Waipā)	Reduced programme	Reduce the size of the Waipā Catchment Plan project by \$200K per year. This follows a \$150K reduction for the last LTP. Retain other catchment works budgets as they reflect the need for works, community demand and ability to leverage co-funding. Continue to apply for WRA funding for all zones in the Waikato River catchment and to MPI for hill country erosion funding regionally. Advantages: Momentum in priority catchments is maintained, landowners continue to be supported to take non-regulatory action, and partnership projects are able to be progressed contributing to improved water way health, reduced exposure to risk and enhanced wellbeing of communities and natural environments. Direct cost budget is reduced by \$200,000 p.a.	WRC cost \$2,631,253 Saving of \$200K per year.	Cost savings	Yes	This option balances cost with environmental, resilience and community outcomes. Reduces rate take for the Waipā catchment where there has been several years of under expenditure, while continuing to enable focus of funding support in the areas of highest risk and potential benefit. Retains sufficient funding to help address key issues, leverage co-funding, support local businesses and retain a whole of catchment approach to water quality, soil conservation and flood protection.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
<i>Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.</i>	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
<i>Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.</i>	As per BAU most of the projects undertaken through these cost centres have a value of less than \$100K. Procurement follows organisational policies and market rates are regularly reviewed to ensure value for money. Suppliers are generally on "As required contracts". Where there is confidence in numbers and timing for plant supply, procurement of plants and planting across multiple zones is undertaken through an RFP which is advertised on GETS and follows the assessment process required through our procurement policy.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Catchment management officers	Catchments section ICM	12,961	Delivered by 15 staff across 8 zones (note: no staff member has 100% of their time in these cost centres). Staff promote programmes to landowners and communities, provide information and advice, develop environmental programme agreements (EPAs) in priority catchments and sites, oversee delivery of works, grant claim programmes according to agreed cost shares.
Unit Leads	Catchments section ICM	2,090	Supported by 4 Unit Leads across 8 zones. Unit leads develop and deliver complex and/or partnership projects and undertake day to day management of catchment management officers. Their time is also spread across multiple other cost centres.
Team Leaders	Catchments section ICM	1,070	There are 3 Team Leaders regionally. They manage river and catchment management teams. Their contribution to the catchment new works programme is approval of EPAs as per their delegation and line management of the wider geographical team.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Opex	\$2,631,253.75	\$2,678,086.37	\$2,727,260.62	\$2,774,093.24	\$2,820,925.86	\$14,537,831.06	\$28,169,450.91
Total Cost*	\$2,631,253.75	\$2,678,086.37	\$2,727,260.62	\$2,774,093.24	\$2,820,925.86	\$14,537,831.06	\$28,169,450.91

*Note *excluding resourcing costs and cofunder/landowner contributions. See document reference in Appendix 1 for full costings by zone, cost centre and funding source.*

- Financial information on which this data was sourced: <https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/36239118>
- All funding allocated to river management programmes was removed from partnership budgets for this SIP.
- \$1,044,250 of WRC direct cost is currently committed to co-funder Deeds of Funding and/or submitted applications.

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	For the direct costs in the above table: Fully funded by WRC For the programme as a whole the funding source is a combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations. Note: Council direct cost funding comes from a mix of targeted and general rates. These WRC direct costs represent approximately 35% of the total direct costs of works achieved through the programme. The external co-funder contribution to the total direct costs is estimated to be \$12.2m over the ten years of the LTP. Landowners are anticipated to contribute \$40.1m giving a total regional value over 10 years of \$80.5m.
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information (and current market rates) ☒ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Catchment management officers • Knowledge of erosion processes and appropriate mitigations • Farm systems • Riparian management • Preparation of farm based environmental programme agreements Catchment programme, unit and team leads • As above • Financial management • Project management and reporting • Staff management • Stakeholder engagement All required technical expertise to deliver the recommended option exist in-house. This includes experienced catchment management officers across each zone and a highly experienced management team. It is not anticipated that contracted catchment staff will be required unless there are vacancies that requiring temporary filling, or additional external funding is obtained that increases the size of the programme to be delivered. Contractors will be used for plant supply, planting, weed control and fencing. These services are readily available across the region.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	At the zone level the key stakeholders are: • Landowners: positively impacted through access to funding incentives to undertake works at a scale that would otherwise be unaffordable. Leveraged funding enables an even greater level of support. Landowners are decision makers on works to be undertaken on their property, subject to it being within funding priorities. • Iwi and hapū: positively impacted through programmes delivering on iwi environmental management plans and multiple partnership projects. Level of engagement is dependent on the programme, level of interest and iwi capacity, and ranges from inform to involve. • Catchment groups: positively impacted through funding for on-the-ground works (catchment group co-ordination is supported through central government funding). Council financial support can also help their members leverage funding from others. Support for their members from council enables catchment aspirations to be achieved through non-regulatory means. • Industry groups: These groups are informed or consulted with as required for programme development and engagement activities that support implementation. • Co-funders: positively impacted through the joint funding of initiatives that meet the goals of multiple partners. Co-funders are involved in decision making through allocation of funds and agreement on delivery targets.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1. Catchment management will continue to be delivered by one or more entities under local government reform 2. The Waikato River Authority, MPI and others will continue to co-fund catchment protection, restoration and resilience programmes with Council.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1. Financial climate: experience has shown that when farmer profits are down, ability for landowners to contribute their percentage to the cost of works is reduced and uptake of incentives is impacted. Staff manage this through working with landowners to identify highest priority works and achievable timeframes. This may mean larger numbers of smaller projects are undertaken in any one year, and/or individual EPAs are spread over multiple years to spread costs. 2. Landowner willingness to continue to contribute to sustainable land use and environmental protection programmes on farm including soil conservation and protection of indigenous vegetation and waterways: Programmes do not cover the full cost of works and landowner willingness, and investment is critical for success. Staff manage this through undertaking promotional activities, field days, working with our Primary Industry Engagement and Biodiversity teams, and building relationships with catchment groups to advocate the on-farm and community advantages of soil conservation, protection of aquatic environments and nature-based solutions.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1. A policy landscape that promotes non-regulatory actions to achieve water quality, soil conservation and catchment resilience outcomes. Co-funder and council policies currently dictate that funding will not be provided where works are required by regulation. 2. Science support: The catchments section works closely with staff in SPI to identify and review priority catchments and highest risk/benefit locations, and to understand impacts of mitigations. 3. Asset management support: We rely on support from the asset management team for management of our asset data base, capture of funded assets and spatial mapping. This supports reporting to council and co-funders and maintenance and audit programmes.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT RISK 03 – Relationships Retention of catchment new works funding reduces the risk of council losing the trust and confidence of communities, iwi, partners and key stakeholders through providing a key positive engagement programme with landowners, communities and others. Surveys and interviews undertaken in 2025 clearly demonstrate how much the catchment programmes are valued and iwi entities specifically identified building trust with council as a key positive outcome. STRAT RISK 09 - Climate change Supporting upper catchment actions and nature-based solutions provides for a whole of catchment approach to mitigation of climate change impacts and reducing exposure to risks from natural hazards including flooding and landslides.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Plant establishment There is a risk that mitigations fail because of weather (e.g. drought/flooding) resulting in objectives not being met. This is managed by allowing for an extended fencing and planting season to provide flexibility and avoid periods of risk. Landowner uptake There is a risk that landowner uptake will not meet the deliverable requirements because of low landowner interest or affordability. This is managed through regular reviews to assess project allocations and progress. Where uptake is low, promotional activities and additional engagement are undertaken to raise awareness and generate uptake of works. Farm plans There is a risk that freshwater farm plans or farm environment plans may require landowners to undertake works that are proposed to be incentivised through this programme resulting in under delivery of work. This is managed through regular discussions with the Primary Industry Engagement team and utilising the best available information on what is likely to be included in the first tranche of farm plans. Should the first farm plans require landowners to complete works that are currently eligible for funding (this is considered very unlikely) then the programme can be amended to focus on works that go above and beyond regulatory requirements.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Detailed costings by zone for SIP Catchment New Works 2027-2037	1	#38116616

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Community Transport (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	5/08/2026 1:48 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	10.71
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	52.50
		Total Score LTP27	63.21

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Moderate
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Low

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	High
Change Complexity	High
Technical Skill Availability	Moderate
Level of Interest	High
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	Low
Level of procurement required	Moderate
Dependencies	Moderate

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We consider applications made annually to the Fund based on their achievement of criteria set within the process.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	9 Community Funding and Investment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Customer
Iwi Māori Engagement	Inform

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

The Waikato Rural Transport Forum was established in March 2010 to address rural transport issues and foster collaboration among stakeholders.

Through the 2022/23 Annual Plan, Council established a contestable fund for distribution to eligible community transport providers in the region, to better support its communities' access needs. This has grown from \$200k per annum to \$500k per annum and has been over-subscribed every year.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

As reported to the August WRC Transport Committee (Attachment One), in 2024/25 the fund (\$300K at that time) supported about 20% of the total costs for 628 volunteer drivers across 29 organisations regionwide, resulting in 78,133 trips totalling 1.726m km. There were 73,000 volunteer hours recorded, a labour equivalent of \$1.825m.

This demonstrates significant value for the funding invested.

Noting that the Community Transport Policy is currently being reviewed (at WRC Transport Committee request), the status quo option is to continue the fund into the 2027-37 Long Term Plan at the current value (\$500k per annum).

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

The Community Transport Accountability Report 2024/25 (Attachment One) presented to the WRC Transport Committee on 4 August 2026 stated that the majority of trips (more than 90 per cent) were for accessing medical and health appointments. Of the remaining trips, almost 3000 were taken to access social and leisure activities, such as social visits, community events and day trips, and slightly more than 1000 were to access support services, such as caregiver respite services. The remaining trips were to access essential, personal, education and other transport services. This highlights the critical role that community transport plays in connecting people and communities with essential services for good living.

In 2024/25, 15 providers used wheelchair accessible vehicles and undertook 3229 trips with at least one wheelchair user. This is an increase of 8 per cent from the previous year. In total, there

were 724 passengers who used wheelchairs among 20,919 passengers. Some providers have regular passengers with ongoing transportation needs.

As in previous year, many of the trips were along the state highway from Thames through to Paeroa, Te Aroha, Matamata and Tokoroa, and even through to Taupō. There were more trips between townships in the Coromandel Peninsula, and between North Waikato and Coromandel Peninsula communities. There are currently limited public transport options along these transport corridors, with all existing services requiring a lengthy transit through Hamilton city centre.

Many community transport organisations bring passengers to Waikato Hospital, but many also bring passengers to appointments at Te Kūiti Hospital, Thames Hospital, Tokoroa Hospital, and specialist medical centres.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	It is not required under legislation but is a council directive or a contractual obligation

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Description: Continue with the Community Transport Fund at the same \$500k per annum as confirmed within the 2026/27 Annual Plan. Advantages: This fund has been oversubscribed since inception even though it has grown from \$200k to \$500k per annum over that time. Evidence demonstrates that this relatively minor investment is enabling communities to improve their access to health, support services and for social and leisure activities. Funding supports communities to identify how they can provide services on the days and times that they require, without needing WRC funded fixed route bus services, and in the absence of any new national NZTA funding. Disadvantages: May not align with the savings that council is seeking.	Total of \$747k comprising \$500k fund plus approx. \$247k overhead covering 1.3 salaries, regional community transport forum, national leadership, two-year Symposium etc No increase from 26/27	No new benefits.	Yes	Fund is over-subscribed annually. Customer feedback is excellent. Council has been very supportive of Community Transport as a way of providing services where conventional fixed route public transport is not economically viable.
Option 1(minimum)	Reduce the annual fund by 50%	Description: Reduce future funding by 50% Advantages: Reduction in the regional PT targeted rate. Disadvantages: 1. Reputational risk – there is strong community support. 2. Breach of Regional Public Transport Plan policies 5, 11, 21 and 22.	Saving of \$497k, comprising half of current grant \$250k plus other costs of up to \$247k.	Cost savings	No	Not preferred because the fund has been over-subscribed since inception and Council has chosen via the Annual Plan process to increase it from \$500k to \$500k over that time.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		3. Misalignment with Regional Land Transport Plan priority 2 (provision of transport options for differing community access and mobility needs).	This is funded 100% by WRC through the targeted public transport rate.			
Option 2 (intermediate)	Reduce the annual fund by 100%	Description: Cease the Community Transport grant Advantages: Reduction in the regional PT targeted rate. Disadvantages: 1. High reputational risk – there is strong community support 2. Breach of Regional Public Transport Plan policies 5, 11, 21 and 22. 3. Misalignment with Regional Land Transport Plan priority 2 (provision of transport options for differing community access and mobility needs).	Saving of \$747k per annum. This is funded 100% by WRC through the targeted public transport rate.	Cost savings		Not preferred primarily due to high reputational risk.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	This is a discretionary grant fund. 'Procurement' is via an application and assessment process. Council is currently reviewing the Community Transport Policy which determines the process and delegations.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Community Transport Advisor (currently vacant)	Portfolio Delivery Team, RTC	2080	SME and responsible staff member.
Team Leader Portfolio Delivery	Portfolio Delivery Team, RTC	100	Oversees the activity, manages workload

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	FYxx	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$0.00					\$	\$
Total Cost*	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council via the Regional PT Targetted Rate.
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings

from the options provided.	

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	This SIP considers the impacts of ceasing a discretionary grant fund. No new resources would be required.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?</i> <i>For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Communities, particularly those which are rural and remote, would be impacted potentially significantly. Targeted TRW advice is recommended to assess whether reducing or ending the Community Transport Grant Fund would have a distinct impact on Māori access to essential services. Further assessment is required to determine whether Māori organisations, marae, papakāinga, or Māori service users are disproportionately affected. However, confirmation is required on affected iwi or hapū rights, Māori providers, marae, papakāinga or relationship commitments. There is a need to confirm whether any Māori organisations or identifiable Māori communities are materially affected and whether targeted engagement is required before funding decisions are finalised.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	1. Any change to the Community Transport grant fund would be the result of council deciding to reduce or stop all discretionary activity in this space (no other intention to change what is a very successful fund).
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	1. The Community Transport Policy is currently being reviewed at the request of the WRC Transport Committee. 2. Community is 100% funded by council via the regional public transport rate (forms part of the 'unserved' cost applied regionwide). There is currently no NZTA subsidy.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	1. Community Transport, run by volunteers using non-PSV vehicles, fills gaps in timetabled public transport networks across the region. Removal of Community Transport would reduce access and increase isolation. 2. If timetabled public transport were able to fill these gaps with timetabled services, the costs would be far higher than the value of the grant fund.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	Strategic Risk 03: Relationships <i>There is a risk that Waikato Regional Council does not effectively manage relationships with its communities and key stakeholders that may affect their trust and confidence in our ability to deliver on our services and commitments.</i>
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	There are multiple risks with stopping this investment, as noted throughout this SIP.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Community Transport Accountability Report 2024/25		https://discovercloud.wairc.govt.nz/cs/cs/app/nodes/37776603

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: External iwi capacity and capability funding (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Iwi Māori Partnerships
		Project, Programme or BAU:	BAU
Date Created:	6/08/2026 9:42 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	46.41
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	75.00
		Total Score LTP27	121.41

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	High
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	Moderate
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	Moderate
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Moderate
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	Low
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	High

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	High
External Impact	Low
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	None
Level of Interest	High
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	None
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	High

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	Supports iwi participation, capacity, and capability through relationship-based engagement, partnership

Supporting Information	Result
	work, administration of iwi capacity funding, and consistent tracking and reporting of funded initiatives.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	0 No alignment
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Te Ao Māori
Iwi Māori Engagement	Inform

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

This proposal seeks to retain the existing \$300,000 annual external iwi capacity and capability fund through the 2027 LTP. No additional funding is requested.

The fund supports ongoing iwi capacity requirements and emerging participation needs, enabling appropriate, proportionate and mutually beneficial iwi participation in Council work. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will provide planned capacity for agreed priorities, while flexible, project-specific allocations will address eligible requirements outside SLA scopes.

Demand is expected to increase during the first years of the 2027 LTP as Council undertakes regional spatial planning, natural environment planning, local government reform and infrastructure planning. These programmes will require earlier and more sustained iwi and hapū participation. However, their timing, scale and specific requirements will vary and cannot be fully planned at LTP adoption.

The Regional Spatial Plan programme illustrates the likely demand. Subject to final legislation and national direction, work in 2027 is expected to cover regional planning arrangements, strategic issues, evidence, partner engagement and scenario development. In 2028, the programme is expected to progress to options assessment, draft plan preparation, notification and hearings.

The plan will address growth, infrastructure, environmental opportunities and constraints, climate risk, investment and long-term regional change. Early understanding of Māori interests, opportunities and constraints will strengthen decision-making and inform subsequent Natural Environment Plan and land-use planning.

Iwi and hapū participation is expected across statutory and Treaty settlement mapping; strategic issues and objectives; spatial evidence and mātauranga Māori; participation arrangements; scenario assessment; infrastructure and environmental planning; plan development, implementation, monitoring and review.

Council's requirements may exceed iwi organisational capacity at the required pace and frequency. SLAs will support planned priorities, while flexible allocations will respond to eligible project-specific needs as they arise. This approach allows funding to reflect the timing, scale and requirements of each activity.

The fund will not cover all iwi engagement. It will not replace Council's relationship management, statutory, legal or engagement-planning responsibilities, or override agreement-specific cost provisions, including arrangements where costs lie where they fall.

The proposal retains the existing funding envelope while strengthening forward planning, promotion, allocation and monitoring. Early discussions with iwi partners and improved internal forecasting will help identify likely requirements, while preserving flexibility to respond to emerging needs.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

- Existing experience shows that both funding mechanisms enable substantive iwi participation.
- SLAs have funded hui preparation, document review, technical advice, internal iwi coordination, workshops, meetings and follow-up across policy, planning, science, monitoring, operational and strategic programmes.
- Internal allocations have funded project-specific participation outside SLA scopes, providing flexibility for time-bound needs identified after annual priorities are set.
- Council allocated \$900,000 from 2023/24 to 2025/26 and spent approximately \$545,500. Unspent funding was returned through prior-year surplus reserve processes and was not retained in the activity.
- This underspend should not determine future funding. It reflected earlier work programmes, staged implementation and variable demand. Future requirements should be based on forecast Council work.

- That work is expected to increase materially. The Regional Spatial Planning programme requires iwi, hapū, post-settlement governance entities and co-governance bodies to contribute to statutory mapping, evidence development, engagement, scenario assessment, plan preparation, implementation and monitoring.
- Current guidance also identifies iwi and Māori capacity as a regional readiness dependency. Effective participation requires practical resourcing that reflects differing partner capacity.
- Demand is expected to peak in 2027 and 2028. In 2027, work is expected to include strategic scope development, evidence building, national direction analysis, early engagement and scenario development. In 2028, it is expected to progress to options assessment, draft Regional Spatial Plan preparation, assurance, notification and hearings.
- These overlapping workstreams support an expectation of more sustained participation demand than in the previous funding period.
- The case for retaining the allocation is therefore based on forecast Council work and anticipated participation requirements. Historical expenditure confirms that SLAs and responsive allocations are workable mechanisms.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Continuing the fund provides a practical means of securing timely iwi participation where that input can improve Council decisions, implementation and partnership outcomes.

- It enables iwi partners to contribute advice, mātauranga Māori, tikanga perspectives, local knowledge and understanding of iwi priorities where relevant.
- Earlier participation can identify issues, opportunities and implementation concerns before Council has committed heavily to a preferred approach. This can reduce avoidable delay, rework, escalation and relationship strain.
- The \$300,000 annual envelope enables Council to provide agreed participation capacity through SLAs, support technical and preparatory input into major planning processes, enable internal iwi coordination, respond to eligible project-specific needs outside SLA scopes, and retain flexibility as overlapping planning and reform work creates demand that cannot be predicted precisely.
- This capacity will become increasingly important as Regional Spatial Plan work progresses through evidence, engagement, options and plan preparation, then into Natural Environment Plan and land-use planning.
- The mechanism also provides greater consistency than separate project-by-project negotiations. Tai-ranga-whenua will work with project teams and iwi partners to identify likely demand earlier, align SLA priorities with forward work programmes and identify requirements for responsive allocations.
- Improved forecasting and monitoring will provide clearer information about commitments, expected demand, expenditure and funded activity.
- Success will not depend on spending the full allocation. The key measure is whether sufficient capacity is available when agreed Council work requires effective iwi participation.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?

<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Retain the \$300,000 annual envelope. Continue SLAs and responsive internal allocations while improving forward planning, forecasting, promotion, utilisation and reporting. Advantages: preserves flexibility, supports known and emerging requirements, maintains continuity and avoids fragmented project funding. Disadvantages: provides no immediate budget saving and expenditure may remain variable.	\$300,000 p.a.	Provides planned and responsive participation capacity without increasing the budget. Supports forthcoming planning, reform and project activity.	Yes	As the preferred option, this best balances affordability, flexibility and forecast demand. It allows Council to plan known requirements while responding to needs that cannot be predicted at LTP adoption.
Reduce	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Reduce funding to \$200,00 annually from 2027/28 and focus mainly on existing SLA commitments. Advantages: creates an immediate saving. Disadvantages: reduces responsive capacity when RSP, Natural Environment Plan and reform-related demand is expected to increase. It may transfer costs and risks to individual project budgets.	\$200,000 p.a.	Creates savings of \$100,000 per annum but provides reduced ability to respond to time-bound participation needs outside existing commitments.	No	This option is not preferred because it would constrain the mechanism before future reform, settlement implementation and project-specific engagement demands is sufficiently certain and increases delivery risk during the early LTP years.
Discontinue	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Discontinue the dedicated funding mechanism and require iwi participation costs to be managed through individual project or activity budgets. Advantages: removes the central discretionary allocation. Disadvantages: returns Council to a fragmented and inconsistent project-by-project approach, increases negotiation effort, reduces transparency, and risks delaying engagement where projects have not budgeted for iwi participation.	\$0 central allocation	Creates central budget savings but transfers cost, inconsistency and delivery risk to individual projects and programmes.	No	This option is not preferred because it would remove the controlled mechanism designed to support consistent, transparent and timely iwi participation.
Increase	Do Different (Alternative scope, scale, timeframes, or cost, benefit)	Increase the annual budget above the current \$300,000 envelope and reintroduce additional mechanisms such as a contractor hub. Advantages: greater capacity to support more participation needs. Disadvantages: requires new funding, additional administration, procurement and contract management capacity, and stronger governance arrangements.	More than \$300,000 p.a.	Could increase coverage and responsiveness but would require additional resourcing and stronger programme administration.	No	This option is not preferred because the current proposal is not seeking new money and is focused on retaining or right-sizing the existing discretionary allocation.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☒ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	No new procurement is proposed. Funding will continue to be managed through existing SLA arrangements and internal allocation processes. Any SLA renewals or new agreements will be developed through existing Council contract, finance and legal processes.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Kaiwhakarite	Tai-ranga-whenua	260	– to provide oversight, coordination and reporting of the Iwi Capacity Fund Programme
Pou Tūhono	Iwi Māori Partnerships	40	– executive oversight, strategic alignment and final review of investment narrative.

Financial Assessment:

	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	Ongoing	Totals
Capex				\$0	\$0
Opex	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000 p.a.	\$900,000
Total Cost*	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000 p.a.	\$900,000
Partner Funding	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000 p.a.	\$900,000

Note *including resourcing costs

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	Fully funded by Waikato Regional Council
Cost confidence Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	The investment requires administration of the external iwi capacity and capability funding mechanism, including SLA administration, allocation management, forecasting, financial tracking, monitoring and reporting. Council-side relationship management, statutory and Treaty settlement advice, engagement planning and assessment of participation requirements remain with Tai-ranga-whenua and relevant internal teams. Administration must align with Council's forward work programme to inform SLA discussions and forecasting. Funding mechanism administration - Administration of Service Level Agreements, including agreement management, renewal coordination and delivery reporting. - Management of internal allocation requests, including eligibility checks, prioritisation advice, budget coding and coordination with project teams. - Financial monitoring, forecasting, expenditure tracking and reporting to support transparency and accountability for the fund. What sits outside the fund - Council-side relationship management with iwi, mana whenua and iwi entities. - Statutory, Treaty settlement, co-governance, joint management agreement and engagement planning advice. These functions remain with Tai-ranga-whenua and relevant Council teams, rather than through the external iwi capacity and capability funding allocation.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	Successful delivery of this investment relies on the funding mechanism being applied consistently and transparently, with requirements identified early. The key stakeholders are those who either receive support through the mechanism, help administer it, or rely on it to enable participation in Council work programmes. 1. Iwi, hapū, marae and iwi partners - Iwi partners with current or future Service Level Agreements that support agreed participation activity. - Hapū, marae and mana whenua interests engaged through iwi partners or project-specific arrangements where participation is appropriate and beneficial. - Iwi organisations involved in Council work programmes, settlement implementation, reform, operational activity or strategic planning where funding may support participation capacity. 2. Council staff and internal users of the mechanism - Tai-ranga-whenua, as the team administering the funding mechanism and supporting consistent application. - Council staff and project leads seeking iwi participation, advice or input through SLAs or internal allocation requests. - Internal teams responsible for planning, policy, science, monitoring, regulatory, catchment, resilience, emergency management and operational activities where iwi participation may be needed. - Finance, legal and contract support functions that assist with budget coding, agreements, expenditure tracking and reporting.
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	The proposal assumes that iwi participation will remain necessary throughout the 2027 LTP period, with increased demand during the early years as Regional Spatial Plan establishment, evidence development, engagement and plan preparation progress. 1. Ongoing Demand for Iwi Participation - The need for iwi participation and engagement support will continue throughout the 2027 LTP period. - Statutory, settlement and partnership contexts will continue to create participation expectations across Council activities, with funding applied where participation is appropriate, proportionate and beneficial to Council and iwi partners. 2. Funding Mechanism Remains Fit for Purpose - The existing SLA and internal allocation model will remain the preferred mechanism for supporting iwi participation. - The current funding framework will continue to provide an effective and practical approach for managing participation needs.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
	3. Existing Operational Capacity - Delivery can continue using existing staff resources and governance arrangements. - No additional FTE or contractor hub administration capacity will be approved through this proposal.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Delivery is shaped by three main constraints: the approved \$300,000 annual funding envelope, existing internal administration capacity, and the need to maintain clear boundaries between external iwi participation funding and Council's broader relationship, statutory and engagement functions. 1. Fixed discretionary funding envelope - Funding is limited to the annual budget envelope approved through the LTP process. - Requests for iwi participation support may exceed available funding in some years. - Any reduction in funding would require increased prioritisation of allocations and commitments. 2. Existing administration capacity - Delivery is dependent on existing Tai-ranga-whenua, finance and legal resources. - No additional FTE resource is proposed to administer the funding programme. - The contractor hub model is not considered viable without dedicated procurement, contract management and reporting capacity. 3. Scope boundaries - The fund supports iwi partner participation capacity; it does not fund Council-side relationship management, statutory interpretation or engagement planning. Funding decisions need to avoid treating every iwi engagement activity as eligible for external capacity support.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	The successful delivery of this investment relies on early iwi discussions, consistent organisational application of the funding framework, and reliable financial monitoring, forecasting and reporting arrangements. 1. Iwi Participation and Forward Planning - Ongoing participation and support from iwi. - Continued use of Service Level Agreements and participation funding arrangements where engagement support is required. - Collaborative relationships that enable iwi involvement in Council programmes, projects, partnership arrangements, and future reform activities where participation is appropriate and beneficial. 2. Organisational Understanding and Adoption - Clear organisational understanding of when Service Level Agreements or the internal allocation mechanism should be used, including the need to consider whether participation is appropriate, proportionate and mutually beneficial. - Consistent application of funding processes across Council activities and work programmes. - Ongoing commitment to supporting effective iwi participation and engagement across the organisation. 3. Financial Management and Performance Monitoring - Finance coding and expenditure tracking arrangements being maintained. - Monitoring and reporting systems providing visibility of funding commitments, expenditure, and outcomes. - Performance information being available to support accountability, future planning, and investment decision-making.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 03: Relationships This investment helps mitigate STRAT 03 by reducing capacity barriers to substantive iwi participation and supporting clearer expectations. Council remains responsible for relationship management through Tai-ranga-whenua and relevant internal functions. STRAT 08: Giving Effect to the Treaty of Waitangi This investment helps mitigate STRAT 08 by supporting iwi participation where Council has statutory, Treaty settlement, governance or partnership responsibilities. It enables participation but does not determine legal obligations or override agreement-specific funding provisions.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Potential risks: Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.	The primary risks are demand exceeding funding, continued underspend, inconsistent application, and changes to planning legislation, national direction or local government reform. 1. Demand Exceeds Available Funding • Demand for iwi participation funding may exceed the approved annual funding envelope. • A reduced funding allocation may limit Council's ability to respond to emerging reform, transition, settlement implementation, or partnership-related participation requirements. • Increased demand may require prioritisation of funding requests and allocations. 2. Continued Underspend • Funding requirements may vary from year to year depending on Council work programmes and iwi participation needs. • Maintaining the current funding level may result in underspend in some years if demand is lower than anticipated. • Ongoing monitoring and forecasting will be required to ensure funding remains aligned with operational demand and strategic priorities. 3. Inconsistent Application • Inconsistent internal application of the funding mechanism could reduce transparency and create uncertainty regarding when funding support should be used. • Limited visibility of expenditure, commitments, and outcomes may reduce confidence in the effectiveness of the investment. • This risk can be mitigated through clear guidance, consistent processes, and strengthened tracking, reporting, and monitoring arrangements.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Business Case – Iwi Māori Partnership and Engagement Funding	Final	P1403 / original business case
Strategic Outline Case – Iwi Māori Partnership and Engagement Funding	N/A	Doc #24990920

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Road Safety (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Regional Transport Connections
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	3/08/2026 11:40 am	Attractiveness Score LTP27	50.00
Finance Code (Infor)		Achievability Score	65.00
		Total Score LTP27	115.00

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	High
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	High
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	None
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	High
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	Low
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Extreme

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	Low
Organisational Impact	Moderate
External Impact	Extreme
Change Complexity	Low
Technical Skill Availability	Low
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	Low
Estimated total team size	None
Level of procurement required	Low
Dependencies	Low

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	We complete 3-yearly reviews of our regional transport plans, as required by the Land Transport Management Act, and maintain a regional road safety strategy.
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	8 Urban Form and Transport
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Excellence
Iwi Māori Engagement	Inform

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

Road safety remains a significant challenge across the Waikato region, with the region continuing to be over-represented in deaths and serious injuries. The Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan identifies safety as a core regional transport priority and recognises that achieving safer outcomes requires a coordinated Safe System approach involving infrastructure, speed management, education, behavioural change, enforcement and partnership delivery.

At regional scale, Waikato Regional Council currently provides regional leadership, coordination, advocacy and education through the Regional Road Safety Programme, enabling local councils to focus their collective effort into programmes that are complimentary and aligned. This key regional role enables collaboration across local authorities, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, New Zealand Police, ACC, community organisations, schools and industry partners, helping to align effort, share resources, avoid duplication and maintain a consistent regional approach to road safety.

In the context of local government reform this is a regional function. Wider consideration would be required to understand roles and responsibilities of the impacts and effects of a change to this delivery model created by either changes in Council approach or local government structural or spatial reform.

The opportunity presented through this investment review is to assess the future role, scale and delivery model of the programme while maintaining focus on activities that provide the greatest regional value. This includes determining the appropriate balance between regional coordination, road safety education, behaviour change initiatives and advocacy activities, and identifying opportunities to improve efficiency or strengthen partnerships.

Without continued investment in regional coordination and leadership, there is a risk that road safety efforts become fragmented across the region, reducing collaboration, limiting knowledge sharing, weakening regional advocacy, and diminishing the ability to deliver consistent education and behaviour change initiatives. This may result in missed opportunities to influence regional safety outcomes and support implementation of the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy and Regional Land Transport Plan priorities.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

The Waikato region continues to be over-represented in national road safety statistics and remains one of New Zealand's highest-risk regions for road trauma. Analysis undertaken for the Regional Road Safety Strategy indicates:

- Deaths and serious injuries (DSI) remain approximately 42 per 100,000 population.

- Personal risk remains elevated at approximately 8 DSI per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled.
- Network risk remains high at approximately 22 DSI per 1,000 kilometres of road network.
- Reductions in DSI have been modest, averaging approximately 1-2% per annum.
- Waikato has the second-highest collective road safety risk nationally and the third-highest personal risk nationally.

The Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan identifies safety as a key regional transport priority and highlights that:

- Waikato's fatal crash rate is higher than the national average.
- Approximately 70% of crashes occur on rural roads.
- Speed contributes to approximately 24% of high-severity crashes.
- Hamilton has one of New Zealand's highest rates of deaths and serious injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists.
- Road trauma is estimated to cost the region approximately \$500 million annually.

These challenges extend across multiple territorial authority boundaries and require a coordinated regional response involving road controlling authorities, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, New Zealand Police, ACC, community organisations, schools and industry partners. The Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan and Regional Road Safety Strategy both identify regional collaboration, coordination and partnership delivery as essential components of the Safe System approach.

The current Regional Road Safety Programme provides this regional coordination function and delivers education, engagement and partnership activities across the Waikato. During 2025/26:

- Approximately 7,883 children participated in the Ruben Road Safety Bear programme.
- More than 1,300 people participated in cycling skills programmes and the Aotearoa Bike Challenge.
- Regional Road Safety Forum activities brought together more than 50 representatives from councils, government agencies, transport organisations and industry.
- Road Safety Week initiatives were delivered collaboratively across multiple councils and partner organisations across the region.
- Regional road safety initiatives targeted vulnerable road users, young drivers, motorcyclists and communities identified as being at greater risk of road trauma.

This evidence demonstrates both the ongoing scale of the road safety challenge and the role the Regional Road Safety Programme plays in providing regional leadership, coordination, education and advocacy. It also highlights the opportunity to review programme delivery and investment settings while maintaining those activities that provide the greatest regional value and support achievement of regional road safety objectives.

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Strategic Alignment

Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036

This investment directly supports:

Pūnaha waka titike | Optimised transport system

- Maintain an integrated, safe and efficient transport system to improve mobility and equity, reduce emissions and support regional productivity.
- Advocate for and deliver a safe, accessible transport system where no-one is killed or seriously injured.
- Update the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy and identify targets to reduce deaths and serious injuries.

Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2054

The programme directly supports the RLTP Safety Objective:

"A safe, accessible transport system in the Waikato region, where no-one is killed or seriously injured."

The programme contributes to:

- Implementing the Safe System approach.
- Education and behaviour change for high-risk and vulnerable road users.
- Regional road safety leadership and collaboration.
- Delivery of actions under the Regional Road Safety Strategy.
- Reductions in deaths and serious injuries.

Potential Outcomes and Benefits

This investment will support the continued delivery of a coordinated regional road safety programme that aligns regional partners, priorities and activities to address road trauma across the Waikato.

Expected benefits include:

- Continued regional leadership, coordination and advocacy for road safety across the Waikato.
- Improved alignment of road safety priorities, programmes and investment across territorial authorities and partner agencies.
- Stronger collaboration between NZTA Waka Kotahi, NZ Police, ACC, local authorities, community organisations, schools and industry.
- Delivery of consistent, evidence-based road safety education and behaviour change initiatives across the region.
- Improved road safety awareness and understanding amongst Waikato communities.
- Increased adoption of safer road user behaviours.
- Improved outcomes for vulnerable road users, including children, pedestrians, cyclists, young drivers and motorcyclists.
- Enhanced ability to identify regional road safety trends, risks and investment priorities through data-led decision making.
- Improved capability to secure National Land Transport Fund investment and advocate for investment that reflects Waikato's high-risk road safety profile.
- Support for implementation of the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy and Road Safety Action Plan.
- Contribution to regional efforts to reduce deaths and serious injuries over time through a coordinated Safe System approach.

Strategic Risks

If the programme is significantly reduced or discontinued:

- Regional leadership and coordination of road safety activities would be diminished.
- The Regional Road Safety Forum and associated partnership networks may become less effective or cease operating in their current form.
- Regional advocacy for road safety investment and policy priorities would be weakened.
- Road safety education and behaviour change initiatives may be reduced, fragmented or delivered inconsistently across the region.
- Opportunities to align local authority, NZTA, NZ Police and ACC initiatives would be reduced.
- Delivery and implementation of the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy could be compromised.
- Regional capability to identify emerging risks, coordinate responses and develop evidence-based funding proposals would decline.
- Knowledge sharing, best practice adoption and collaboration across councils and partner agencies would reduce.
- Waikato's ability to secure investment proportional to its nationally significant road safety risk profile may be adversely affected.
- Progress toward regional and national road safety targets may be slower due to reduced coordination and collective action.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	Strategic
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. It is specified how and / or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo (preferred)	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	Continue delivery of all current activities including the Regional Road Safety Forum, Regional Road Safety Strategy, Ruben Road Safety Bear, Road Safety Week, driver licensing support, cycling and motorcycle initiatives, behaviour change campaigns, resource development, regional advocacy and partner coordination. Advantages: Maintains regional leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy functions; supports RLTP objectives and Regional Road Safety Strategy implementation; retains NZTA co-funding; supports vulnerable road users and existing partnerships. Disadvantages: Ongoing WRC operational funding commitment required.	Total programme value approximately \$850k p.a. (51% NZTA funded; 49% WRC funded plus staff costs).	- Supports WRC strategic direction and RLTP objectives. - Maintains regional leadership role. - Supports Safe System approach. - Retains established partnerships with NZTA, Police, ACC and territorial authorities. - Continues programmes currently reaching thousands of Waikato residents annually. - Positions Waikato strongly for future NLTF	Yes	Maintain the current regional road safety leadership, coordination, education and behaviour-change programme, including delivery of the Regional Road Safety Strategy, Regional Road Safety Forum and community safety initiatives. This option best supports WRC's strategic direction, RLTP safety objectives and national road safety priorities while providing the greatest opportunity to influence reductions in deaths and serious injuries across the Waikato region.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
				funding opportunities. - Supports implementation of the Regional Road Safety Strategy.		
Option 1 (minimum)	Minimum Viable Programme (Reduced Service)	Retain only core strategic functions including - the Regional Road Safety Forum, - Regional Road Safety Strategy, - RLTP planning support, - basic coordination and advocacy. Reduce or cease delivery of - Ruben programme expansion, - Road Safety Week leadership, - behaviour change campaigns, - driver licensing initiatives, - motorcycle and cycling promotion activities and development of new regional resources. Advantages: Retains strategic leadership and planning functions. Disadvantages: Reduced community reach, education activities and stakeholder support. Potential reduction in NZTA co-funding.	Estimated programme value \$250k-\$350k p.a. (Estimated WRC saving \$150k-\$250k p.a. plus minor staff-related savings.)	- Maintains WRC's regional coordination role. - Retains ability to update and monitor the Regional Road Safety Strategy. - Reduces operating costs.	No	Retain core regional coordination and strategic planning functions while reducing community education, awareness campaigns and behaviour-change activities. This option would lower costs but reduce programme reach, stakeholder support and WRC's ability to influence road user behaviour and deliver regional road safety outcomes.
Option 2	Partnership Delivery Model	Retain WRC leadership, strategy, advocacy and coordination functions while transitioning some delivery activities to district councils, community providers, schools or external partners. WRC continues to lead the Strategy, Forum, data analysis and regional advocacy.	Estimated programme value \$400k-\$500k p.a. (Estimated WRC saving \$100k-\$200k p.a.)	Retains regional coordination, planning and advocacy while continuing some community	No	Provides some saving while maintaining regional leadership but introduce a delivery risk and may reduce programme consistency across the region.

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OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		Advantages: Retains regional leadership while reducing direct delivery costs. Disadvantages: Reduced control over programme quality and consistency; increased reliance on partner priorities and funding.		delivery through alternative providers.		
Option 3	Withdraw from Regional Road Safety Programme	Cease WRC-funded regional road safety leadership, coordination and programme delivery activities. Individual councils, NZTA, Police and community organisations may continue activities independently where funding permits. Advantages: Maximum cost reduction. Disadvantages: Loss of regional coordination, advocacy, strategy implementation and forum leadership; reduced collaboration; loss of regional education programmes; likely cessation of regionally led initiatives	0 (Estimated WRC saving \$416.5k p.a.)	WRC Programme funding savings	No	Cease WRC's regional road safety leadership, coordination and programme delivery activities. While this option would deliver cost savings, it would remove regional coordination, weaken collaboration between road safety partners and reduce the region's ability to address one of New Zealand's highest road safety risk profiles and advocate for future investment.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☒ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☐ Over \$250k
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	The majority of the Regional Road Safety Leadership, Coordination and Education Programme will be delivered through existing Waikato Regional Council staff and established partnerships with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, New Zealand Police, ACC, territorial authorities, schools, community organisations and other road safety stakeholders. Programme delivery will primarily utilise existing internal capability and collaborative regional networks. Limited procurement may be required for specialist programme delivery, educational resources, campaign collateral, community engagement materials, communications support, event delivery and targeted road safety initiatives. Existing programme providers and suppliers may be engaged where specialist expertise, established delivery capability or continuity of service is required.

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Manager Transport Strategy and Delivery	RTC – Transport Strategy and Delivery	21	Programme Sponsor – Provides strategic oversight, stakeholder engagement and programme governance.
Team Leader Portfolio Delivery	RTC – Transport Strategy and Delivery	104	Programme Lead – Responsible for programme oversight, coordination, reporting, budgeting and delivery management.
Regional Road Safety Lead	RTC – Transport Strategy and Delivery	2,080	Programme Manager – Leads programme delivery, stakeholder engagement, implementation of road safety initiatives, regional coordination and monitoring of outcomes.
Programmes Administrator	RTC – Transport Strategy and Delivery	686	Programme Coordinator – Coordinates programme delivery, Ruben Road Safety Bear presenters, scheduling, stakeholder liaison, administration and programme support activities.

Comment:

Total hours have been calculated over the life of the programme and are intended for planning purposes only. Due to PowaPlanner constraints, resources have been aggregated across the programme period rather than being profiled annually.

- **Regional Road Safety Lead** is assumed to provide approximately 1.0 FTE programme management and delivery resource across the programme period.

- **Programmes Administrator** is assumed to provide approximately 0.33 FTE programme administration and coordination support across the programme period.
- **Team Leader - Portfolio Delivery** is assumed to provide approximately 5% effort for programme governance, reporting, financial oversight, risk management, stakeholder engagement and programme support.
- **Manager - Transport Strategy and Delivery** is assumed to provide approximately 1% effort as Programme Sponsor, including strategic oversight, executive sponsorship, governance and escalation support.

The majority of programme delivery will be undertaken by internal Waikato Regional Council staff, supported by established partnerships with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, other organisations and external programme providers where required.

The annual programme cost includes both programme delivery expenditure and internal staff costs associated with programme management, administration, governance and sponsorship activities. No additional labour costs have been added separately within the financial assessment to avoid double counting.

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$	\$
Opex	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$	\$4,250,000
Total Cost*	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$	\$4,250,000
Partner Funding (NZTA Share)	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$	\$1,314,095
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$	\$0
Total Revenue/Saving	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$262,819	\$	\$1,314,095
Net (WRC Share)	\$587,181	\$587,181	\$587,181	\$587,181	\$587,181	\$	\$2,935,905

*Note *including resourcing costs*

Cost Assumptions:

The annual Road Safety Programme cost of approximately \$850,000 is based on the current programme budget and includes both programme delivery expenditure and internal staff costs associated with programme management, programme administration, governance, sponsorship, stakeholder engagement, regional coordination, communications, behavioural change initiatives, educational programmes and operational delivery.

NZTA typically funds eligible Road Safety Promotion activities at a 51% Funding Assistance Rate (FAR). However, internal staffing costs associated with programme management, administration, governance and sponsorship are generally funded directly by Waikato Regional Council and are not claimed against NZTA funding assistance. As a result, the current NZTA contribution of approximately \$262,819 per annum represents

only a portion of the overall programme cost, with the balance funded by Waikato Regional Council through targeted rates and operational funding.

Internal labour costs have not been shown separately within the financial assessment as they are already included within the overall programme budget and have not been added again to avoid double counting. Future funding assumptions have been based on the current programme funding model, although actual funding contributions will remain subject to future National Land Transport Programme investment decisions and funding approvals.

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and one external organisation
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	• Road safety programme management and delivery. • Road safety planning, policy and strategy expertise. • Stakeholder and partnership management. • Community engagement, education and behaviour change programme delivery. • Communications and campaign development. • Monitoring, evaluation and performance reporting. • Knowledge of NZTA funding requirements, Road Safety Objectives, and Safe System principles.
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	• NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. • New Zealand Police. • Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). • Waikato Regional Transport Committee. • Waikato territorial authorities (Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, Waipā District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, South Waikato District Council, Waitomo District Council, Ōtorohanga District Council, Hauraki District Council, Thames-Coromandel District Council and Taupō District Council). • Schools, ECE providers and community organisations. • Road users and Waikato communities, particularly vulnerable and high-risk road users including children, young drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. • Iwi and Māori partners, in accordance with WRC's Māori engagement framework.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	- Continued NZTA funding support for eligible Road Safety Promotion activities through future NLTP funding rounds. - Regional partners remain committed to a coordinated, collaborative approach to improving road safety outcomes. - Education, awareness and behaviour-change interventions continue to complement infrastructure and enforcement activities in contributing to reduced deaths and serious injuries.
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	- Ongoing programme delivery is dependent on future NLTP funding approvals and funding assistance rates. - Measuring and attributing behaviour change outcomes directly to education and promotion activities can be challenging. - Staff and partner capacity constraints may affect the scale and reach of programme delivery across the region.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	- Continued investment and support from NZTA through the National Land Transport Programme. - Ongoing collaboration with NZ Police, ACC, territorial authorities and regional road safety partners. - Alignment with the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy, Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan and national road safety priorities.
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	This investment helps mitigate strategic risks associated with: - Transport system safety and community wellbeing by supporting initiatives that contribute to reducing deaths and serious injuries. - Reduced partner coordination across the region by maintaining regional leadership and collaboration mechanisms. - Failure to achieve regional transport safety objectives identified in Te Pae Tawhiti and the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan. - Reduced ability to secure external road safety investment and advocate for Waikato's road safety priorities.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	- Reduction or loss of external funding resulting in reduced programme delivery. - Changes to national road safety priorities, funding settings or programme eligibility criteria. - Reduced stakeholder participation or partner resourcing impacting collaborative delivery. - Inability to demonstrate measurable road safety outcomes due to the long-term nature of behaviour change and external factors influencing road safety performance. - Reputational risks if regional road safety outcomes do not improve despite continued investment.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference

Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP)

Once completed, this investment proposal should provide decision-makers with a clear overview of the challenge or opportunity, its alignment with organisational priorities, and the proposed scope and scale of investment.

Investment Information			
Proposal Name: Formal Education (2027 LTP)			
		Group of Activities:	Resource Use
		Project, Programme or BAU:	Project
Date Created:	30/07/2026 2:03 pm	Attractiveness Score LTP27	21.43
Finance Code (Infor)	20035	Achievability Score	65.00
		Total Score LTP27	86.43

Attractiveness refers to the strategic value and impact of an initiative. It considers how well the initiative aligns with organisational priorities, improves outcomes for users, and contributes to long-term goals. Highly attractive initiatives are those that offer meaningful benefits, address pressing needs, or unlock significant opportunities.

Attractiveness Assessment	Rating Result
Driver 1: Future Fit Organisation	None
Driver 2: Productivity & Prosperity	None
Driver 3: Building Regional Resilience	None
Driver 4: Sustaining Natural Resources	Low
Driver 5: Optimised Transport System	None
Driver 6: Te Ara Tupu	High
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of not proceeding)	Moderate

Achievability reflects how feasible it is to deliver an initiative successfully. It considers factors such as available resources, timeframes, stakeholder support, and implementation complexity. Highly achievable initiatives are those that can be delivered with confidence, using existing capabilities or with manageable investment.

Achievability Assessment	Rating Result
WRC's Strategic Risks (Risk of proceeding)	None
Organisational Impact	Low
External Impact	Moderate
Change Complexity	None
Technical Skill Availability	High
Level of Interest	Moderate
Subject Knowledge	None
Estimated total team size	Moderate
Level of procurement required	None
Dependencies	Extreme

The following supporting information enhances understanding of the investment but doesn't contribute to attractiveness or achievability.

Supporting Information	Result
Level of Service	
Chief Executive (CE) KPI	No Alignment
Climate Action Roadmap Pathway	1 Water
Te Ara Tupu focus area	Te Ao Māori
Iwi Māori Engagement	Empower

Investment Context:

Challenge or Opportunity: *What is this investment, and why does it need to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed now? Include the drivers for the work or project.*

WRC's Formal Education programmes are a key front-end tool for influencing environmental behaviours, building community capability and supporting long-term environmental outcomes. Through Enviroschools, Kura Waiti ki Kura Waitā and youth engagement programmes, WRC works with students and schools to develop local environmental literacy, stewardship and leadership. A leveraged co-funding model extends WRC's reach. Continued investment provides an opportunity to influence behaviour early, strengthen partnerships with iwi and communities, and reduce future reliance on more costly regulatory, compliance and remediation interventions. The formal education programme also enables successful delivery of WRC environmental education for SPI and ICM (Kauri Protection, Freshwater and Marine biosecurity and Lake Algal Bloom) at a regional scale. Continued investment will help future generations contribute to improved water quality, biodiversity, biosecurity, waste minimisation, climate resilience and sustainable resource management.

Evidence: *Concisely capture the evidence that underpins the problem or opportunity outlined. Evidence based rigour is an important element of validating the need for investment. Further information can be captured in an appendix.*

Formal education programmes operate at regional scale and are supported through strong partnerships and co-funding. Enviroschools reaches over 55,000 learners through 172 schools and 50 early childhood centres, while Kura Waiti ki Kura Waitā and youth programmes build environmental literacy, leadership and kaitiakitanga. Independent evaluations, commissioned as an LTP measure, demonstrate that the formal education programmes are highly effective with positive environmental, cultural & community outcomes.

"It's fantastic, the future of NZ is in good hands" Mayor Mike Petitt, Waipa DC

"We didn't have to ask the kids to action, they mobilised, they came up with solutions. It's the whole process, the Enviroschools journey from education to taking action" Principal Alana Thomson, Karapiro School

"It works when communities learn and act together" Student Enviroleader, Karapiro School

"Kia ako i etahi momo rautaki ki te tiaki i te ao, i te taiao (To learn strategies to care for the world, for the environment)" Tauira/Kura Waitii student

"Through this kaupapa, our students have grown in confidence not only in their reo and environmental knowledge, but also in their physical and cultural practice." Tumuaki Denise Marshall, Te Wharekura o Maniapoto

Why do this? Potential outcomes and Benefits

Provide a brief summary of the outcomes and benefits this proposal should deliver.

Formal education programmes create long-term behaviour change by helping future ratepayers develop an understanding of sustainability, resources, and community wellbeing reducing long term environmental and compliance costs. The investment develops environmentally informed, capable and resilient communities that contribute to improved environmental outcomes across the Waikato. The 2025 and 2026 independent evaluations identified the following value for council: strategic alignment and policy implementation, fulfilling its commitment to te Tiriti based partnerships and Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato, community connection and engagement, operational and communication benefits. Toimata Foundation commission EconMix to undertake SROI analysis for Enviroschools -total annual national investment of \$28M (funding, time and resources). Analysis found a wide range of outcomes, with a quantified value of \$109M. SROI RATIO 3.86 - For every \$1 invested in Enviroschools, \$3.86 of generated social and environmental value is measured.

Category: In which Investment category does this proposal fit and is WRC required, by legislation, to carry out this work?	
<i>Investment Category</i>	Maintenance
<i>Mandatory Setting</i>	Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.

Options Assessment:

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
Option Type	Option Name	Description including the advantages and disadvantages.	Estimated cost \$	Estimated Benefits	Preferred Yes/No	Rationale
Status Quo	Maintain the Status Quo (Same scope, scale, timeframes, cost, benefit)	No additional contracted services budget; operate within existing BAU roles and funding. Advantages: Continue successful Enviro schools and Kura Waitii delivery. No extra cost; minimal disruption. Maintain existing co-funding partnerships. Maintain existing relationships with 172 schools and Waikato kura and access for quality environmental learning and action projects for 55,000 learners. Maintain youth engagement and WRC environmental education delivery for Kauri protection, Freshwater biosecurity, Marine biosecurity and Lake Algal blooms Disadvantages: Relies on existing part-time contracts to deliver programme. Stretching limited hours across region.	No additional budget \$720K* direct costs (in current budget) \$260k WRC Formal education budget, \$480k external funding and \$130k for ICM and SPI projects *costs and revenue will be adjusted at Q1 forecast when income has been received	Contributes to protecting and restoring natural resources through community engagement and action projects	Yes	Contributes to council vision: Empowering people shaping a healthy, prosperous place for generations to come
Option 1 (minimum)	Do Different (Do the minimum)	Deliver WRC funded Environmental education projects only. Enviro schools and Kura Waitii delivery would cease. Advantages: removal of contracted service. Education advisers support schools with environmental education and youth engagement Disadvantages: Access to Enviro schools and Kura Waitii support would cease for 172 Waikato schools and kura and 55,000 students resulting in the termination of existing school agreements. This will severely impact relationships with schools, communities, co-funders, and iwi, and affect perceptions of Council's long-term commitment to environmental education and community capability building empowering people to shape a healthy prosperous place for generations to come. Reduced school engagement would limit opportunities for student leadership, environmental learning, and local action projects. The loss of experienced facilitators and established networks would also reduce	\$70k direct cost plus \$130K for ICM and SPI projects <i>Lose \$480K in external co-funding</i> <i>Unsure if ICM and SPI projects would be feasible to continue without Enviro schools and Kura Waitii experienced facilitators.</i>	Minimal environmental education will be delivered that aligns to council outcomes.	No	This option reduces the funding for long-term transformation and severely risks community and funding relationships established over 25 years.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED						
		organisational capability to deliver specialist environmental education programmes and maintain existing community connections.				
Option 2 (maximum)	Do Different (Enable strategic growth)	Expand contracted services to establish a Regional Resilience Programme. Increase the contracted services budget to establish a dedicated regional resilience programme delivered through the Enviroschools network, building on the Hauraki Plains College and Hauraki community adaptation planning model. Delivery would include internal alignment, curriculum-linked resources and facilitation, strategic partnerships, and sector coordination. Existing BAU resources would continue to be prioritised to support broader Council strategic outcomes. Advantages: Builds regional capability and capacity for resilience through an established network of schools, kura, and communities. Leverages existing facilitator expertise, relationships, and environmental education infrastructure to support resilience outcomes efficiently. Strengthens sector leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and the integration of resilience concepts into education and community engagement. Creates opportunities for continuous improvement, innovation, and the scaling of successful resilience approaches across the region. Disadvantages: Requires increased investment and ongoing operational funding. Introduces a new programme area with associated implementation, governance, and evaluation requirements. Requires strong executive sponsorship, cross-organisational alignment, and a long-term commitment to realise intended outcomes. Benefits are likely to accrue over the medium to long term, with outcomes potentially less visible in the short term.	\$200k additional contracted service in addition to status quo option.	Stronger regional resilience, innovation, and community trust. Positions WRC as a leader in regional resilience.	No	This option is ideal if WRC desires an enhanced community connection to support regional resilience engagement. It delivers the highest impact but is not feasible under current fiscal constraints. Status Quo is preferred for FY27/28, with potential to revisit this option through future LTP processes.

Procurement Approach:

PROCUREMENT APPROACH	
Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.	☐ No procurement required ☐ Under 100K ☐ 100-250k ☒ Over \$250k Assumption to work with existing supplier relationships and procurement plans for co-funded environmental education facilitation
Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.	Professional Services - Use of existing panel of Environmental education contractors Known Co-funders or Partnerships - Partnership agreements are in place with all 11 Territorial authorities. - Multi-year funding agreements are in place with external community funders - Service level agreements are in place for WRC education projects

Team Resource Table:

Resource Table			
Resource	Team	Hours	Description
Education Team Leader/Senior Education advisor	Education	2028	Team Lead secondment- To provide team oversight Contract manager for Enviroschools programme delivery Lead other environmental education projects
Kaihapai Hotaka Matauranga	Education	2028	Contract manager for Kura Waitii delivery Lead Matauranga Maori environmental education delivery in kura
Education Advisor	Education	1014	Enable youth leadership and curriculum linked secondary school environmental education
Programme Coordinator	Education	1248	Coordination support for Education portfolios including budget tracker for income and expenses, event coordination and contract management

Financial Assessment:

COST ESTIMATION & FUNDING SOURCE (PREFERRED OPTION)							
	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	Ongoing	Totals
Capex						\$0	\$
Opex	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$0	\$5,105,000
Total Cost*	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$1,021,000	\$0	\$5,105,000
Partner Funding-External	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$	\$2,400,000
Partner Funding-External	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$	\$650,000
TOTAL PARTNER FUNDING	\$610,000	\$610,000	\$610,000	\$610,000	\$610,000		\$3,050,000
Potential Savings/Revenue	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue/Saving	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$0	\$
Net	\$411,000	\$411,000	\$411,000	\$411,000	\$411,000	0	\$2,055,000

Note *including resourcing costs

** Note: the total cost includes \$301,000 internal labour and \$720,000 direct costs*

Funding Source and Cost Confidence	
Funding Source	A combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations
Cost confidence <i>Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.</i>	☐ Low - Rough order estimate ☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information ☐ Medium - Based on quotations ☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings

Delivery Assessment:

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Expertise required <i>List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.</i>	Leadership support – section manager and director to enable long term strategic support Contractors: Te Toki Voyaging Trust and 10 contract environmental education facilitators
Key stakeholders <i>Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it? For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.</i>	All 11 Territorial Authorities – co-funders of local facilitation of Enviroschools Waikato River Authority- co-funder of Kura Waitii 172 Waikato Schools and Waikato Kura – participants in Enviroschools and Kura Waitii Toimata Foundation – national foundation that holds the vision, intellectual property and regional partner relationships to reach 1600 schools nationally. JMA Contractors: Te Toki Voyaging Trust and 10 contract environmental education facilitators WRC: ICM- Kauri Protection programme, Freshwater and Marine Biosecurity education; SPI – Lake Algal Bloom education project
Key assumptions <i>List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification</i>	Sustained Executive Sponsorship and Organisational Support It is assumed that the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will continue to support the co-funded environmental education delivery of our key programmes Enviroschools and Kura Waitii ki Kura Waitaa ICM and SPI continue to support environmental education projects delivered by the education team and environmental education facilitators. Availability of Required Skills and Capacity It is assumed that the existing contractors complete their contracts and deliver against milestones WRC Education team resource is retained Budget Inflation has not been included in the 5 year budget figures External funding continues at current levels

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY	
Known constraints <i>List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.</i>	Resource Availability Limited hours to support school learning and action and BAU reprioritisation. Budget Limited budget to support environmental education engagement events and activities to empower community Change Fatigue Competing priorities and change initiatives across education sector limit the scope for action projects and curriculum linked environmental education learning.
Key dependencies <i>List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.</i>	Executive Sponsorship Ongoing support from ELT is critical. Budget Ongoing co-funding with external co-funders is critical to the delivery of Enviroschools and Kura Waitii. Ongoing funding from ICM and SPI is critical to deliver WRC Environmental education School Engagement Ongoing engagement with Waikato schools and kura is critical to the delivery of Enviroschools and Kura Waitii
Strategic risks: <i>Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how</i>	STRAT 03 Relationships Improves transparency, supports engagement, empowers people to shape a healthy prosperous place, facilitates collaboration STRAT 04 People, Capability, Capacity, and Culture Investment in capability, enables staff to focus on delivering strategic priorities and relationships to effectively engage with communities, iwi partners and our key stakeholders. STRAT 07 Financial Sustainability Co-funding enables Council investment to be leveraged to achieve greater community and environmental outcomes through times of economic and environmental change. WRC Enviroschools \$25k grant fund enables action projects to take place annually. STRAT 10 Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi Developing capability and capacity to internally collaborate with mana whenua and Iwi and as a result meet our legislative and statutory obligations. STRAT 09 Climate Change Environmental education empowers communities to prepare for the future through connecting to their local environment and enabling local planning and decision making.
Potential risks: <i>Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.</i>	Risk: Insufficient engagement from schools and kura Mitigation: Agreements are in place, ongoing communication, clear value proposition, and visible facilitation support. Risk: Local government reform Mitigation: Partnership agreements are in place with co-funding TAs, ongoing reporting, clear value proposition, and local engagement opportunities.

Appendix A: Related Documents

Document title	Version #	DM reference
Procurement plan – Environmental education facilitators	1	25385387
Territorial Authority Partnership Agreements -Enviroschools	1	35863738
Tenders Board report – Exemption from open competition Kura Waiti ki Kura Waita	1	34225616
Waikato River Authority Deed of Funding – Kura Waiti ki Kura Waitaa	1	34155162
Waikato Enviroschools Evaluation report 2026	1	37494020
Kura Waitii Evaluation Report 2025	1	38111747
Formal Education budget	1	38136601
Letters of support from kura	1	32742786
Enviroschools presentation to Waipa DC by Wharepapa South and Karapiro School Service Delivery Committee Meeting - 17 August 2026		

3 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!