# WORKSHOP AGENDA

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| **Date:** | **Wednesday, 16 September 2026** |
| **Time:** | **9.30am** |
| **Location:** | **Council Chambers**<br>**Waikato Regional Council**<br>**Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton** |
| **Workshop Details:** | **Waikato Regional Council Workshop** |

## Order Of Business

# 1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

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

## 2 WORKSHOP PAPER(S)

# 2.1 2027 - 2037 LONG TERM PLAN - LEVELS OF SERVICE REVIEW WORKSHOP TWO

**Rā | Date:** **8 September 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 continue to present the work that staff have been undertaking over the last two months to review Council's current levels of service, utilising the structured approach of Enterprise Work Management.
2. The workshop will recap the direction that staff heard at the workshop on 3rd September 2026 and then present the remainder of the Strategic Investment Cases (SIPs) that have been prepared.
3. Additionally, the workshop will allow councillors the opportunity to identify any other activities / levels of service that have not been identified by staff for review.
4. This report utilises information that councillors were previously provided for the 3rd September workshop. Other than the summary of direction that staff have taken from discussions to date, no new information is included for this agenda.

**KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

5. 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.
6. This work has been guided by the prioritisation of Council's current portfolio of work, utilising the recently implemented Enterprise Work Management model.
7. Key information was presented at the 3 September workshop for Council's consideration, and included:
    (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 budget 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 through:

(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.

8. 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.

9. In total, the budget drivers and changes presented to council 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 are currently undertaking. The high-level estimate of impact is noted to support feedback from Council on the setting of priorities for the LTP, and appetite for increases in rate revenue – particularly in the first two years of the plan before proposed rates caps come into effect from 1 July 2029.

## FEEDBACK FROM 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026 WORKSHOP

10. Discussions on 3rd September canvassed most of the Strategic Investment Proposals submitted for consideration by staff based on the level of service review undertaken.

11. The table below summarises the actions that staff have captured that will inform the next steps in the LTP development process.

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | Mandatory requirement - proceed to Investment Case to explore implications and funding |
| 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 | Mandatory requirement - proceed to Investment Case to explore implications and funding |

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 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 | |
| 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. | Mandatory requirement - proceed to Investment Case to explore implications and funding |
| 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. | Mandatory requirement - proceed to Investment Case to explore implications and funding |
| 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. | Mandatory requirement - proceed to Investment Case to explore implications and funding |
| 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. | Proceed to Investment Case |
| 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 | Councillors wanting to see work focussed on action rather than science and research.<br>Proceed to Investment Case – with responsibility transferred to ICM. |

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | better understand causes, inform management responses, and protect these important values. | |
| Chief Executive's Office | Regional Economic Development | This proposal requests ongoing funding to position WRC to lead implementation of the Reginal Economic Development Strategy, attract investment, deliver the regional energy strategy, monitor outcomes, and support long-term economic planning. | Proceed to Investment Case, including greater clarity on where effort would be directed |
| Integration 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. | Report to 16th September workshop to consider next steps. |
| Integration 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. | On the basis that this provides operational cost savings, include in detailed budgeting |
| Integration 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. | Proceed to Investment Case |
| Integration 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 | Proceed to Investment Case |

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 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 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. | Report on Special Events Funding to be provided back to relevant committee for guidance on whether to continue this funding, and at what level.<br>Investment Case to be developed, taking account of committee feedback |
| 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.<br>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. | Proceed to Investment Case<br>Noted that if NZTA funding is not available, a reduced package of work would be developed |
| 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 | Include in detailed budgeting as a future cost driver |

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 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. | |
| 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. | Include in detailed budgeting, with rating impacts of rolling stock options to be brought back as part of budget |
| 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. | Include in detailed budgeting, on the basis that direct cost budget can be released to offset salary cost of new role |
| 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. | Proceed to Investment Case |

| Directorate | Strategic Investment Proposal | Description | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | Proceed to Investment Case |
| 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. | Proceed to Investment Case |
| 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). | Proceed to Investment Case |

## DISCRETIONARY EXPENDITURE

12. 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
13. A summary of all current cost centres and costs that have been assessed as Discretionary is provided in **Attachment One**. In total, these cost centres reflect budgeted expenditure of $15.167 million in the 2026/27 Annual Plan.
14. 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
15. 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.
16. 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**

17. 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.
18. The following table summarises the activities that currently reflect the provision of discretionary / community grant funding and a summary of the rationale for provision.
19. At the 3rd September workshop, Council discussed two of the Strategic Investment Proposals prepared in relation to this discretionary funding:
    (a) Community partnerships – direction provided to remove funding for Balance Farm Environment Awards based on lower uptake through events ($26,000). Other funds will remain in place, with no further action to develop an Investment Case
    (b) Regional Services Fund – report to be brought back to a future workshop on the alignment of this funding to Council's functions, how funds are utilised by recipients. No further action to develop an Investment Case pending further council review.

20. The table below summarises the remaining SIPs that have been prepared to support discussion on the other areas where Council provides discretionary community grant funding.

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ICM | Biodiversity work programme | The Biodiversity work programme:<br>• takes a collaborative approach through partnerships to support others to deliver biodiversity outcomes<br>• provides technical advice and support (including incentives) to landowners, community groups<br>• delivers collaborative restoration projects at site<br>• 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 is 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. |

21. Strategic Investment Proposals included in **Attachment Two** 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**

22. 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.

23. The following table summarises the activities that currently reflect the provision of education services / activities, and a summary of the rationale for provision.

24. Strategic Investment Proposals present consideration of these activities for Council direction (refer **Attachment Three).**

| 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 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 Waitī 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**

25. 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.

26. Depending on direction received from Council on areas for further review, additional workshop time may be required with Council to consider these additional areas. Refer to **Attachment Four** for the detailed portfolio information by directorate.

**PLAN CHANGE 1**

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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**

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. Decisions from this workshop, alongside the direction provided from the workshop on 3rd September, will provide direction to staff who have begun detailed budgeting and the preparation of Investment Cases.

36. 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.

**ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS**

1. **Discretionary Activities (Doc # 38512977)** ⇩
2. **Strategic Investment Proposals - Discretionary Funding and Community Grants (Doc # 38521512)** ⇩
3. **Strategic Investment Proposals - Education (Doc # 38493364)** ⇩
4. **Directorate view of prioritised portfolio of Council's current work (Doc #38520209)** ⇩

**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 Arikinui 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.<br>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.<br>Property & Rating: Respond to enquiries relating to valuation data and properties, undertake rating scheme modelling, and maintain the regional property dataset.<br>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.<br>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.<br>Property & Rating: Respond to enquiries relating to valuation data and properties, undertake rating scheme modelling, and maintain the regional property dataset.<br>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.<br>Local government must have particular regard to the contribution that the following core services make to its communities:<br>- network infrastructure<br>- public transport services<br>- waste management and minimisation<br>- civil defence emergency management<br>- libraries, museums, reserves, and other community and recreational facilities.<br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Current funding arrangements under this cost centre include a mix of scholarships and discretionary funds:<br>Scholarships:<br>• Dame Te Atairangikaahu scholarship established 1991. $5,000 per annum co-funded with the University of Waikato<br>• Stella Francis scholarship established 2006. $3,000 per annum co-funded with Department of Conservation<br>• Roger Harris (Waihou Valley Scheme) scholarship. $6,000 per annum<br>• University of Waikato Water Science prize. $500 per annum<br><br>Sponsorships:<br>• Rural Support Trust $50,000 per annum. Introduced to help support farmer wellbeing.<br>• Ballance Farm Environment Awards $26,000 per annum.<br>• University of Waikato School of Science Postgraduate conference $500 per annum<br>• NIWA Waikato Science and Technology Fair. $1,250 per annum<br><br>Grants:<br>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<br>*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.<br>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.<br>Advantage: continues to support scholarships and sponsorships within the community and maintain historical agreements.<br>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.<br>Advantage: Generate savings and reduce administration of funding deeds.<br>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.<br>Advantage: Honours historical arrangements and respects named individual scholarships and co funding arrangements.<br>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<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ 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<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required** *List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | Communications support required to support clear rationale for discontinuation of fund |
| **Key stakeholders** *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.* | Scholarship co-funders - Waikato University and DOC<br>Sponsorship recipients |
| **Key assumptions** *List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | Savings benefits identified from current LTP budget. |
| **Known constraints** *List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | None |
| **Key dependencies** *List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | Communication with co-funders on any potential withdrawal of funding |
| **Strategic risks:** *Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | May impact relationships risk – management of potential negative perception from fund recipients and community |
| **Potential risks:** *Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | None |

# 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.<br>Local government must have particular regard to the contribution that the following core services make to its communities:<br>- network infrastructure<br>- public transport services<br>- waste management and minimisation<br>- civil defence emergency management<br>- libraries, museums, reserves, and other community and recreational facilities.<br>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.<br><br>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).<br>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<br>*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.<br>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? | |
|---|---|
| *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 Regional Emergency Services Fund.<br>Advantage: continues to support emergency services within the community in line with historic cross council agreements (for Surf Lifesaving NZ only).<br>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.<br>Advantage: Generate savings and reduce administration of funding deeds.<br>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.<br>Advantage: Allows Council to reconsider benefits expected through the funding deeds and alignment with strategic priorities.<br>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<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ 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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | Communications support required to support clear rationale for discontinuation of fund |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?*<br>*For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.* | Regional Emergency Services Fund recipients<br>Councils across the Waikato region<br><br>Current Regional Emergency Services fund recipients would be most impacted as would be no longer eligible for funding. |
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | 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.<br>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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | None |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | Awareness of Councils across the region due to historical agreement in relation to some funding arrangements. |
| **Strategic risks:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | May impact relationships risk – management of potential negative perception from emergency services fund recipients and community |
| **Potential risks:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | None |

# 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<br>*NB: Applies only to Priority Biodiversity Sites* |
| 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<br>• takes a collaborative approach through partnerships to support others to deliver biodiversity outcomes,<br>• provides technical advice and support (including incentives) to landowners, community groups and<br>• delivers collaborative restoration projects at site, and<br>• maintains minimum lake levels as required in the Waikato Reigonal Plan.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>**Biodiversity work programme**<br><br>• **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.<br><br>• **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.<br><br>• **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.<br><br>• **Priority Biodiversity Sites (50466)** – supports willing landowners and others to maintain, protect and restore indigenous ecosystems and threatened species on private land.<br><br>• **Coastcare (50467)** – is a partnership with local communities, iwi, and agencies that protects and restores coastal environments.<br><br>• **Lake Level Setting (50203)** – oversees the sustainable management of minimum lake levels.<br><br>• **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<br>*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:<br>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.<br>2. Biodiversity supports economic prosperity with agricultural benefits from healthy soils, clean water etc, tourism benefits from native ecosystems, intact and connects natura landscapes and associated recreational ecosystems.<br>3. There are policy and legislative requirements, such as the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) which requires councils to:<br>a. Protect, maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity.<br>b. Monitor native species.<br>c. Work with tangata whenua.<br>d. Develop regional biodiversity strategies.<br>4. Further biodiversity loss continues to be an issue.<br>5. Biodiversity is intertwined with cultural identify and Treaty responsibilities with native species and ecosystems consider taonga.<br>6. Increased biodiversity delivers broader community benefits e.g. social cohesion through volunteering, public health and wellbeing benefits, recreational opportunities, etc.<br><br>In summary:<br>• Biodiveristy loss ultimately results in increased costs for ratepayers, landowners and businesses through reduced productivity, increased flood damage, and loss of ecosystem services.<br>• Biodiversity investment builds economic prosperity, environmental health, cultural identity, long term resilience and community wellbeing.<br>• Preventing further loss is more cost-effective than attempting large-scale restoration after ecosystems have significantly degraded.<br>• The biodiversity work programme helps the council meet its statutory obligations and reduces future compliance risks.<br>• The wellbeing of people and the natural environment are inseparable, and biodiversity restoration is delivered best when done in partnership with iwi and communities.<br>• Council funding can leverage co-funding to multiple the scale and impact of our investment.<br><br>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?** | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Maintenance |
| *Mandatory Setting* | Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are undertaken.<br>*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.* |

## 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 | *Description* - 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.<br>AP2027 LTP figures are:<br>• Advocacy and Policy Development (50460) – OPEX $104,500<br>• Partnerships and Coordination (50461) – OPEX: $109,611<br>• Collective Impact (50469) – OPEX $22,000<br>• Priority Biodiversity Sites (50466) – OPEX $404,000<br>• Coastcare (50467) – OPEX $242,000<br>• Shallow lake restoration (50209) – OPEX $210,000<br>• Lake Level Setting (50203) – OPEX $76,000<br>*Advantages* – 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.<br>*Disadvantages* – 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.<br>Strong support for incentives for landowners to protect, restore and maintain biodiversity on private land.<br>Strong public support for biodiversity partnership programmes. |
| Option 1(minimum) | Reduced biodiversity work programme | 1. Reduce current and future funding by:<br>• Reducing Advocacy and Policy Development by $48,721 to $60,000.<br>2. Maintain the following budgets at 2026/27 levels and only factor in inflationary adjustments as per the figures in the 2024 LTP:<br>• Partnerships and Coordination to $109,611<br>• Collective Impact to $22,000<br>• Priority Biodiversity Sites $404,000<br>• Coastcare to $242,000<br>• Shallow Lakes $210,000<br>• Lake level setting $76,000<br>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.<br>Reducing budgeted increases to maintain existing programmes is preferable to cutting entire programmes.<br>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 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Advantages* – 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.<br>*Disadvantages* – 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 | |
|---|---|
| *Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.* | ☐ No procurement required<br>☒ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ Over $250k |
| *Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.* | 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** | |
| | *Biodiversity Team* | *150* | Oversight and coordination |
| | *SPI - Science* | *80* | Oversight of contracts |
| **Partnerships** | **Total** | **3,330** | |
| | *Biodiversity Team* | *2,640* | Supporting others with |
| | *GIS, Business support* | *300* | Development of maps, contract administration etc |
| **Collective Impact** | **Total** | **390** | |
| | *Biodiversity Team* | *390* | |
| **Priority Biodiversity Sites** | **Total** | **3,500** | |
| | Biodiversity Team | 3,340 | Delivery of restoration projects with landowners |
| | Business support | 160 | Contract administration, PO's etc |
| **Coastcare** | **Total** | **1,490** | |
| | Biodiversity Team | 1,490 | Oversight of Coastcare coordinators and restoration and monitoring programme. |
| **Lake level** | **Total** | **1,150** | |
| | Biodiversity Team | 1100 | Delivery of the programme – inspection and maintenance of assets, resource consent management, overseeing construction of new assets etc |
| | SPI – Science | 100 | Scientific advice and interpretation to support the programme |
| | SPI – Environmental Monitoring | 300 | Lake level monitoring |
| **Shallow lake restoration** | **Total** | **1,390** | |
| | Biodiversity Team | 1,390 | Delivery of restoration of projects with partners and stakeholders |
| | SPI – Science | 100 | 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 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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☒ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | • Experienced Biodiversity Officers, Scientists and support staff to deliver the programme and manage relationships and collaborative projects.<br>• Experienced Unit Leads, Team Leads and Manager to deliver the programme and undertake project management, financial management and staff management.<br>• 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**<br>*Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?*<br>*For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.* | • Landowners<br>• Community groups<br>• Iwi<br>• Agencies such as Department of Conservation, Territorial Authorities, Fish and Game<br>• Co-funders |
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | • NPS-IB remains in place following RMA reform.<br>• That the biodiversity work programme continues in some form by one or more entities following local government reform.<br>• That the council continues to employ non regulatory mechanisms to implement the Environment Bill once it becomes law and the NPS-IB. |
| **Known constraints**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | • 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.<br>• 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.<br>• Financial constraints – landowner uptake may reduce or smaller projects over longer time periods if the economy remains under pressure. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | • Support and investment from other parts of the organisation including SPI and the catchment and river management programmes.<br>• Willingness of community groups and landowners to want to undertake biodiversity related work.<br>• Policy and legislation that promotes non regulatory actions to achieve biodiversity outcomes beyond what is required by regulation. |
| **Strategic risks**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | ***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.<br><br>***STRAT-09 Climate Change*** – the biodiversity work programme supports nature based solutions, landscape/catchment scale responses to increase resilience of our natural ecosystems and out communities. |
| **Potential risks:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | • Current investment not enough to halt biodiversity decline.<br>• Reducing investment in one part of the organisation (ICM) puts other biodiversity work at risk – e.g. Tier 1 and Tier 2 monitoring programme.<br>• Operational risk includes weather events/drought, financial constraints of partners/landowners etc. |

# 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Other funders are under pressure and/or have a broader focus than just biodiversity.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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:<br>• NHF – requested: $3,277,797, available: $2,021,122<br>• EIF – requested: $1,109,977, available: $436,880<br>• 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?** | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Maintenance |
| *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) | 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.<br>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).<br>Supporting community groups to deliver biodiversity outcomes means we can deliver better outcomes for biodiversity than the council could achieve on its own.<br>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.<br>• The council has invested in this partnership programme with the community for more than 20 years.<br>• 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.<br>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.<br>The KPI relating to the number of community groups and landowners supported through this programme would need to be reduced.<br>Community groups will be less able to use our funding to leverage additional funding as we will be providing less funding.<br>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.<br>• 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 is providing support to the community:<br>1. 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.<br>Decisions made faster. | Yes | • Labour costs allocated to the NHPP can be reduced and savings available for distribution to recipients.<br>• Time between application and decisions will be reduced by at least 7 weeks. |

| OPTIONS CONSIDERED | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | reducing staff time in preparing the committee report and attending ICMC; and<br>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 | |
|---|---|
| *Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.* | ☒ No procurement required<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ Over $250k |
| *Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.* | • Recipients are funded through funding deeds.<br>• 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.<br>• 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 |
| **Opex**[1] | $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

[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<br><br>NB Noting that funding provided by the council is used to leverage funding from other funders. |
| **Cost confidence**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | • Experienced staff to run and support the three funding rounds.<br>• Experienced staff to provide technical advice and support for project delivery.<br>• An external assessor is used to review NHF applications to provide a level of independence.<br>• Appropriate software to manage applications and management of funds. |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?*<br>*For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.* | • NHF/EIF – community groups undertaking restoration projects.<br>• SSCIF – community groups and individual landowners undertaking restoration projects.<br>• Community hubs delivering the SSCIF community hub funding trial.<br>• Other funders – e.g. Trust Waikato, Lotteries Commission, WCEET, WRA |
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | • That SSCIF continues to be funded through the UAGC.<br>• That NHF and EIF continues to be funded through the Natural Heritage Targeted Rate. |
| **Known constraints**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | • Demand for community led biodiversity projects is likely to always exceed funding available.<br>• Other funders cannot meet the needs of community led biodiversity projects alone. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that* | • Relevant and current NHPP Funding Policy (see Related Document #1). |

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| *must occur to enable success.* | |
| **Strategic risks**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | • STRAT-03 Relationships – the NHPP helps to effectively manage relationships with its communities and key stakeholders to deliver biodiversity outcomes across the region.<br>• 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:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | There are limited risks associated with implementing the NHPP as per the preferred option. Risks could include:<br>• Not enough applications for funding are received (has never happened over 20 years)<br>• Weather events could prevent projects being completed (delays more likely)<br>• 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)<br><br>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. |

# 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:<br>2 Coast and Marine<br>3 Biodiversity and Biosecurity<br>4 Regional Resilience<br>6 Afforestation and Planting<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br><br>Key drivers include:<br>• 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.<br><br>Expected benefits are:<br>• Reduced erosion and sedimentation, helping protect productive land, infrastructure, waterways, harbours and coastal receiving environments from the impacts of accelerated erosion.<br>• Improved freshwater outcomes through riparian protection, wetland restoration, stock exclusion and targeted catchment mitigations that help reduce sediment, nutrient and pathogen losses to waterways.<br>• 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.<br>• 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.<br>• 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?** | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Strategic |
| *Mandatory Setting* | Two setting apply across these cost-centres<br><br>Either: It is not required under legislation but is a council direction or contractual obligation. (applies to budget attached to Deeds of Funding).<br>OR<br>Optional actions are available to council but are not required. There is no specification on how or when optional actions are taken.<br><br>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.<br>**Advantages:**<br>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.<br>**Disadvantages:**<br>Doesn't provide for savings that council is seeking. Risks underspend in the Waipā catchment. | WRC cost $2,831,253<br><br>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.<br>**Advantages:**<br>There would be reductions to zone rates and some general rates regionally.<br>**Disadvantages:**<br>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.<br>**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<br><br>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 | |
|---|---|
| *Does this investment require procurement? If so, please indicate level of (estimated) procurement.* | ☐ No procurement required<br>☒ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ Over $250k |
| *Please provide information on how this investment could be procured.* | 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".<br><br>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.*

- 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<br>For the programme as a whole the funding source is a combination of WRC (cash or in-kind) and two or more external organisations.<br><br>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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information (and current market rates)<br>☒ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | Catchment management officers<br>• Knowledge of erosion processes and appropriate mitigations<br>• Farm systems<br>• Riparian management<br>• Preparation of farm based environmental programme agreements<br><br>Catchment programme, unit and team leads<br>• As above<br>• Financial management<br>• Project management and reporting<br>• Staff management<br>• Stakeholder engagement<br><br>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.<br><br>Contractors will be used for plant supply, planting, weed control and fencing. These services are readily available across the region. |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*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.* | At the zone level the key stakeholders are:<br>• 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.<br>• 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.<br>• 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.<br>• Industry groups: These groups are informed or consulted with as required for programme development and engagement activities that support implementation.<br>• 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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | 1. Catchment management will continue to be delivered by one or more entities under local government reform<br>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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | 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.<br>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 Biodiveristy 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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | 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.<br>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.<br>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:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | **STRAT RISK 03 – Relationships**<br>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.<br>**STRAT RISK 09 - Climate change**<br>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:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | **Plant establishment**<br>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.<br><br>**Landowner uptake**<br>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.<br><br>**Farm plans**<br>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. |

# 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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?** | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | |
| *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) | **Description:** Continue with the Community Transport Fund at the same $500k per annum as confirmed within the 2026/27 Annual Plan.<br><br>**Advantages:**<br>This fund has been oversubscribed since inception even though it has grown from $200k to $500k per annum over that time.<br><br>Evidence demonstrates that this relatively minor investment is enabling communities to improve their access to health, support services and for social and leisure activities.<br><br>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.<br><br>**Disadvantages:**<br>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<br><br>No increase from 26/27 | No new benefits. | Yes | Fund is over-subscribed annually.<br><br>Customer feedback is excellent.<br><br>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%<br><br>**Advantages:**<br>Reduction in the regional PT targeted rate.<br><br>**Disadvantages:**<br>1. Reputational risk – there is strong community support.<br>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<br><br>**Advantages:**<br>Reduction in the regional PT targeted rate.<br><br>**Disadvantages:**<br>1. High reputational risk – there is strong community support<br>2. Breach of Regional Public Transport Plan policies 5, 11, 21 and 22.<br>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<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ 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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☐ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☒ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

| | |
|---|---|
| *from the options provided.* | |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | This SIP considers the impacts of ceasing a discretionary grant fund. No new resources would be required. |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?*<br>*For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.* | Communities, particularly those which are rural and remote, would be impacted potentially significantly.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | 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**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | 1. The Community Transport Policy is currently being reviewed at the request of the WRC Transport Committee.<br>2. Community is 100% funded by council via the regional public transport rate (forms part of the 'unserviced' cost applied regionwide). There is currently no NZTA subsidy. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | 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.<br>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:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | Strategic Risk 03: Relationships<br><br>*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**.* |
| **Potential risks:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | There are multiple risks with stopping this investment, as noted throughout this SIP. |

# 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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>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.<br>• 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.<br>• Internal allocations have funded project-specific participation outside SLA scopes, providing flexibility for time-bound needs identified after annual priorities are set.<br>• 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.<br>• 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?** | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Maintenance |
| *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) | 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<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ 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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | 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.<br>**Funding mechanism administration**<br>• Administration of Service Level Agreements, including agreement management, renewal coordination and delivery reporting.<br>• Management of internal allocation requests, including eligibility checks, prioritisation advice, budget coding and coordination with project teams.<br>• Financial monitoring, forecasting, expenditure tracking and reporting to support transparency and accountability for the fund.<br>**What sits outside the fund**<br>• Council-side relationship management with iwi, mana whenua and iwi entities.<br>• Statutory, Treaty settlement, co-governance, joint management agreement and engagement planning advice.<br>These functions remain with Tai-ranga-whenua and relevant Council teams, rather than through the external iwi capacity and capability funding allocation. |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*Who are the key stakeholders for the investment? Who will be most impacted by it?*<br>*For Māori participation, please refer to the WRC Māori engagement framework.* | 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.<br>**1. Iwi, hapū, marae and iwi partners**<br>• Iwi partners with current or future Service Level Agreements that support agreed participation activity.<br>• Hapū, marae and mana whenua interests engaged through iwi partners or project-specific arrangements where participation is appropriate and beneficial.<br>• Iwi organisations involved in Council work programmes, settlement implementation, reform, operational activity or strategic planning where funding may support participation capacity.<br>**2. Council staff and internal users of the mechanism**<br>• Tai-ranga-whenua, as the team administering the funding mechanism and supporting consistent application.<br>• Council staff and project leads seeking iwi participation, advice or input through SLAs or internal allocation requests.<br>• Internal teams responsible for planning, policy, science, monitoring, regulatory, catchment, resilience, emergency management and operational activities where iwi participation may be needed.<br>• Finance, legal and contract support functions that assist with budget coding, agreements, expenditure tracking and reporting. |
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | 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.<br>**1. Ongoing Demand for Iwi Participation**<br>• The need for iwi participation and engagement support will continue throughout the 2027 LTP period.<br>• 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.<br>**2. Funding Mechanism Remains Fit for Purpose**<br>• The existing SLA and internal allocation model will remain the preferred mechanism for supporting iwi participation.<br>• The current funding framework will continue to provide an effective and practical approach for managing participation needs. |

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| | **3. Existing Operational Capacity**<br>• Delivery can continue using existing staff resources and governance arrangements.<br>• No additional FTE or contractor hub administration capacity will be approved through this proposal. |
| **Known constraints**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | 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.<br>**1. Fixed discretionary funding envelope**<br>• Funding is limited to the annual budget envelope approved through the LTP process.<br>• Requests for iwi participation support may exceed available funding in some years.<br>• Any reduction in funding would require increased prioritisation of allocations and commitments.<br>**2. Existing administration capacity**<br>• Delivery is dependent on existing Tai-ranga-whenua, finance and legal resources.<br>• No additional FTE resource is proposed to administer the funding programme.<br>• The contractor hub model is not considered viable without dedicated procurement, contract management and reporting capacity.<br>**3. Scope boundaries**<br>• The fund supports iwi partner participation capacity; it does not fund Council-side relationship management, statutory interpretation or engagement planning.<br>Funding decisions need to avoid treating every iwi engagement activity as eligible for external capacity support. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | 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.<br>**1. Iwi Participation and Forward Planning**<br>• Ongoing participation and support from iwi.<br>• Continued use of Service Level Agreements and participation funding arrangements where engagement support is required.<br>• Collaborative relationships that enable iwi involvement in Council programmes, projects, partnership arrangements, and future reform activities where participation is appropriate and beneficial.<br>**2. Organisational Understanding and Adoption**<br>• 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.<br>• Consistent application of funding processes across Council activities and work programmes.<br>• Ongoing commitment to supporting effective iwi participation and engagement across the organisation.<br>**3. Financial Management and Performance Monitoring**<br>• Finance coding and expenditure tracking arrangements being maintained.<br>• Monitoring and reporting systems providing visibility of funding commitments, expenditure, and outcomes.<br>• Performance information being available to support accountability, future planning, and investment decision-making. |
| **Strategic risks:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | **STRAT 03: Relationships**<br>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.<br><br>**STRAT 08: Giving Effect to the Treaty of Waitangi**<br>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:**<br>*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.<br>**1. Demand Exceeds Available Funding**<br>• Demand for iwi participation funding may exceed the approved annual funding envelope.<br>• A reduced funding allocation may limit Council's ability to respond to emerging reform, transition, settlement implementation, or partnership-related participation requirements.<br>• Increased demand may require prioritisation of funding requests and allocations.<br>**2. Continued Underspend**<br>• Funding requirements may vary from year to year depending on Council work programmes and iwi participation needs.<br>• Maintaining the current funding level may result in underspend in some years if demand is lower than anticipated.<br>• Ongoing monitoring and forecasting will be required to ensure funding remains aligned with operational demand and strategic priorities.<br>**3. Inconsistent Application**<br>• Inconsistent internal application of the funding mechanism could reduce transparency and create uncertainty regarding when funding support should be used.<br>• Limited visibility of expenditure, commitments, and outcomes may reduce confidence in the effectiveness of the investment.<br>• This risk can be mitigated through clear guidance, consistent processes, and strengthened tracking, reporting, and monitoring arrangements. |

# 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 tītike | 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? | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Strategic |
| *Mandatory Setting* | 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br>- Maintains regional leadership role.<br>- Supports Safe System approach.<br>- Retains established partnerships with NZTA, Police, ACC and territorial authorities.<br>- Continues programmes currently reaching thousands of Waikato residents annually.<br>- 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.<br>- Supports implementation of the Regional Road Safety Strategy. | | |
| Option 1(minimum) | Minimum Viable Programme (Reduced Service) | Retain only core strategic functions including<br>• the Regional Road Safety Forum,<br>• Regional Road Safety Strategy,<br>• RLTP planning support,<br>• basic coordination and advocacy.<br>Reduce or cease delivery of<br>• Ruben programme expansion,<br>• Road Safety Week leadership,<br>• behaviour change campaigns,<br>• driver licensing initiatives,<br>• motorcycle and cycling promotion activities and development of new regional resources.<br><br>**Advantages:** Retains strategic leadership and planning functions.<br><br>**Disadvantages:** Reduced community reach, education activities and stakeholder support. Potential reduction in NZTA co-funding. | Estimated programme value $250k-$350k p.a.<br><br>(Estimated WRC saving $150k-$250k p.a. plus minor staff-related savings.) | - Maintains WRC's regional coordination role.<br>- Retains ability to update and monitor the Regional Road Safety Strategy.<br>- 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.<br>WRC continues to lead the Strategy, Forum, data analysis and regional advocacy. | Estimated programme value $400k-$500k p.a.<br>(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. |

| OPTIONS CONSIDERED | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Advantages:** Retains regional leadership while reducing direct delivery costs.<br>**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.<br><br>**Advantages:** Maximum cost reduction.<br>**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<br>☒ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☐ 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.<br><br>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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | • Road safety programme management and delivery.<br>• Road safety planning, policy and strategy expertise.<br>• Stakeholder and partnership management.<br>• Community engagement, education and behaviour change programme delivery.<br>• Communications and campaign development.<br>• Monitoring, evaluation and performance reporting.<br>• Knowledge of NZTA funding requirements, Road Safety Objectives, and Safe System principles. |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*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.* | • NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.<br>• New Zealand Police.<br>• Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).<br>• Waikato Regional Transport Committee.<br>• 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).<br>• Schools, ECE providers and community organisations.<br>• Road users and Waikato communities, particularly vulnerable and high-risk road users including children, young drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.<br>• Iwi and Māori partners, in accordance with WRC's Māori engagement framework. |

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | • Continued NZTA funding support for eligible Road Safety Promotion activities through future NLTP funding rounds.<br>• Regional partners remain committed to a coordinated, collaborative approach to improving road safety outcomes.<br>• Education, awareness and behaviour-change interventions continue to complement infrastructure and enforcement activities in contributing to reduced deaths and serious injuries. |
| **Known constraints**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | • Ongoing programme delivery is dependent on future NLTP funding approvals and funding assistance rates.<br>• Measuring and attributing behaviour change outcomes directly to education and promotion activities can be challenging.<br>• Staff and partner capacity constraints may affect the scale and reach of programme delivery across the region. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | • Continued investment and support from NZTA through the National Land Transport Programme.<br>• Ongoing collaboration with NZ Police, ACC, territorial authorities and regional road safety partners.<br>• Alignment with the Waikato Regional Road Safety Strategy, Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan and national road safety priorities. |
| **Strategic risks:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | This investment helps mitigate strategic risks associated with:<br>• Transport system safety and community wellbeing by supporting initiatives that contribute to reducing deaths and serious injuries.<br>• Reduced partner coordination across the region by maintaining regional leadership and collaboration mechanisms.<br>• Failure to achieve regional transport safety objectives identified in Te Pae Tawhiti and the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan.<br>• Reduced ability to secure external road safety investment and advocate for Waikato's road safety priorities. |
| **Potential risks:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | • Reduction or loss of external funding resulting in reduced programme delivery.<br>• Changes to national road safety priorities, funding settings or programme eligibility criteria.<br>• Reduced stakeholder participation or partner resourcing impacting collaborative delivery.<br>• Inability to demonstrate measurable road safety outcomes due to the long-term nature of behaviour change and external factors influencing road safety performance.<br>• Reputational risks if regional road safety outcomes do not improve despite continued investment. |

# 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 Waitī 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 Waitī 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.<br>*"It's fantastic, the future of NZ is in good hands"* Mayor Mike Petitt, Waipa DC<br>*"We didn't have to ask the kids to action, they mobilised, they came up with solutions. It's the whole process, the Envrioschools journey from education to taking action"* Principal Alana Thomson, Karapiro School<br>*"It works when communities learn and act together"* Student Enviroleader, Karapiro School<br>*"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<br>*"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<br>*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? | |
|---|---|
| *Investment Category* | Maintenance |
| *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) | No additional contracted services budget; operate within existing BAU roles and funding.<br>**Advantages:** Continue successful Enviroschools 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<br>**Disadvantages**: Relies on existing part-time contracts to deliver programme. Stretching limited hours across region. | No additional budget<br><br>$720K* direct costs (in current budget)<br><br>$260k WRC Formal education budget, $480k external funding and $130k for ICM and SPI projects<br><br>*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. Enviroschools and Kura Waitii delivery would cease.<br>**Advantages:** removal of contracted service. Education advisers support schools with environmental education and youth engagement<br>**Disadvantages**: Access to Enviroschools 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<br><br>*Lose $480K in external co-funding*<br><br>*Unsure if ICM and SPI projects would be feasible to continue without Enviroschools and Kura Waitii experienced facilitators.* | 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.<br>**Advantages:** Builds regional capability and capacity for resilience through an established network of schools, kura, and communities.<br>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.<br>**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<br>☐ Under 100K<br>☐ 100-250k<br>☒ Over $250k<br><br>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**<br>• Use of existing panel of Environmental education contractors<br>**Known Co-funders or Partnerships**<br>• Partnership agreements are in place with all 11 Territorial authorities.<br>• Multi-year funding agreements are in place with external community funders<br>• 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<br>Contract manager for Enviroschools programme delivery<br>Lead other environmental education projects |
| Kaihapai Hotaka Matauranga | Education | 2028 | Contract manager for Kura Waitii delivery<br>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**<br>*Select applicable cost confidence from the options provided.* | ☐ Low - Rough order estimate<br>☒ Low to Medium - Based on historical information<br>☐ Medium - Based on quotations<br>☐ High - Quantity surveyor costings |

Delivery Assessment:

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Expertise required**<br>*List specific expertise (external or internal resourcing) required to deliver this investment.* | Leadership support – section manager and director to enable long term strategic support<br><br>Contractors: Te Toki Voyaging Trust and 10 contract environmental education facilitators |
| **Key stakeholders**<br>*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.* | All 11 Territorial Authorities – co-funders of local facilitation of Enviroschools<br><br>Waikato River Authority- co-funder of Kura Waitii<br><br>172 Waikato Schools and Waikato Kura – participants in Envrioschools and Kura Waitii<br><br>Toimata Foundation – national foundation that holds the vision, intellectual property and regional partner relationships to reach 1600 schools nationally.<br><br>JMA<br><br>Contractors: Te Toki Voyaging Trust and 10 contract environmental education facilitators<br><br>WRC: ICM- Kauri Protection programme, Freshwater and Marine Biosecurity education; SPI – Lake Algal Bloom education project |
| **Key assumptions**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 conditions presumed true for planning and analysis, without current verification* | **Sustained Executive Sponsorship and Organisational Support**<br>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<br>ICM and SPI continue to support environmental education projects delivered by the education team and environmental education facilitators.<br>**Availability of Required Skills and Capacity**<br>It is assumed that the existing contractors complete their contracts and deliver against milestones<br>WRC Education team resource is retained<br>**Budget**<br>Inflation has not been included in the 5 year budget figures<br>External funding continues at current levels |

| MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY | |
|---|---|
| **Known constraints**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 three Limitations imposed by policy, funding, timeframe, technology, or capacity that shape scope, design, and delivery decisions.* | **Resource Availability**<br>Limited hours to support school learning and action and BAU reprioritisation.<br>**Budget**<br>Limited budget to support environmental education engagement events and activities to empower community<br>**Change Fatigue**<br>Competing priorities and change initiatives across education sector limit the scope for action projects and curriculum linked environmental education learning. |
| **Key dependencies**<br>*List the top 2 to 3 factors, deliverables, or events that must occur to enable success.* | **Executive Sponsorship**<br>Ongoing support from ELT is critical.<br>**Budget**<br>Ongoing co-funding with external co-funders is critical to the delivery of Enviroschools and Kura Waitii.<br>Ongoing funding from ICM and SPI is critical to deliver WRC Environmental education<br>**School Engagement**<br>Ongoing engagement with Waikato schools and kura is critical to the delivery of Enviroschools and Kura Waitii |
| **Strategic risks:**<br>*Referring to WRC's strategic risk register, note any that this investment might mitigate & how* | **STRAT 03 Relationships**<br>Improves transparency, supports engagement, empowers people to shape a healthy prosperous place, facilitates collaboration<br>**STRAT 04 People, Capability, Capacity, and Culture**<br>Investment in capability, enables staff to focus on delivering strategic priorities and relationships to effectively engage with communities, iwi partners and our key stakeholders.<br>**STRAT 07 Financial Sustainability**<br>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.<br>**STRAT 10 Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**<br>Developing capability and capacity to internally collaborate with mana whenua and Iwi and as a result meet our legislative and statutory obligations.<br>**STRAT 09 Climate Change**<br>Environmental education empowers communities to prepare for the future through connecting to their local environment and enabling local planning and decision making. |
| **Potential risks:**<br>*Summarise any risks associated with implementing this investment.* | **Risk:** Insufficient engagement from schools and kura<br>*Mitigation*: Agreements are in place, ongoing communication, clear value proposition, and visible facilitation support.<br><br>**Risk:** Local government reform<br>*Mitigation*: Partnership agreements are in place with co-funding TAs, ongoing reporting, clear value proposition, and local engagement opportunities. |

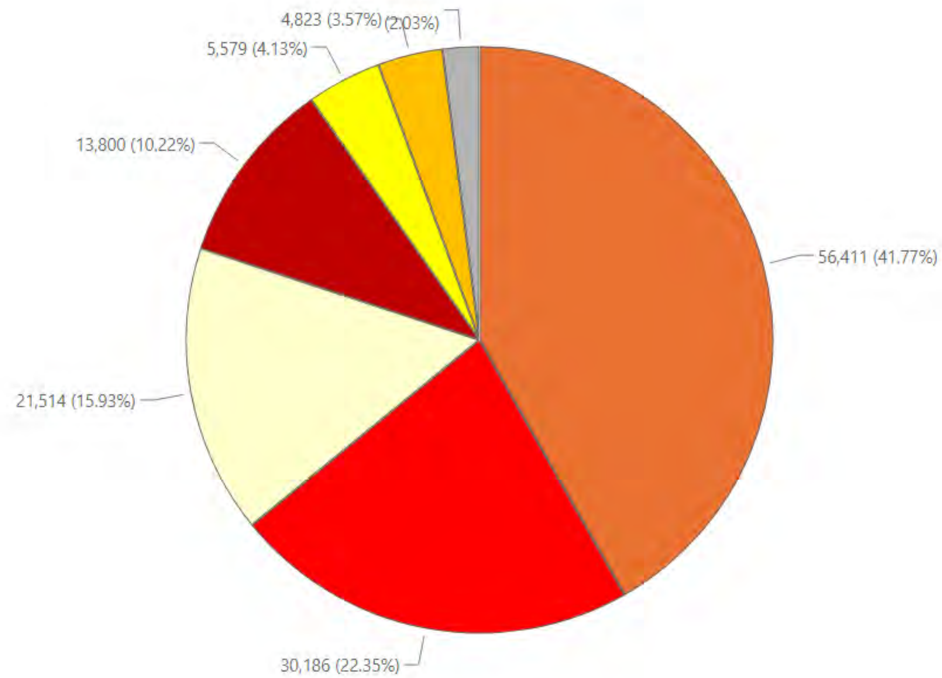
# Directorate Analysis

## Current Portfolio

### Legislative Alignment

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | $4,823 | 6 |
| 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** | | **$135,052** | **266** |

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



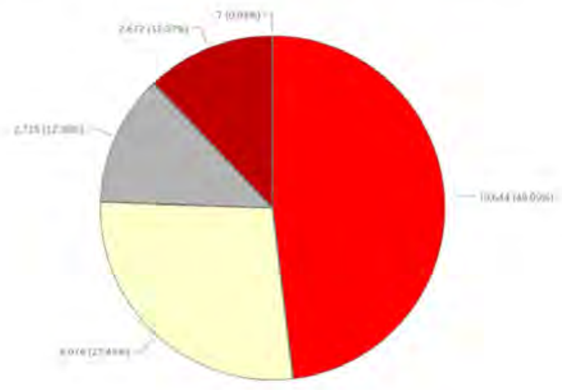
## Customer and Corporate Services (CCS)

### 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 Arikinui 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:<br>- Business process management<br>- Information management<br>- Enterprise Data Strategy<br>- Cyber Security<br>- Information technology (licences / subscription costs)<br>- 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 Councils 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 | |

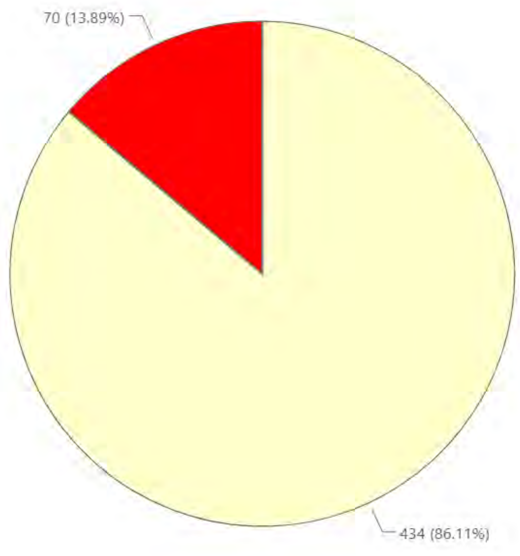
## Chief Executive Office (CEO)

### 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



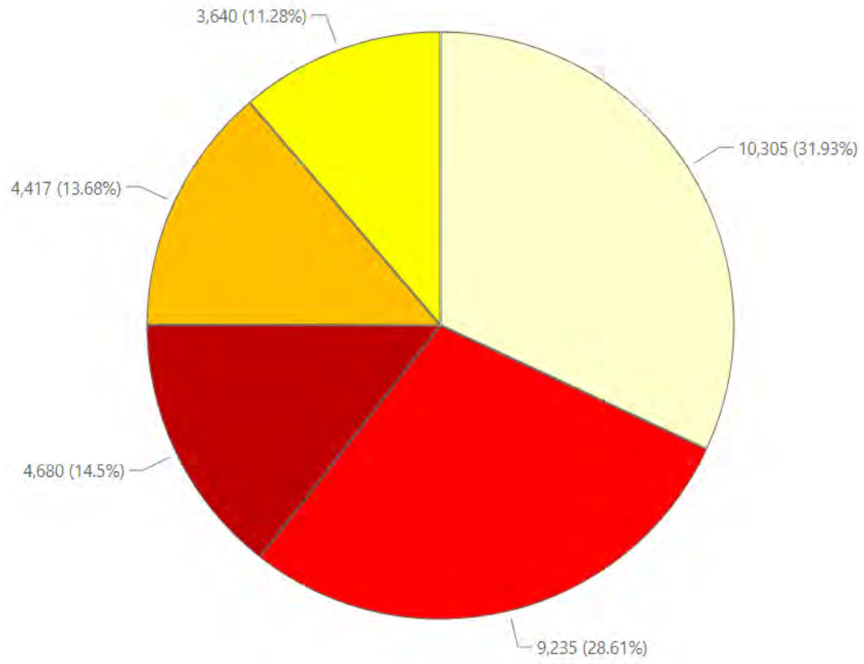
| Directorate | Activity Group | Activity Name | Description | Attractiveness Score | Legislative Alignment Value | Future Fit Organisation | Productivity & Prosperity | Building Regional Resilience | Sustaining Natural Resources | Optimised Transport System | 2026/27 Direct Cost Budget ($000) | SIP 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)

### Legislative Alignment

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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. | $4,417 | 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. | $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** | | **$32,278** | **81** |

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



| 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 | 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 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 | |
| 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.<br>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:<br><br>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<br>2. Support a more cohesive comms and engagement programme building off the CCD programme and including support to water users/industry on impacts.<br>3. Liaising with national/regional stakeholders.<br><br>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 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 | |
| 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 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ICM | | 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 | |
| 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 | |
| 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 Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato Lower Waikato | 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 | |

| 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 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 $m^3/s$ 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 $m^3/s$ 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 | |

| 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 | | 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 | |

| 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 | | 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 | |

| 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 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 5management, like tree removal which can be high risk work. | 39 | 5 | None | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | None | $478 | |

| 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 | | 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 | |

| 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 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.: 33 | | | | | | | $32,278 | |

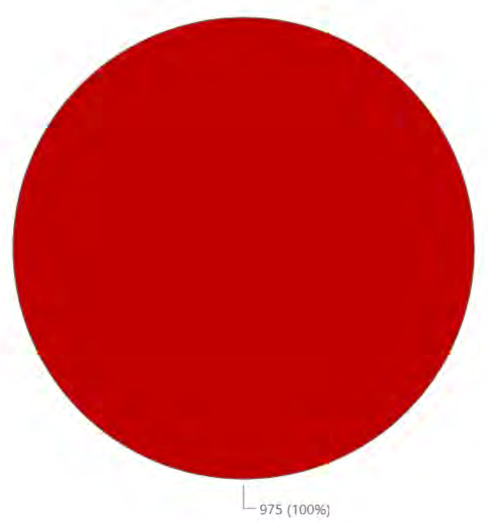
## People and Capability (P&C)

### 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)

### 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 | |
| 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 | Yes |
| 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.<br>WRC acts as the cash authority for the programme and is therefore responsible for:<br>Receiving all invoices from the delivery partner (Co-Lab)<br>Paying 100% of costs upfront<br>Recovering partner contributions in line with the funding agreement.<br>Challenges<br>WRC carries cash flow risk as upfront payer<br>Complexity in coordinating:<br>- Purchase orders (POs) across councils<br>- Cost recovery timing<br>New funding agreement → processes still being established<br>Capex vs Opex treatment creates reporting inconsistency<br><br>Opportunities<br>Strong regional collaboration across councils and NZTA<br>Ability to leverage:<br>NZTA co-funding (40% + additional 51% support on eligible costs)<br>Improve modelling capability to support:<br>-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 | Yes |
| 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, Ōtorohanga) | 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 Ōtorohanga to improve accessibility and inclusion. | 21 | 5 | None | None | None | None | High | $0 | |
| | | | | Ave.: 26 | | | | | | | $59,797 | |

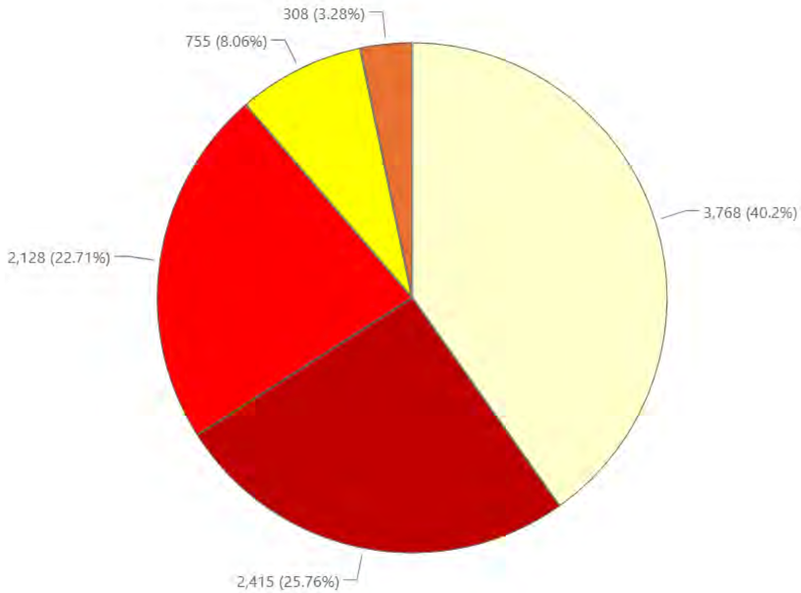
## Resource Use (RUD)

### 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 | |
| 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 | Farm Environment Plan Implementation | 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 | 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 | 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 5to the Regional Plan | 21 | 2 | None | None | None | Moderate | None | $0 | |
| | | | | Ave.: 29 | | | | | | | $9,373 | |

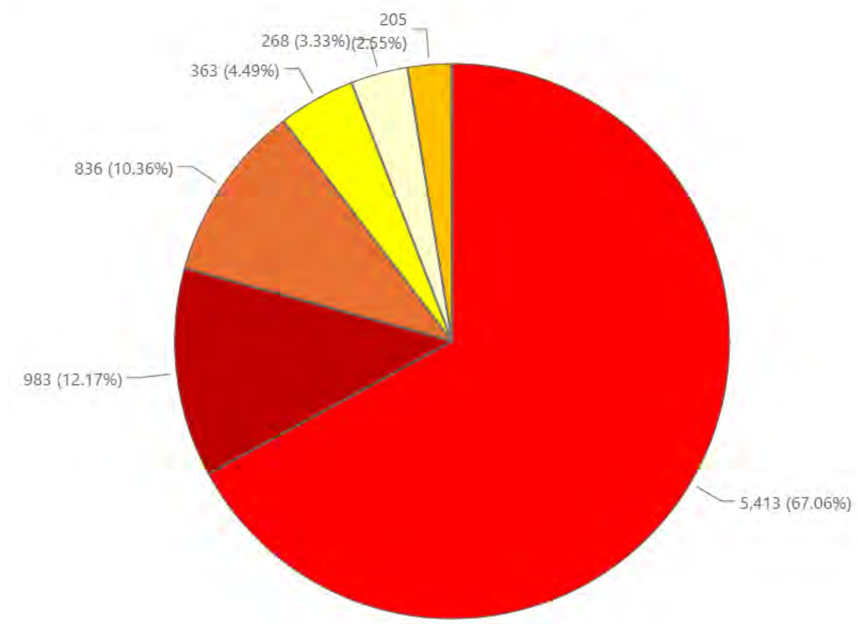
## Science, Policy and Information (SPI)

### 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 | Yes |
| 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 | |
| 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 Mātauranga Māori | 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 drainage 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 | Strategic Policy Implementation | 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 require 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 | 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 | |
| SPI | Sustainable Peatlands Programme | Peatland roadmap development | Overarching approach to peat management throughout the region | 29 | 2 | None | Moderate | Moderate | 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 | |

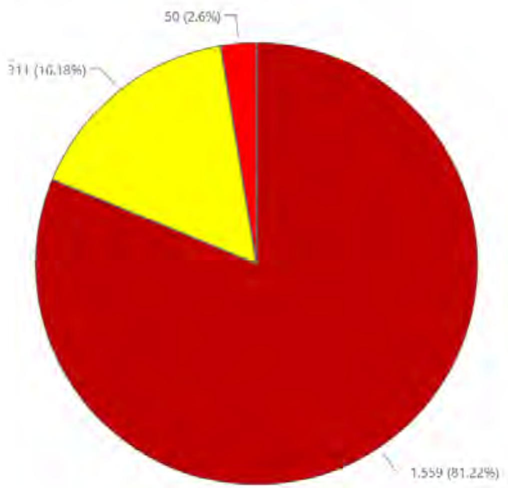
## Tai-ranga-whenua and Democracy

### 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 Māori | 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. | 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 | |

# 2.2 PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL FLOOD PROTECTION AND DRAINAGE ASSETS ON PRIVATE LAND: OPTIONS AND POSSIBLE BYLAW PROCESS

**Rā | Date:** **16 September 2026**

**Kaituhi | Author:** **Sandra Balcombe, Principal Advisor**

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** **Janine Becker, Director, Customer and Corporate Services**

## TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. This workshop paper is presented in two parts. Part One considers the options available to council to protect and manage council flood protection and drainage assets, including assets located on, or accessed through, private land. Part Two outlines the statutory process and indicative timing if council later decides to develop a bylaw.

2. The workshop is not being asked to determine under section 155(1) of the Local Government Act 2002 that a bylaw is the most appropriate response, or to approve a draft bylaw for consultation. Councillor feedback will inform further analysis, engagement and the formal governance reports required at later stages.

## KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. The council manages a flood protection and drainage network valued at approximately $1.2 billion and protecting more than 300,000 hectares. A significant proportion of these assets are located on, or accessed through, private land. The issue is not private land ownership itself, but council's ability to protect, access, maintain and manage assets for which it remains responsible. Current arrangements can leave council responding reactively to access constraints, unknown or unauthorised works, asset interference and fragmented responsibilities.

4. Several options are available to council, including operational improvements, education and voluntary compliance measures, planning mechanisms, property-based instruments, and a dedicated bylaw. These options are not mutually exclusive and may be combined. Initial analysis indicates that a dedicated bylaw warrants further investigation as part of an integrated package; however, no determination has been made that a bylaw is the most appropriate option, and further work is required before council could make a formal decision under section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002.

5. If council ultimately wishes to establish a bylaw, it must follow a staged statutory process. This includes assessing reasonably practicable options under section 155(1), assessing the proposed form under section 155(2), including New Zealand Bill of Rights Act considerations, undertaking consultation under section 156, considering submissions with an open mind, and making a final adoption decision. The process should be preceded by structured pre-work to ensure council is in a position to make informed decisions at each stage.

6. Pre-work should include clarification of legal scope, evidence gathering, engagement planning, development of a Waikato-specific policy framework, consideration of Te Ture Waimano and River settlement obligations, implementation planning, and whole-of-life cost assessment. The costs currently identified relate only to development and adoption activities and do not represent the full cost of administering and enforcing a bylaw if one were ultimately adopted.

**DIRECTION SOUGHT**

7. Councillors are invited to provide feedback on:
   (a) The problem definition and options identified in Part One.
   (b) The proposed pre-work programme and statutory pathway identified in Part Two.
   (c) Whether staff should continue development of an Investment Case to support future consideration.
   (d) Whether any additional matters should be investigated before staff return to council with further advice.

**PART ONE | OPTIONS TO PROTECT AND MANAGE COUNCIL FLOOD PROTECTION AND DRAINAGE ASSETS**

8. Problem statement. The council needs the ability to protect, access, maintain and management flood protection and drainage works for which it is responsible, including works located on, or accessed through, private land. This includes the ability to identify, prevent and remedy activities that may impair asset integrity, operation or maintenance; maintain routine and emergency access; establish consistent approval requirements; and allocate responsibility for remediation and cost recovery.

9. Current arrangements rely on a combination of statutory powers, operational practices, relationships with landowners, property arrangements and planning controls. While these mechanisms provide important tools, they do not always provide a consistent, network-wide framework for managing activities that may affect flood protection and drainage assets.

10. The following options have been identified for consideration in the table Below:

| Option | Advantages | Limitations | Current assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Status quo | No new development cost and retains local flexibility | Leaves fragmented arrangements, delayed detection, inconsistent expectations and reactive intervention largely unresolved | Not sufficient as the primary response |
| 2. Existing powers and operational improvement | Can improve inspection, record keeping, escalation, access planning and use of existing statutory powers | Powers are dispersed and may not create a clear, accessible or preventative network wide approvals framework | Essential complementary work, but unlikely to resolve the whole problem |

| Option | Advantages | Limitations | Current assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Education and voluntary cooperation | Supports understanding, relationships and voluntary compliance, comparatively low regulatory burden | Cannot compel access, prior approval, remediation, or consistent behaviours where co-operation fails | Use alongside other measures |
| 4. Regional and district planning instruments | Can management environmental effects, land use and subdivision and improve coordination with territorial authorities | Not designed as a complete operational asset-protection regime and does not in itself secure access to council assets | Targeted supporting role |
| 5. Property instruments | Easements, licences, covenants and agreements can provide strong and tailored rights at individual sites | Coverage is incomplete, negotiation and registration can be slow and costly, and instruments are unsuitable as the sole network wide response | Use where tailored or enduring property rights are needed |
| 6. Dedicated bylaw plus complementary measures | Could provide one mapped, transparent, preventative and enforceable regional framework, including approvals, standards, access protection and remediation pathways | Creates legal scope, property-impact, implementation, cost and legitimacy risks, must be proportionate and carefully designed | Has potential as the leading option for further testing, but not there is not adequate information for a pre-determined final outcome |

**Councillor Discussion – Part One**

11. Councillors are invited to consider:

    (a) whether the problem definition appropriately reflects the operational and community consequences council is seeking to avoid;

    (b) whether all reasonably practicable options have been identified and assessed;

    (c) whether any additional options should be investigated through pre-work; and

    (d) what further information would assist council before any formal statutory assessment is undertaken.

**PART TWO | STATUTORY PROCESS AND INDICATIVE TIMING**

12. A decision to investigate a possible bylaw is not the same as the statutory decision to make one. The process should retain clear decision gates so council can continue, narrow, pause,

transfer or discontinue the work as evidence, engagement, legal advice and wider strategic considerations develop. Drafting should follow policy decisions rather than substitute for them.

13. The purpose of pre-work is to establish whether a formal bylaw programme should proceed and, if so, on what basis. The pre-work phase is intended to improve council's understanding of the issue, test assumptions, identify implementation implications, and provide a stronger foundation for future decision-making

14. Key areas of pre-work are expected to include:

    (a) Clarification of the legal scope of any potential bylaw, including the application of section 149 of the Local Government Act 2002;

    (b) Identification of relevant asset classes and mapping requirements;

    (c) Development of a Waikato-specific policy framework;

    (d) Consideration of Te Ture Whaimana and River settlement obligations;

    (e) Engagement planning and participation pathways, including with Waikato and Waipā River iwi;

    (f) Implementation and operating model development;

    (g) Whole-of-life cost assessment;

    (h) Review of relevant precedents and lessons from other regions; and

    (i) Ongoing monitoring of local government reform developments.

15. While a significant proportion of a Waikato Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaw could be adapted from existing regional council models, a report by GMD Consultants identifies some matters that are unique to Waikato and are not readily addressed through direct adoption of another council's approach. There will also be legal work required to identify the extent to which drainage matters can be included as within the prescribed statutory scope for the bylaw, which is limited to "flood protection and flood control works undertaken by, or on behalf of, the regional council." The key task will therefore involve assessing what can be adopted unchanged, what modifications are required, and the extent Waikato -specific provisions are necessary.

16. The Preliminary Assessment of Ability to Adapt Existing Regional council Bylaw Provisions (Attachment 1) contains a preliminary assessment of the ability to adopt provisions from other council's bylaws. The table also identifies potential targeted engagement considerations associated with areas where further policy development may be required. These may include the statutory consultation requirements associated with bylaw development under the Local Government Act 2002, including the Special Consultative Procedure, together with any targeted engagement considered appropriate under council's Significance and Engagement Policy and the expectations arising from the Waikato River settlement framework.

17. The Indicative Bylaw Pathway (Attachment 2) sets out an indicative pathway. While the timeframe appears lengthy, much of the programme is driven by statutory requirements rather than drafting alone. The Local Government Act requires a series of formal decision points, consultation processes, hearings and deliberations that cannot be bypassed. In addition, the overall duration will depend on the extent of policy development required. Before drafting can be finalised, council would need to resolve a range of Waikato-specific policy questions relating to scope, powers, approvals, implementation, compliance, costs and

stakeholder interests, including engagement with iwi. The critical path is therefore policy development and statutory process rather than preparation of legal text.

18. **Councillor Discussion – Part Two** Part two is provided for councillor's awareness. No decisions or direction are sought.

**ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS**

1. **Preliminary Assessment of Ability to Adapt Existing Regional Council Bylaw Provisons - Doc # 38697691** ⇩
2. **Indicative Bylaw Pathway - Doc # 38697691** ⇩

**Attachment 1 – Preliminary Assessment of Ability to Adapt Existing Regional Council Bylaw Provisions**

Attachment 1 provides a preliminary assessment of the extent to which provisions from existing regional council flood protection and drainage bylaws may be adapted for Waikato. The assessment indicates that a substantial proportion of a Waikato bylaw could likely be adapted from existing regional council models. Further consideration is likely to be required only in relation to matters identified in the GMD report as distinguishing features of the Waikato region, namely extensive peatland systems, hydrological complexity and the Waikato River settlement framework. The key task is therefore to determine where existing provisions can be adopted unchanged, where modifications are required, and whether any Waikato-specific provisions are necessary. Any such decisions would need to be informed through appropriate engagement and consultation processes, including statutory consultation requirements.

| Bylaw Component | Ability to Adapt | Likely Source Councils | Waikato-Specific Considerations | Potential Targeted Engagement Considerations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Core Bylaw Provisions** | | | | |
| Definitions and interpretation | High | BOPRC, Otago, Canterbury, Southland, Taranaki | Minor amendments to reflect Waikato asset classes and terminology. | No specific engagement beyond standard bylaw consultation anticipated |
| Asset protection framework | High | BOPRC | Core framework for protecting stopbanks, drains and other assets appears readily transferable. | Flood protection scheme stakeholders and affected landowners |
| Controls on structures near assets | High | All councils | Primarily requires local asset references and mapping. | Local asset managers and landowners |
| Controls on earthworks and excavation | High | All councils | Existing provisions provide proven precedent and | Landowners, contractors and scheme engineers |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | enforcement mechanisms. | |
| Vegetation and planting controls | High | All councils | May require consideration of Waikato River restoration and biodiversity objectives. | River and catchment stakeholders, environmental interest groups, iwi where relevant |
| Stock access controls | High | All councils | Existing approaches appear readily adaptable. | Farmers and landowners subject to stock controls |
| Compliance, enforcement and offences | High | All councils | Standard local government bylaw provisions. | Compliance stakeholders, enforcement staff |
| Approval, exemption and consent processes | High | BOPRC, Otago | Administrative provisions largely transferable. | Council administration and applicants |
| **Waikato-Specific Considerations** | | | | |
| Setback distances and asset buffers | Medium-High | BOPRC, Canterbury, Southland | Existing approaches provide a strong starting point, but assessment may be required to determine whether standard setbacks are appropriate in peatland environments or complex flood systems. | Potentially affected landowners, scheme ratepayers, rural sector representatives |
| Environmental enhancement provisions | Medium | BOPRC | Potential need to reflect Waikato-specific environmental | Environmental groups, iwi, catchment stakeholders |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | outcomes and restoration objectives. | |
| Peatland management | Limited precedent available | Limited precedent identified | The GMD report identifies extensive peatland systems as a distinguishing feature of Waikato. Further assessment may be required to determine whether standard bylaw provisions adequately manage risks to flood protection and drainage assets. | Landowners and occupiers within peatland areas, drainage scheme stakeholders, relevant iwi/hapū |
| Hydrological complexity | Limited precedent available | Some relevant experience in other regions | The GMD report notes Waikato's hydrological complexity as a distinguishing feature. Assessment may be required to determine whether standard provisions are suitable across the region's diverse river, drainage and flood management systems. | Flood protection scheme stakeholders, affected communities, technical specialists |
| **Statutory and Settlement Obligations** | | | | |
| Waikato River settlement framework | No direct precedent available | No direct precedent identified | No comparator council operates under the same statutory framework. | River iwi, co-governance entities and other parties with statutory interests |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Consideration will be required regarding Te Ture Whaimana, settlement legislation and associated environmental and cultural expectations. | |
| Mauri and kaitiakitanga provisions | No direct precedent available | No direct precedent identified | Potential policy development required to determine how these concepts should be reflected within a Waikato bylaw. | Iwi, hapū and other parties with interests arising from the settlement framework |

Of the matters identified above, the Waikato River settlement framework is considered the most significant area where direct adoption of another council's provisions may not be appropriate. Unlike peatland management or hydrological complexity, which may potentially be addressed through modification of existing bylaw approaches, the statutory obligations arising from Te Ture Whaimana and the Waikato River settlement legislation have no direct equivalent in the comparator bylaws reviewed and are therefore likely to require specific policy consideration and engagement.

**Attachment 2: Indicative pathway for bylaw development**

**Why the process takes time.** The indicative pathway reflects more than drafting a bylaw document. Several stages are required by the Local Government Act 2002, including formal statutory determinations, consultation, hearings, deliberations and a final Council decision. The timeframe also depends on the policy choices Council makes about what the bylaw should cover and how it should operate in Waikato. Those policy settings must be developed, legally tested and informed by engagement before the bylaw can be finalised and consulted on with confidence.

| Phase / decision gate | Indicative timing | Purpose and key work |
|---|---|---|
| **Preliminary work** | Jul-Sep 2027 | Early engagement, including iwi participation; legal scoping; and analysis of the operating model, compliance approach and whole-of-life costs. Local government reform would be monitored throughout the programme. |
| **Gate 1: section 155(1) determination** | Sep 2027 | Council determines, with an open mind, whether a bylaw is the most appropriate way of addressing the perceived problem. |
| **Policy design and drafting** | Oct 2027-May 2028 | Develop Waikato-specific policy settings, including scope, powers, approvals and implementation arrangements. Prepare and iteratively test the draft bylaw with legal and subject-matter input. |
| **Gate 2: statutory assessment and consultation pathway** | Jun 2028 | Assess the proposed bylaw under section 155(2), including its form and New Zealand Bill of Rights Act implications, and determine the required consultation process under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. |
| **Special Consultative Procedure** | Jul-Aug 2028 | Consult on the draft bylaw and supporting information under sections 83 and 86. Provide at least one month for submissions, with six weeks recommended, and an opportunity for submitters to be heard. Prepare a submissions report. |
| **Hearings and deliberations** | Sep 2028-Feb 2029 | Hear and consider submissions, determine any changes, and assess whether further consultation is required. Prepare recommendations for Council on the final form of the bylaw and the statutory determinations. |
| **Gate 3: Council decision** | Feb 2029 | Council decides whether to make and adopt the bylaw, and if so, its final form and commencement date. |

**Note:** The dates are a best-case scenario, are indicative and subject to a degree of uncertainty depending on Council direction, further refinement, the policy choices made, legal advice, the nature of submissions received, and whether further consultation is required.

# 2.3 SIGNIFICANT FORECASTING ASSUMPTIONS

**Rā | Date:** **7 September 2026**

**Kaituhi | Author:** **Toby McIntyre, Senior Corporate Planner**

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** **Janine Becker, Director, Customer and Corporate Services**

## TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to seek elected member feedback on the draft Significant Forecasting Assumptions (SFAs), for the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan (LTP).

## KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Forecasting assumptions are foundational to the LTP, supporting decision-making in a highly uncertain and moveable planning environment.
3. Financial assumptions and regional assumptions from the 2024-2034 LTP have been combined into a single Significant Forecasting Assumptions framework for the 2027-2037 LTP. This recognises that economic, environmental, demographic, technological and legislative factors are increasingly interconnected and collectively influence Council's financial position, service delivery, infrastructure investment and long-term planning decisions.
4. Subject matters experts from across the organisation have reviewed and updated the assumptions, to reflect the emerging trends, new information and changes in Council's operating environment. A number of themes emerged, and the draft assumptions have been grouped by those identified.
5. The assumptions were also reviewed to better articulate the potential implications for service delivery, affordability, financial resilience and achievement of Council outcomes if assumptions prove incorrect. In addition, a financial materiality assessment has been introduced to identify assumptions that may have a significant influence on Council's long-term financial position.
6. While these draft assumptions have been developed using the best information available at the time of preparation, a number are dependent on future decisions, policy settings or external information that remain uncertain.
7. The assumptions will be monitored and reviewed throughout the development of the LTP, with specific trigger points identified for reassessment. Examples include local government reform, resource management reform and NZTA funding settings.

## BACKGROUND

8. Significant forecasting assumptions are required under schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA).
9. The LTP must disclose all significant forecasting assumptions, the levels of uncertainty associated with each assumption, and quantify the potential effect of the uncertainty on the financial estimates.

**Financial assumptions vs non-financial/regional assumptions**

10. The legislation does not differentiate between non-financial/regional assumptions and financial assumptions. However, in our previous LTPs, assumptions have been split into two different sections/documents:
    - Regional assumptions – those ‘non-financial’ assumptions that can be applied across all the work we do
    - Financial assumptions – financial and economic assumptions.
11. Through development of the 2027-2037 LTP, staff reviewed the approach used by other regional councils and found that most now present assumptions within a single Significant Forecasting Assumptions framework. This reflects the increasing interrelationship between financial and non-financial factors and provides a more consistent basis for assessing uncertainty, financial implications and planning impacts.
12. The review highlighted that many assumptions previously classified as either financial or non-financial cannot be considered in isolation. For example, climate change influences infrastructure investment, resilience planning, insurance costs and funding requirements. Similarly, population growth influences service demand, infrastructure planning, rating growth and affordability. While noting that Council only maintained single assumptions in relation to such matters, separating assumptions into different sections can obscure important relationships between assumptions and their impacts.
13. A further benefit of the integrated framework is that it enables assumptions to be assessed using a common methodology. This includes consideration of uncertainty, financial materiality, changes since the previous LTP and how assumptions have been reflected in Council's planning, funding, investment and service delivery decisions.
14. Staff therefore recommend a single Significant Forecasting Assumptions framework for the 2027-2037 LTP. The combined framework provides a more complete description of the environment within which Council is planning over the next ten years and better reflects the interconnected nature of the challenges facing local government, including affordability, climate adaptation, infrastructure stewardship, legislative reform and organisational resilience.

**Structure and terminology**

15. Staff workshops identified that the terms "risk" and "uncertainty" have been used interchangeably in previous assumption frameworks. To improve consistency and transparency, greater emphasis has been placed on clearly distinguishing the uncertainty associated with an assumption from the potential consequences if the assumption proves incorrect.
16. A matrix has been developed to support a more consistent assessment of uncertainty, and the structure of the assumptions framework has been updated to provide a clearer connection between an assumption, the source of uncertainty, the potential implications if the assumption proves incorrect, its financial materiality and Council's planning response. This is outlined in the attached draft document.
17. Financial materiality has been retained. While uncertainty considers how predictable an assumption is, financial materiality considers the extent to which a change in the assumption could influence Council's financial position, affordability, service delivery, programme delivery, infrastructure investment or achievement of strategic outcomes. Together, these

assessments help identify not only where uncertainty exists, but also where changes in assumptions may have the greatest impact on the Long Term Plan.

18. A Planning Response has also been included for each assumption. This is intended to explain how the assumption has been reflected in Council's planning, funding, investment, asset management and service delivery decisions. These measures are intended to mitigate the impacts of the risks.

**Draft assumptions**

19. A desktop review of the 2024-2034 LTP assumptions was undertaken, using the Waikato Region Trends and Opportunities report as the key source of reference. Other internal documents and sources were used, including the Waikato Regional Climate Hazards and Risks report, and the Waikato dashboard.

20. Subject matters experts from across the organisation were also engaged to review the assumptions and update them with the most recent and up to date information.

21. Staff reviewed the assumptions and the assessment of the potential financial implications arising from uncertainty. This includes consideration of impacts on affordability, financial resilience, service delivery, funding requirements, infrastructure investment, programme delivery and long-term financial sustainability.

22. Through the review process, several common themes emerged across the assumptions, including:
    (a) Climate, Resilience and Environmental Stewardship
    (b) Growth, Communities and Regional Development
    (c) Legislative, Regulatory and Institutional Change
    (d) Infrastructure, Assets and Service Delivery
    (e) Transport and Mobility
    (f) Financial Sustainability and Affordability, and
    (g) Technology and Organisational Capability.

23. The draft assumptions have been grouped by these themes to show further interconnection and highlight mitigation planning responses.

24. Collectively, the draft assumptions now provide a clearer description of the operating environment Council is planning within over the next ten years, rather than simply a collection of individual forecasts.

25. While the assumptions will continue to be refined using the best information available at the time of preparing the LTP, a number are highly dependent on future decisions, legislative change, policy settings or external information that remain uncertain. It is therefore proposed that specific assumptions be identified for ongoing monitoring and review throughout the development of the LTP.

26. The following assumption categories are proposed for more intensive monitoring and review throughout development of the LTP:
    - Local Government reform
    - Rates capping legislation
    - Resource Management Reform

- Climate related events
- Natural hazards
- NZTA Funding
- Public transport patronage
- Asset renewal funding
- Investment fund returns and distributions
- Interest rates and borrowing costs.

27. These assumptions are considered the most likely to require revision as further information becomes available during development of the LTP, in line with sector guidance.
28. The draft assumptions can be found in Attachment 1.

## CONCLUSION

29. Staff recommend a refreshed assumptions framework for the 2027-2037 LTP that combines financial and non-financial assumptions, and strengthens the connection between uncertainty, service delivery, affordability, financial resilience and long-term planning decisions.
30. The proposed approach strengthens the assessment of uncertainty and financial materiality and provides greater visibility of how assumptions have been reflected in Council's planning, funding, investment and service delivery decisions.
31. Collectively, the assumptions provide a clearer description of the environment within which Council is planning over the next ten years.

## ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **DRAFT 2027-2037 LTP Significant regional forecasting assumptions.** ⇩

## Guidance

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty about the assumption: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Summary of the assumption.* | *The level of uncertainty includes any limitations of knowledge about future states. Consider evidence strength, system stability, timing predictability and outcome variability.*<br><br>*Determined if this is* ***low, medium or high*** *using the scoring matrix below.* | *Explains the level of uncertainty and provide evidence.*<br><br>*Could include:*<br>**Data source**<br>**External report**<br>**Expert judgment** | *Summarises the risk of any uncertainty.* | *Explains the potential* ***effect of uncertainty on*** *financial estimates, service delivery and other matters.* | ***Financial materiality considers the potential financial impact on Council if the assumption proves incorrect.***<br><br>*Considers the potential effect on rates, operating expenditure, capital expenditure, borrowing requirements, reserves, service delivery and Council's ability to achieve planned outcomes.*<br><br>*Determined if this is* ***low, medium or high*** *using the Materiality scoring matrix below.* | *Outlines any actions Council is taking to mitigate the risk associated with the uncertainty.* | *Highlights key shifts in the assessment of the assumption since the 2024-2034 LTP.* |

**Defining uncertainty**

Staff used the following four dimensions to determine the overall level of uncertainty.

| | Low uncertainty | Moderate uncertainty | High uncertainty | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evidence strength | *Assumption is supported by generally reliable evidence, with only minor gaps or inconsistencies.* | *Assumption is supported by mixed or incomplete evidence, with moderate uncertainty or disagreement.* | *Assumption is supported by limited, uncertain, or inconsistent evidence, with significant knowledge gaps.* | *Evidence strength score* |
| System stability | *The underlying system is generally stable, with limited exposure to change or disruption.* | *The system is subject to moderate transition, stress, or evolving conditions.* | *The system is unstable, rapidly changing, or exposed to significant disruption or policy change.* | *System stability score* |
| Timing predictability | *The timing of change is generally predictable, with only limited variation expected.* | *The timing of change is somewhat uncertain and may vary across scenarios.* | *The timing of change is difficult to anticipate and subject to major variation.* | *Timing predictability score* |
| Outcome variability | *There is a relatively limited spread of plausible outcomes.* | *There is a moderate spread of plausible outcomes across different scenarios.* | *There is a wide range of plausible outcomes with substantial variation in impacts.* | *Outcome variability score* |
| Total score | *Insert total score* | | | |

## Financial Materiality

| **Financial Materiality** | Description |
|---|---|
| High | • An unbudgeted operating expenditure greater than 5 per cent of council's total operating expenditure in that year, excluding amortisation and depreciation.<br>• An unbudgeted capital expenditure greater than 2 per cent of the total value of council's assets in that year, excluding amortisation and depreciation. |
| Medium | • An unbudgeted operating expenditure greater than 2.5 per cent of council's total operating expenditure in that year, excluding amortisation and depreciation.<br>• An unbudgeted capital expenditure greater than 1 per cent of the total value of council's assets in that year, excluding amortisation and depreciation. |
| Low | Below the above thresholds. |

## Introduction to assumptions in the LTP

The Long Term Plan (LTP) is based on a range of assumptions about the future operating environment in which Waikato Regional Council will deliver services, manage assets, invest in infrastructure and support regional outcomes.

For the 2027–2037 LTP, Council has adopted an integrated assumptions framework that combines both financial and non-financial assumptions. This recognises that economic, environmental, demographic, technological, legislative and social factors are increasingly interconnected and collectively influence Council's financial position, service delivery, infrastructure investment and long-term decision making.

The assumptions should not be viewed as a collection of isolated forecasts. Together they describe the environment in which Council expects to operate over the next ten years and identify the key uncertainties that may influence the delivery of the LTP.

While every effort has been made to use the best information available at the time of preparing the Plan, uncertainty remains. Some assumptions are inherently more uncertain than others, and actual outcomes may differ from those forecast. Council will continue to monitor changes in its operating environment and respond through annual planning, long-term planning, asset management planning and other strategic review processes as new information becomes available.

In addition, each assumption includes:

- **Planning Response** – a summary of how the assumption has been considered in Council's planning, funding, investment, asset management and service delivery decisions.

The Planning Response is intended to provide context on how Council has considered the assumption in developing the LTP. It highlights how the assumption has informed Council's planning and decision-making processes.

Through the review process, several common themes emerged across the assumptions, including:

a) Climate, Resilience and Environmental Stewardship
b) Growth, Communities and Regional Development
c) Legislative, Regulatory and Institutional Change
d) Infrastructure, Assets and Service Delivery
e) Transport and Mobility
f) Financial Sustainability and Affordability, and
g) Technology and Organisational Capability.

The draft assumptions have been grouped by these themes to show further interconnection and highlight mitigation planning responses.

These themes underpin the Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy and wider LTP. Collectively, the assumptions help explain both the environment in which Council is planning and the key factors influencing future funding, investment and service delivery decisions in an increasingly uncertain environment.

**1. Climate, Resilience and Environmental Stewardship**

These assumptions relate to environmental outcomes, adaptation, resilience, natural systems, resource pressures, and Council's stewardship responsibilities:

- Climate Related Impacts
- Environmental Management
- Land Use Change
- Natural Capital
- Natural Hazards.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Climate related impacts**<br><br>Climate-related impacts will continue to influence Council's operating environment over the life of the Plan. | **Moderate** | There is clear evidence that the impacts from climate change will continue to intensify. The region can expect rising sea levels, more extreme weather, warmer summers, milder winters, with seasonable rainfall shifts. Drought risk will likely increase in the north and east over spring and summer, and seasonable changes in rainfall and wind may occur in the west.<br><br>However, climate change is a complex multifaceted phenomenon influenced by numerous interrelated factors, many of which are subject to change over time. Long-term projections of climate change impacts depend on future greenhouse gas emissions, which are uncertain. There are four main global emission scenarios from the IPCC, ranging from low to high. The different scenarios indicate the range of projected climate change futures and expected changes across hazards.<br><br>**External report –** IPCC report<br>**Internal report –** WRC Climate change hazards in the Waikato region. | The impacts of climate change are felt sooner or greater than assumed. | If climate change impacts occur earlier or are greater than assumed it could result in insufficient resilience in WRC's assets, along with the financial impact of any necessary unbudgeted recovery work. This means costs could change in response to the impact of climate change.<br><br>Council's involvement in climate mitigation and resilience activities may need to increase.<br><br>There may also be greater expectation for involvement in community adaptation projects led by territorial authorities.<br><br>Councils' involvement with Emergency Response and CDEM activities may increase and subsequently also result in service delivery and work programme delays.<br><br>Climate change may increase operating and capital expenditure requirements through additional asset maintenance, flood protection works, resilience investments and emergency response activities. Significant events may require the reprioritisation of planned expenditure, place pressure on borrowing requirements and reduce Council's financial flexibility. Over time, these costs may influence future funding requirements, affordability considerations and rates decisions. | Medium | The potential climate change impacts are routinely factored into the Council's planning and design activities as prediction and adaptation information becomes available. In particular, the council's Infrastructure Strategy considers the impact of climate change on the management of flood protection scheme assets and notes the ways in which management of these schemes will need to adapt in the future.<br><br>Regional spatial planning will support consideration of climate risk in strategic growth management and planning for development and critical infrastructure.<br><br>The Council's energy strategy will also take into account climate change constraints and opportunities.<br><br>The LTP includes provision for ongoing resilience, adaptation and emergency management activities, with future investment priorities continuing to be reviewed through asset management, infrastructure investment and long-term planning processes. | Climate related events remain a significant long-term planning assumption. However, the focus has shifted from considering future impacts to understanding the current implications for infrastructure investment, resilience, affordability and service delivery.<br><br>Assumption combines the previous financial and non-financial assumptions into one, with much stronger focus on adaptation, resilience, flood protection assets, emergency management, community adaptation and affordability.<br><br>In 2024:<br>• The uncertainty level for the non-financial element was moderate.<br>• The uncertainty level for the financial element was low, with low financial materiality in the short-term and high financial materiality in the long-term.<br><br>Climate change is influencing planning and investment decisions now. |
| **Environmental Management**<br><br>Environmental management responsibilities will continue, however resource management reform and associated policy changes are expected to influence future programme requirements, funding | Moderate | Resource management reform, replacement of the Resource Management Act 1991, new national direction, environmental policy changes, funding responsibilities, implementation timeframes and future government priorities may significantly influence Council's environmental management responsibilities and programme requirements.<br><br>While the direction of reform is becoming clearer, uncertainty remains regarding the final legislative | New environmental management or regulatory requirements arise that are not currently planned or funded. | The environmental and regulatory environment is expected to continue evolving throughout the period covered by this Plan.<br><br>However, changes arising from resource management reform, new planning instruments, national direction or government policy may require additional policy, planning, implementation and engagement activities that are not currently reflected in budgets and forecasts. | Medium | Council actively monitors legislative developments, national policy direction and emerging environmental issues to identify potential impacts at an early stage.<br><br>Resource management reform and environmental regulation assumptions have been considered in the development of the Long Term | Since the 2024-34 LTP, the Government has progressed significant resource management reform, including replacement of the Resource Management Act 1991 with a new planning and environmental management framework.<br><br>There is now greater certainty that substantial transition activity, new planning instruments, implementation requirements and associated costs are likely during the 2027-37 LTP period.<br><br>However, uncertainty remains regarding the final legislative framework, funding responsibilities, cost-sharing arrangements and implementation timeframes. |

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| needs and organisational priorities. | | framework, implementation requirements, cost-sharing arrangements and the scale of transition activity required during the LTP period.<br><br>Future Government decisions relating to freshwater management and climate adaptation may alter Council's responsibilities and funding requirements.<br><br>Emerging environmental issues may also require Council to respond to matters that are not currently anticipated or funded within the Plan. | | The transition to a new planning and environmental management framework may result in increased operating expenditure, additional staffing requirements, programme reprioritisation and new investment needs during the first years of the LTP. Depending on the final legislative requirements and funding arrangements, Council may incur additional operating or capital expenditure, reprioritise existing work programmes or seek additional funding.<br><br>Emerging environmental issues may also influence service delivery priorities, resource allocation and the timing of planned activities. | | Plan, policy work programme and long-term resource planning.<br><br>Council is assessing the potential implications of new planning instruments, implementation requirements, transition costs and future environmental management responsibilities as greater certainty emerges regarding the replacement planning framework.<br><br>Council will continue to prioritise resources and adjust work programmes where necessary to respond to changing regulatory requirements, environmental risks and community expectations.<br><br>Planning decisions will continue to balance environmental outcomes, statutory obligations, affordability considerations and long-term financial sustainability. | Resource management reform has therefore become a significantly more important planning consideration than was anticipated during development of the previous LTP, with greater potential implications for programme delivery, resourcing requirements and long-term funding needs. |
| **Land Use Change**<br><br>Land use trends will generally be in line with current projections but may be impacted by policy shifts. | **Moderate** | The Resource Management Act is being replaced, and implementation of a new system will occur over the duration of this LTP. The reform may impact land use in the region, with it prioritising private property rights. There will also be faster consenting processes aimed at enabling quicker delivery of housing, farming and renewable energy projects. This may have varying effects on land use change.<br><br>Heightened economic uncertainty, with heightened geopolitical tensions and conflict in the Middle East, may also affect demand for primary exports, the supply of imported inputs, with uncertain effects on land use change. | Land use changes occur more rapidly than anticipated, placing pressure on drainage networks, transport services, and water resources. | More rapid urbanisation or growth on the urban/rural fringe could put pressures on council drainage systems and potentially require a review of levels of service of some council infrastructure.<br><br>There may also be increased pressure to provide additional public transport services in these outer areas (with NZTA funding depending on central government prioritisation).<br><br>Land use changes in response to decreased availability of water (for either supply (climate) – or demand (side reasons) may also negatively impact communities that have previously relied on dairy and other land uses most affected by resource constraints.<br><br>Changes in land use patterns may require additional investment in infrastructure, environmental management and service delivery activities. Depending on the scale and location of growth or land use change, this may place pressure on future operating and capital budgets, increase funding requirements and influence infrastructure affordability. | Medium | Regional spatial planning will support consideration of projections and growth demand and support management and planning for development and critical infrastructure.<br><br>Planning processes will seek to better understand the implications of land use change for infrastructure requirements, transport demand, water resources, environmental outcomes and community resilience. | The underlying trend since the last LTP remains similar, but the context has shifted from uncertainty around the repeal of RM reform to uncertainty around implementation of a replacement planning system, property rights, renewable energy development and urban growth pressures.<br><br>There is also increasing recognition of the interaction between land use change, climate adaptation, infrastructure planning, community resilience and long-term affordability. |
| **Natural Capital**<br><br>Natural capital will remain under pressure and competition for finite natural resources, including | **Moderate** | Related factors such as climate change, create some uncertainty as it can create negative feedback loops that accelerate the decline of natural capital.<br><br>Shifts in energy and technologies may also contribute to changes in natural capital. For | Natural capital declines at an accelerated rate and policy shifts result in increased pressure for water resources. | Rapid decline of natural capital could result in increased levels of service being required, and necessitate more compliance monitoring, enforcement and sanctioning.<br><br>If higher levels of service are required to address declining natural capital, | Medium | WRC's Energy Strategy will support informed decision making, and the State of Environment reporting will keep the Council informed about environmental impacts. | While the uncertainty level remains moderate, additional uncertainty has emerged from climate change impacts, resource management reform, future water allocation frameworks, changing government priorities and local government reform. |

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| freshwater, is expected to increase. | | example, future data centres to support AI may place pressure on water resources, with the timing and development of such centres in the Waikato region currently unknown.<br><br>The level of uncertainty is also influenced by resource management reforms, which give central government more responsibility for controlling the methodology for environmental limits.<br><br>There may also be future policy shifts because of government elections, and the reform of local government. | | Council may need to invest more in environmental restoration, monitoring, compliance and catchment management activities. Depending on the scale of intervention required, this may increase operating and capital expenditure, place pressure on future funding requirements and influence affordability.<br><br>There may also be reputational risks to the council's relationship with iwi, if the council is not seen to be doing enough to protect water allocations, and the council may come under increased pressure to decline water allocations. | | Council considers natural capital outcomes through its environmental planning, asset management, annual planning and long-term planning processes.<br><br>Council will continue to monitor the implications of resource management reform, changing land use patterns, water allocation pressures, emerging technologies and government policy settings to inform future planning and investment decisions.<br><br>Funding requirements and investment priorities will be reviewed as better information becomes available to ensure environmental outcomes are balanced with affordability and long-term financial sustainability. | Previously this assumption focused primarily on environmental degradation. The update broadens scope to include growing competition for water, AI/data-centre water demand, environmental limits, and future allocation frameworks. |
| **Natural Hazards**<br><br>Natural hazard events will continue to affect communities, infrastructure and service delivery.<br><br>It is assumed that hazard emergencies will be addressed through a combination of existing budgets and central government support. | **Moderate** | While modelling and monitoring are carried out, it cannot be predicted exactly when, where, or how severe an occurrence will be. When it comes to climate change related hazards such as sea level increase and flooding, the main uncertainty is the time, location, and extent to which infrastructure service level thresholds will be breached.<br><br>The quantum of central government support may also vary due to the bespoke funding opportunities that emerge following events. For example, if an adaptation plan does not exist where an event occurs, funding may be withheld.<br><br>**Internal report –** WRC Climate change hazards in the Waikato region. | Natural hazards and disasters are felt with more severity and/or occur more frequently than predicted. | The potential effect of a natural disaster event is dependent upon the scale, duration, and location of the event. Multiple disasters occurring in a short space of time (or a single event that affects multiple parts of the region) may test the council's capacity to respond.<br><br>Compounding events may impact service level thresholds, affecting road access, pump stations, stop banks, response capacity and insurance availability.<br><br>Building increased resilience into infrastructure could also increase capital costs.<br><br>There may also be greater expectations from the community to effectively manage natural resources, with greater reputational risks if levels of service are impacted.<br><br>Council is not rating sufficiently to replenish Disaster Reserve Funds.<br><br>Natural hazard events may also increase insurance costs, affect the availability of cover and require additional investment in resilience, asset relocation or adaptation measures. These costs may place further pressure on future funding requirements and affordability. | High | The Infrastructure Strategy, asset management planning, emergency management arrangements and resilience planning all consider the implications of natural hazards when assessing future investment needs and service delivery requirements.<br><br>The Financial Strategy review will also consider the role of reserves, insurance arrangements and other funding mechanisms in supporting recovery from significant events and maintaining long-term financial resilience.<br><br>Business continuity planning is undertaken so that the council can continue to perform the functions needed when adverse effects happen.<br><br>Council will also continue to work with CDEM and territorial authorities to support regional resilience and emergency preparedness.<br><br>Council regularly reviews insurance arrangements, disaster recovery funding and long-term resilience planning to ensure financial exposure to natural hazard risks remains understood and manageable. Council is also reviewing funding of critical infrastructure. | This combines financial and non-financial assumptions from the 2024 LTP. The assumption has expanded from hazard response to resilience planning, disaster reserve funding, insurance retreat, asset resilience, service continuity and affordability. Stronger focus on compounding events and long-term financial exposure.<br><br>In 2024:<br>• The uncertainty level for the non-financial element was moderate.<br>• The uncertainty level for the financial element was low in the short-term and moderate in the long term, with low financial materiality in the short-term and medium financial materiality in the long-term.<br>• Recent weather events have also increased focus on the adequacy and sustainability of long-term recovery and funding arrangements. |

**2. Growth, Communities and Regional Development**

These assumptions influence future demand, prosperity, community expectations and outcomes, growth patterns and affordability.

- Community Expectations
- Economic Growth
- Employment Growth
- Iwi and Hapū Participation
- Population Growth
- Treaty Settlement Implementation and Statutory Partnerships.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| **Community Expectations**<br><br>It is expected that there will be increasing demands from communities to participate at all stages of local decision-making processes in ways that suit their interests and needs<br><br>Challenges will increase with social engagement and misinformation, with the increased use and influence of algorithms on social media sites impacting the type of information that users are most likely to see and engage with. | **Moderate** | It is assumed that public interest in the council's activities will increase with central government placing greater focus on rates reduction and local government reform.<br><br>Uncertainty is linked to both potential population and demographic changes and the unknown impact of disruptive technologies.<br><br>**Source:** Waikato Region Trends and Opportunities | That the level of interest in local government activities increase more than expected, or misinformation spreads quickly across social media on key consultation topics. | With increased expectations for co-design and community involvement may require additional engagement, communications and staff resources.<br><br>This could increase operating costs, extend project and decision-making timeframes, and affect the delivery of planned work programmes and statutory processes. | Medium | Policies such as the Significance and Engagement Policy are reviewed every three years as community expectations and preferences evolve.<br><br>Council considers engagement requirements through its planning and budgeting processes and reviews resourcing levels as community expectations and participation approaches evolve. | This was a non-financial assumption in the previous LTP, and the level of uncertainty has changed from Low to Moderate.<br><br>In 2024 the focus was public participation. The 2027 draft adds misinformation, algorithms, social media influence, co-design expectations and engagement resourcing pressures. Uncertainty has increased from Low to Moderate. |
| **Economic Growth**<br><br>Economic growth is expected to remain moderate, with growth outcomes varying across sectors and regions. | **Moderate** | Global economic conditions remain heavily defined by uncertainty due to rising trade tensions, geopolitical instability and demographic changes.<br><br>Escalating costs, exacerbated by supply chain issues may impact business margins and constrain investment decisions. A monetary policy response that sees interest rates rising will further compound this risk.<br><br>Extreme weather events and climate shocks could significantly impact sectors such as agriculture.<br><br>**Report:** Waikato Region Trends and Opportunities | That regional economic conditions significantly shift due to climate, geopolitical, policy and other exogenous factors. | Different levels of service may be required if there are significant changes in economic activity across the region.<br><br>Economic downturns, high inflation or recessionary conditions may increase affordability pressures for ratepayers and reduce demand in parts of the regional economy.<br><br>Weaker economic conditions may also affect Council revenue through lower investment returns, increased pressure to limit rates increases and changing demand for Council services.<br><br>Depending on the scale and duration of economic change, Council may need to reprioritise expenditure, adjust investment plans or review funding priorities. | Medium | Council reviews economic indicators, inflation, employment trends and broader market conditions as part of its ongoing planning and forecasting processes and adjusts priorities where appropriate to maintain long-term financial sustainability.<br><br>Financial forecasts, funding requirements and investment priorities are reviewed regularly to ensure Council can respond to changing economic conditions while maintaining long-term financial sustainability. | The economic assumption in the 2024-2034 LTP have been separated into distinct GDP, labour market, inflation and interest rate assumptions to better reflect the different factors influencing Council's operating environment.<br><br>Economic outlook has shifted from post-COVID inflation and recession concerns towards global economic uncertainty, geopolitical instability, climate impacts on productive sectors and uneven regional growth patterns. |

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| **Employment Growth**<br><br>The region's labour force will continue to grow (as the population increases) but employment growth may be more limited. | **Moderate** | Even if the working age population continues to increase as expected, weak economic activity may mean employment growth does not keep up. This may see higher rates of underutilization and unemployment.<br><br>A weak labour market could see a fall in participation rates, resulting in a relatively static labour force even while the working age population grows.<br><br>**Source:** Waikato Region Trends and Opportunities | That employment growth is weak, and the unemployment rate increases more than expected. | There may be a higher level of service required by the council in response to higher unemployment, a greater proportion of the community living on fixed income, increased social inequalities in our communities, and changing employment and skill requirements.<br><br>Higher unemployment or weaker labour market conditions may also increase affordability pressures for households and businesses, reduce economic activity and influence demand for Council services.<br><br>Prolonged weakness in the labour market could influence regional economic activity, demand for Council services and the broader economic environment that supports regional growth. | Low | Labour market trends are considered alongside broader economic and demographic assumptions when preparing the Long Term Plan and Financial Strategy.<br><br>Information on labour force participation, employment and population growth helps inform assumptions about economic activity, community wellbeing and future demand for Council services. | New standalone assumption. Previously labour market matters were embedded within broader economic assumptions. Now explicitly addresses workforce participation, unemployment and social impacts.<br><br>Emerging trends indicate employment growth may not keep pace with population growth, while labour force participation rates may decline as the population ages. These changes have implications for regional economic performance, affordability and demand for Council services. |
| **Iwi and Hapū Participation**<br><br>It is assumed that iwi and hapū interest in Council activities, and expectations for meaningful engagement and participation in decision-making, will continue to increase. This is particularly likely for environmental management, natural resource use and places of cultural significance. Capacity to participate may remain constrained by competing priorities and multiple concurrent processes. | **Moderate** | Changing environmental priorities, community expectations, reform processes and increasing demand for iwi and hapū input create uncertainty about future engagement expectations, timing, participation methods and Council resourcing requirements.<br><br>**Source:** Waikato Region Trends and Opportunities | Council may be unable to meet increasing iwi and hapū expectations for engagement, relationship management and participation within existing timeframes and resources. | Increased demand for engagement and participation may require additional staff and resources.<br><br>Greater engagement and participation requirements may increase staff, relationship management and programme costs, and affect project timeframes, decision-making processes and work programme delivery.<br><br>Constraints on iwi and hapū capacity to participate across multiple processes may also affect the timing and delivery of Council work programmes. | Low | Council will continue to build staff capability, coordinate engagement across work programmes, and support relationship-based approaches with iwi and hapū.<br><br>Council to continue to take a coordinated approach to iwi engagement and relationship management, noting where iwi and hapū have finite capacity to engage across multiple processes.<br><br>Council will review funding and resourcing requirements through its planning processes to support effective iwi and hapū engagement and partnership outcomes. | This was a non-financial assumption in the previous LTP, and the level of uncertainty has not changed.<br><br>Similar core assumption, but now more clearly focused on broad iwi and hapū participation, relationship-based engagement, cultural values, environmental decision-making and capacity constraints.<br><br>References to Treaty settlement implementation, statutory partnerships and formal statutory obligations are now addressed more directly in the separate Treaty settlement assumption, reducing duplication between the two assumptions. |
| **Population Growth**<br><br>Population growth is expected to continue broadly in line with current projections, with growth remaining concentrated in key urban areas and growth corridors. | **Low** | Internal migration along the Auckland to Hamilton corridor is likely to increase due to Auckland house prices and industrial/commercial land costs, job opportunities, and the Waikato Expressway.<br><br>However, net migration may affect population distribution, along with the housing market and service pressures. | The errors in the growth assumptions are significant. | Changes in population may affect the demand for Council services, including transport, resource use, environmental management, civil defence and emergency management activities.<br><br>Growth in some areas may create demand for new or expanded services and infrastructure that was not anticipated when the Plan was prepared. Accommodating these changes, including the needs of an ageing population, may require additional resources and investment.<br><br>Population growth influences service demand, rating growth and infrastructure investment requirements. Significant variation from forecast growth levels, or growth occurring in different locations than anticipated, may affect future revenue, place pressure on operating and capital budgets, and influence infrastructure affordability. | Low | Population projections are used to inform rating growth and revenue forecasts within the Long Term Plan and Financial Strategy.<br><br>Regional spatial strategies will support regional planning decisions and infrastructure needs.<br><br>Council monitors population growth and development trends and reviews assumptions through its planning processes. | This was a non-financial assumption in the previous LTP, and the level of uncertainty has changed from Medium to Low.<br><br>This assumption remains largely the same but moves from a demographic planning issue to one with explicit links to infrastructure demand, rates growth and revenue forecasting.<br><br>Growth location is increasingly important in understanding future transport demand, infrastructure requirements, service delivery expectations and long-term affordability. |

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| **Treaty Settlement Implementation and Statutory Partnerships**<br><br>Treaty settlement obligations, statutory partnership arrangements, co-governance and related commitments will continue over the life of the Plan. Council assumes these commitments will be retained or given equivalent effect through resource management reform, and that any future local government reorganisation will provide for successor organisations to uphold them. Some settlement mechanisms and partnership arrangements may need to be reviewed or transitioned as legislative and governance settings change. | High | Resource management and local government reform create uncertainty about how Treaty settlement commitments, statutory mechanisms, co-governance arrangements and partnership responsibilities will operate in future legislative and governance settings. While Government has signalled these commitments will continue to be recognised, the form of that recognition, transition requirements and responsibilities of any successor organisations remain uncertain. | Council or any successor organisation is not adequately prepared to transition Treaty settlement obligations into new legislative, planning or governance arrangements. | Transition and implementation requirements may require additional legal, policy, governance, engagement and organisational capability support. Unclear responsibilities during reform could affect planning processes, statutory decision-making, partnership initiatives, costs, timing and confidence that settlement commitments will continue to be upheld. | Medium | Council will maintain capability to support Treaty settlement implementation, statutory obligations, co-governance arrangements and strategic iwi partnerships. It will monitor resource management and local government reform, work with iwi authorities, statutory partners, local authorities and central government, and plan for transition requirements, governance continuity and capability transfer where institutional arrangements change. | New standalone assumption for the 2027-2037 LTP. Treaty settlement obligations were previously reflected mainly through broader iwi engagement assumptions. Resource management and local government reform have increased the need to plan for continuity of settlement outcomes, statutory arrangements, co-governance mechanisms and enduring partnerships through legislative and organisational change. |

**3. Legislative, Regulatory and Institutional Change**

These assumptions relate to external decision-making, such as future legislative change, governance reform, policy uncertainty and funding flexibility, that could fundamentally reshape Council's operating environment.

- Local Government Reform
- Rates Capping
- Resource Management Reform.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| **Local Government Reform**<br><br>While governance and delivery arrangements may change, Council's core functions and services are assumed to continue throughout the period covered by this Plan. | **High** | The government has announced Voluntary Head Start Pathway for councils willing to reorganise quickly and submit a proposal for a unitary authority. Regional councils can be involved in discussions but cannot submit a proposal. Three proposals have been submitted for the Waikato region, but it remains uncertain as to whether any will proceed further.<br><br>A backstop process will be used for regions that do not progress through these pathways with an interim body to be formed in 2028 to govern regional councils and develop the plan for regional reorganization.<br><br>There is also a general election in 2026 which could result in policy shifts and changes to this proposal.<br><br>**Central government direction:** Simplifying Local Government - dia.govt.nz | Council is not adequately prepared to transition into a new arrangement. | The delivery of Council's services may be significantly altered following implementation of Head Start proposals or regional organisational plans, and rates capping mechanisms.<br><br>The governance structure of the council may change, and legislative and priority changes could affect the way we manage land, the allocation of water, the management of key infrastructure, the way we prioritise transport planning and provision (or the cost of providing Council's services).<br><br>The financial implications of local government reform cannot be quantified until the final model is known.<br><br>However, Council may incur costs associated with interim governance arrangements, organisational change, system integration, asset and service transfers, and changes to funding arrangements.<br><br>These activities could result in additional operating expenditure, capital investment requirements and implementation costs that are not currently reflected in the Plan. It could also create difficulties in attracting and retaining the staff needed to deliver functions, with the level of uncertainty as a result local government reform. | Medium | Council monitors local government reform developments and will assess the financial, governance and organisational implications as further information becomes available.<br><br>Funding requirements will be incorporated into future planning and budgeting processes where necessary and able to be reasonably quantified.<br><br>Where these are unable to be planned for, it is assumed that organisation savings will be made available through the reprioritisation of planned work where required. Projects may be reprioritised if staffing levels are significantly impacted. | This was a non-financial assumption in the previous LTP, and the level of uncertainty has not changed.<br><br>In 2024 local government reform was speculative and is now more certain, aligned to current reform proposals and rates capping.<br><br>It is likely that this assumption will need to be revisited and updated throughout the process of LTP development. |
| **Rates capping**<br><br>**It is assumed that any future rates-capping framework will not materially constrain Council's ability to implement the funding and financing assumptions included in this Plan.**<br><br>Central government has signalled its intention to introduce a rate capping framework over the 2027-37 LTP period, with current proposals indicating limits on annual rates increases, potentially in the range of 2-4 percent, and implementation expected from around 2027. | Moderate | The Government has signalled its intention to introduce a rates-capping framework during the period covered by this Plan. However, the detailed design, implementation approach, exemptions and enforcement mechanisms remain uncertain.<br><br>There is also uncertainty regarding the extent to which flood protection, emergency management, growth-related expenditure and other regionally significant investments may be exempt from any future framework.<br><br>The interaction between any rates cap, inflation, population growth, climate resilience requirements and existing statutory obligations is not yet known. | A rates-capping framework is introduced that limits Council's ability to increase rates in line with the assumptions contained in this Plan | Even if some activities are excluded from a future rates-capping framework, affordability pressures are expected to remain significant, with many core Council activities and funding requirements continuing to rely on rates revenue.<br><br>If a rates-capping framework is introduced as currently proposed, Council may have reduced flexibility to respond to inflationary pressures, invest in critical infrastructure, fund service improvements or respond to unforeseen events.<br><br>Even if some activities, such as flood protection, are exempted from the rates cap as advocated for by the regional sector, affordability pressures on ratepayers are expected to remain and may affect Council's ability to recover | Low | Council has developed this Plan with a strong focus on affordability, financial sustainability and prudent stewardship of community/regional resources.<br><br>Rates-capping has been considered as part of the development of the LTP, Financial Strategy and funding review.<br><br>Through annual planning processes, Council will continue to review expenditure, prioritise investment, identify efficiency opportunities and consider alternative funding sources where appropriate, or review service levels to maintain financial sustainability. | Entirely new assumption reflecting central government policy proposals and the potential impact on affordability, investment and service levels.<br><br>The potential for externally imposed limits on rates increases has elevated the importance of affordability, prioritisation, funding flexibility and levels of service discussions within the development of the 2027 LTP. |

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| | | | | costs, fund new initiatives or increase service levels. | | Council's funding and financing decisions will continue to balance affordability considerations with the need to deliver Council's strategic priorities, maintain critical flood protection infrastructure, environmental outcomes, public transport services and community resilience. | |
| **Resource Management Reform**<br><br>The Resource Management Act 1991 will be replaced requiring reprioritisation of council activities and transition costs. | Low | The government is replacing the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) with two separate bills – the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill. However, these have not yet been passed into law.<br><br>The timing, final content and implementation requirements remain uncertain.<br><br>The new legislation may also be subject to legal interpretation and challenge.<br><br>The proposed legislation could also change following the general election in 2026.<br><br>**Central government direction:** Resource management reforms \| Ministry for the Environment | That transition timeframes are shorter than expected. That legislation gets repeatedly amended or repealed | Current plans and work programmes may need to change or be delayed in response to the new legislation and implementation timeframes. This may require additional operating expenditure, project reprioritisation and transitional resourcing. If Council develops policies or plans that do not align with legislative requirements, it may incur additional costs to amend planning documents, respond to legal challenges, address compliance issues or implement corrective actions. This may also result in reputational impacts and delays to planned work programmes.<br><br>More complex implementation requirements may increase expenditure on staff training, system changes, policy development, legal advice and programme delivery. | Medium | Council's planning and budgeting processes allow for legislative change to be reflected in future priorities, resourcing requirements and programme delivery as further information becomes available. However, due to the level of uncertainty costs estimates will likely need to be regularly reviewed as the programme of work crystalises.<br><br>Council actively monitors legislative developments and implementation guidance and will adjust work programmes, resources and funding as further information becomes available.<br><br>Staff training, policy updates and system changes will be implemented as required to support a successful transition. | New assumption for 2027. Resource management reform now treated as a standalone assumption rather than part of general legislative uncertainty. Greater focus on transition costs, implementation requirements / pressures, organisational readiness and the reprioritisation of Council activities and resources. |

**4. Infrastructure, Assets and Service Delivery**

These assumptions underpin infrastructure planning and sustainability, asset stewardship, affordability, and delivery capability.

- Asset Renewal Funding
- Asset Useful Lives
- Asset Valuations and Depreciation Funding
- Capital Programme Delivery.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| **Asset Renewal Funding**<br><br>Funding and financing will remain available to support the renewal and replacement of significant assets | Moderate | The availability and affordability of funding and financing is influenced by inflation, interest rates, economic conditions, legislative change, debt market conditions and Council's future borrowing capacity.<br><br>Climate change, severe weather events and evolving community expectations may also increase the scale and timing of future infrastructure investment requirements.<br><br>Actual renewal costs may differ from those forecast due to changes in asset condition, construction costs, regulatory requirements or service expectations. | Council is unable to access sufficient funding or financing to renew and replace significant assets when required. | Council's Financial Strategy assumes sufficient funding and financing will remain available to support the renewal and replacement of significant assets over the life of the Plan. However, the timing and cost of renewal expenditure remain uncertain.<br><br>Inflation, asset condition changes, climate resilience requirements and increasing construction costs may increase future funding needs beyond current forecasts. If sufficient funding or financing is unavailable, Council may need to defer renewals, reprioritise capital programmes, increase borrowing, review service levels or seek alternative funding sources.<br><br>While short-term deferral of some renewal expenditure may help manage affordability pressures, sustained underinvestment can increase whole-of-life asset costs, reduce resilience and limit future service delivery options.<br><br>Where investment trade-offs are required, critical flood protection and lifeline infrastructure would be prioritised. | Low | Funding and financing considerations are reflected in the Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy, Revenue and Financing Policy and asset management planning processes.<br><br>Asset condition, renewal requirements and funding needs are regularly reviewed through asset management planning, annual budgeting and long-term planning processes.<br><br>Council actively manages its borrowing capacity, reserves and insurance arrangements to maintain financial resilience and flexibility.<br><br>Investment decisions are prioritised based on risk, asset criticality, service delivery requirements and community outcomes, with particular emphasis on maintaining flood protection and other critical infrastructure. | Same core assumption but significantly expanded. Greater focus on resilience investment, infrastructure affordability, asset sustainability and the long-term funding implications of renewal and replacement programmes.<br><br>The level of uncertainty has not changed. Financial materiality has shifted from Low to High. |
| **Asset Useful Lives**<br><br>Useful lives of significant assets will broadly align with current asset management and engineering assessments.<br><br>Council assumes that the useful lives of assets and depreciation funding levels used in the 2027-37 LTP reflect the expected life cycle of assets.<br><br>Asset useful lives are reviewed and updated through cyclical asset revaluations and asset condition assessments. In general, asset renewals are funded from depreciation, with borrowing used where renewal costs exceed accumulated depreciation funding | Low | Actual asset performance may differ from expected useful lives due to asset condition, environmental factors, demand pressures, technological change, or changes in regulatory standards. Cost escalation and inflation may also affect the cost of asset renewal. | That the actual life of an asset is shorter than assumed. This may impact on the level of depreciation expense recognised, the asset maintenance work required, and the timing of any asset replacement. | Council's flood protection infrastructure represents its most significant asset base. Asset useful lives are assessed through the 2025/26 revaluation process and reviewed following major capital investment or changes in asset condition.<br><br>However, climate change, environmental factors, technological developments and changing service expectations may affect asset performance and useful lives over time.<br><br>If assets deteriorate faster than expected, or renewal costs exceed forecasts, Council may need to increase maintenance, bring forward renewals or increase capital investment, placing pressure on operating budgets, borrowing and planned capital programmes. Conversely, if assets perform better than expected, renewal expenditure may be deferred, reducing short-term funding requirements. | Low | Useful life assumptions are reflected in Council's asset management planning, Infrastructure Strategy, asset valuations and long-term financial forecasts.<br><br>Asset condition, performance, renewal requirements and expected service life are assessed through regular condition assessments, engineering reviews and periodic asset revaluations. | Same assumption but stronger focus on climate resilience, deferred renewals, infrastructure performance and whole-of-life asset costs.<br><br>Asset condition information, revaluation outcomes and infrastructure planning work have improved Council's understanding of future renewal requirements and the potential impacts of asset performance on affordability and service delivery.<br><br>Materiality increases from Low to High. The level of uncertainty has not changed. Financial materiality has shifted from Low to High. |

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| | | | | While short-term deferral of renewals may assist with affordability pressures, sustained deferral can increase whole-of-life asset costs, increase asset risk and reduce future financial flexibility. | | | |
| **Asset Valuations and depreciation funding**<br><br>Infrastructure asset valuations will remain broadly consistent with forecast movements over the life of the Plan<br><br>Council's infrastructure assets are revalued on a cyclical basis, with the most recent valuation completed in 2025/26. Future asset values have been forecast using projected price change factors provided by Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL). | Moderate | Asset values are influenced by changes in construction costs, labour costs, material prices, market conditions, technological change and regulatory requirements.<br><br>Actual movements in replacement costs and depreciation may differ from forecast price indices used in the Plan. | Actual asset valuation movements and depreciation expense differ significantly from those forecast in the Plan. | Council infrastructure assets are periodically revalued to reflect current replacement costs, with future values forecast using the best information available at the time the Plan was prepared.<br><br>If replacement costs increase faster than forecast, asset values and depreciation expenses may rise above expectations, increasing the funding required to maintain, renew and replace infrastructure assets. This may place additional pressure on future funding requirements, infrastructure affordability and rates decisions.<br><br>Conversely, if replacement costs increase more slowly than forecast, future asset values, depreciation expenses and funding requirements may be lower than anticipated.<br><br>While valuation and depreciation changes do not immediately impact cashflows, they are an important indicator of the future cost of maintaining infrastructure.<br><br>Material valuation or depreciation changes may therefore influence future funding needs, financial strategy decisions, investment priorities, affordability and service delivery. | Medium | Council undertakes regular asset revaluations in accordance with accounting standards and industry good practice.<br><br>Asset values, depreciation forecasts and renewal funding requirements are reviewed through asset management planning, annual planning and long-term planning processes.<br><br>Council considers the affordability implications of valuation and depreciation movements alongside asset condition, service levels and long-term infrastructure resilience when making funding decisions | Similar assumption but now explicitly links valuation movements to depreciation, affordability, renewal funding and investment decisions. Materiality increases from Medium to High. |
| **Capital Programme Delivery**<br><br>Capital delivery programmes will be delivered broadly in accordance with approved budgets, timeframes and programme priorities.<br><br>Council has assumed that capital projects included in the Plan will be delivered broadly in accordance with approved budgets, timeframes and programme priorities. | High | Delivery of Council's capital programme is subject to uncertainty over the life of the Plan, including construction cost pressures, contractor availability, supply chain constraints, weather events, land acquisition requirements, regulatory approvals and changing asset priorities, third party funding priorities.<br><br>Project delivery may also be affected by organisational capacity, competing investment demands and changing community or legislative requirements.<br><br>As a result, actual costs, timing and delivery outcomes may differ from those assumed when the Plan was prepared. | Council is unable to deliver the capital programme as planned. | Council's capital programme has been developed based on current asset management plans, infrastructure priorities and the best information available at the time this Plan was prepared.<br><br>Delivery remains subject to factors outside Council's control, including market conditions, contractor availability, weather events and changing project requirements.<br><br>If projects are delayed, reprioritised or unable to be delivered as planned, expenditure and borrowing requirements may occur later than forecast. While this may reduce short-term funding requirements, delays to renewal and resilience projects may increase future costs, extend asset risks and reduce Council's ability to deliver planned levels of service.<br><br>Deferred investment may also increase future affordability pressures as projects | Low | Council actively monitors the delivery of its capital programme and regularly reviews project scope, timing, cost and priority through asset management, budget and governance processes.<br><br>Capital programmes may be reprioritised where changing circumstances, emerging risks or funding constraints require resources to be redirected.<br><br>Council recognises that short-term deferral of capital expenditure may assist in managing affordability pressures. However, sustained deferral can increase whole-of-life costs, reduce resilience and limit future service delivery options.<br><br>Critical flood protection and lifeline infrastructure will continue to be | Similar assumption but considerably expanded. Greater focus on contractor capacity, supply chains, weather events, organisational capability and affordability trade-offs – mitigated by the availability of third party funding.<br><br>Capital programme delivery is now treated as a more significant planning assumption due to its influence on infrastructure outcomes, borrowing requirements and long-term service delivery. |

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| | | | | become more expensive to deliver over time. Significant events, such as natural disasters or major infrastructure failures, may require Council to redirect resources towards critical flood protection and lifeline infrastructure. | | prioritised to maintain community resilience and service continuity. | |

**5. Transport and Mobility**

These assumptions focus on transport affordability, service delivery, and have a dependence on external funding.

- NZTA Funding (with Public Transport, Te Huia rail service and Low cost low risk bus trials as subcomponents)
- Public Transport Patronage.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NZTA funding**<br><br>NZTA funding assistance will remain broadly consistent with current funding approvals and policy settings<br><br>Council has assumed that NZTA funding assistance will continue to be available for approved transport activities in accordance with the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP), approved funding assistance rates and current policy settings.<br><br>Funding assumptions reflect information available at the time the Plan was prepared. | High | As per the Land Transport Management Act, NZTA funding assistance is required to align with Government priorities, National Land Transport Programme decisions, funding availability, policy changes and future transport investment priorities.<br><br>The level of future support for public transport services, rail initiatives and discretionary transport programmes remains uncertain beyond currently approved funding periods.<br><br>Changes to funding assistance rates, eligibility criteria or programme priorities may affect the level of external funding available to Council. | NZTA funding assistance is lower than assumed or unavailable for planned transport activities. | Council and councils across the region rely on NZTA funding to support a range of transport activities, including public transport services, rail initiatives and transport infrastructure programmes.<br><br>If NZTA funding assistance is lower than assumed, Council may need to increase its share of funding, reprioritise transport investment, defer projects, reduce service levels or seek alternative funding sources.<br><br>Reduced external funding may also reduce the scale of the region's transport programme and for WRC limit Council's ability to deliver transport outcomes while maintaining affordability for ratepayers. | High | On behalf of the region, Council actively engages with central government and NZTA and participates in National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) development processes to advocate for regional transport priorities.<br><br>Transport programmes are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain aligned with available funding and strategic priorities.<br><br>Council considers alternative funding options, programme reprioritisation and service delivery adjustments where external funding assumptions change.<br><br>Future transport investment decisions will continue to balance service delivery objectives, affordability considerations and long-term financial sustainability. | Same assumption with clearer treatment of NLTP decisions, programme funding risk, transport affordability and reliance on external funding.<br><br>In light of the central government direction set out in the 2024 GPS Transport, greater consideration is also being given to the implications of reduced funding assistance rates, changes in programme eligibility and the potential affordability impacts on ratepayers and transport users.<br><br>Initiatives such as regional private share targets are likely to continue. |
| Public transport | Moderate for years 1-3<br>High for years 4-10 | | | Public transport services are particularly sensitive to changes in funding assistance rates, as NZTA currently funds a significant proportion of operating costs.<br>Reduced funding may place additional pressure on rates, fares, service levels would have to be rationalised or reduced. | | Council regularly monitors NZTA funding decisions, patronage trends, fare revenue and service performance to ensure public transport services remain aligned with available funding and customer demand.<br><br>Public transport funding assumptions are reviewed through annual planning and budgeting processes, with service levels and network planning adjusted where appropriate. | The level of uncertainty and financial materiality have not changed. |
| Te Huia rail service | High | Te Huia is currently in a trial phase, and future funding is dependent on decisions regarding continuation.<br><br>If the service transitions to a permanent model, the funding profile is likely to be staged:<br><br>• Short term (1–3 years): continuation with limited capital investment<br>• Medium to longer term: dependent on rolling stock availability, service frequency improvements, and wider investment decisions | NZTA does not approve subsidy funding for the future of the passenger rail service or does so at a Financial Assistance Rate not supported by Council. | Funding support for initiatives such as Te Huia and Low Cost Low Risk programmes remains subject to future NZTA decisions.<br><br>Changes to funding arrangements may affect the affordability, timing or scope of these activities. | | Council continues to work collaboratively with central government, NZTA, Auckland Transport, KiwiRail and territorial authorities to support the long-term viability of Te Huia.<br><br>Funding arrangements, patronage trends and service performance are regularly monitored to inform future investment decisions.<br><br>Should funding assumptions change, Council will assess alternative funding options, service delivery models and | The level of uncertainty and financial materiality have not changed. |

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| | | | | | | affordability impacts before making decisions on the future of the service. | |
| Low cost low risk – bus trials | High | This is a discretionary funding source for NZTA, under increasing pressure due to uplifts in the costs of other activities.<br><br>In addition, the fund is always oversubscribed nationally so the chance of funding being approved is low. | | Local share could be confirmed via the Long Term Plan before NZTA share is confirmed. This results in a potential mismatch requiring Annual Plan adjustments annually (as was seen between 2024 and 2027). | | Council actively engages with NZTA during funding rounds to advocate for projects that support regional transport outcomes.<br><br>Project priorities are reviewed regularly and may be reprioritised where funding levels differ from those assumed in the Plan.<br><br>Investment decisions will continue to balance transport benefits, affordability considerations and available funding. | The level of uncertainty and financial materiality have not changed. |
| **Public Transport Patronage**<br><br>Public transport patronage and fare revenue will broadly align with forecast levels<br><br>Council has assumed that public transport patronage and fare revenue will broadly align with forecast levels over the life of the Plan.<br><br>Patronage forecasts reflect current travel patterns, population growth assumptions and planned service levels. | Moderate | Public transport patronage is influenced by population growth, the economic cycle, employment patterns, fuel prices, service reliability, fare levels, customer preferences and broader economic conditions.<br><br>Changes in travel behaviour, including ongoing flexible working arrangements, may affect future patronage levels.<br><br>There is also a strong interdependency between:<br>• NZTA funding<br>• fare revenue<br>• service levels<br><br>Reduced funding combined with lower-than-forecast patronage would compound affordability pressures for public transport services, including Te Huia. | Public transport patronage and fare revenue are lower than forecast. | Public transport patronage has recovered strongly following the impacts of COVID-19 and continues to be supported by population growth, service improvements and changing travel behaviours.<br><br>More recently, increases in fuel prices and broader cost-of-living pressures have contributed to increased demand for public transport as households seek lower-cost transport alternatives.<br><br>However, NZTA funding decisions in 2024 resulted in no investment for new or enhanced services between 2024 to 2027, resulting in a reduction in patronage growth. Future patronage remains sensitive to economic conditions, customer demand and service reliability.<br><br>In addition, required annual increases to fare levels to achieve NZTA private share targets and increase revenue will also increase passenger sensitivity to cost.<br><br>Lower-than-forecast patronage over time may reduce fare revenue and increase reliance on rates, external funding or other revenue sources, while higher patronage may support future investment in public transport services. | Low | Council regularly monitors patronage trends, fare revenue recovery and service performance to ensure public transport services remain aligned with customer demand and community needs.<br><br>Patronage and revenue forecasts are reviewed through annual planning and budgeting processes, with service levels and network planning adjusted where appropriate.<br><br>Council continues to work with NZTA and public transport operators to improve service reliability, customer experience and network efficiency.<br><br>Future public transport investment and service decisions will balance patronage outcomes, affordability considerations, funding availability and long-term transport objectives. | Expanded significantly. Recognises the interaction between patronage, fare revenue and NZTA funding. The level of uncertainty has changed from Low to Moderate, and Materiality rises from Low to High.<br><br>Greater emphasis is now being placed on the affordability of public transport services and the interaction between patronage growth, fare revenue, rates funding and external funding assistance. |

**6. Financial Sustainability and Affordability**

The assumptions that underpin the Financial Strategy, considering affordability, financial resilience, funding capacity and long-term sustainability.

- Inflation and Cost Escalation
- Interest Rates and Borrowing Costs
- Investment Fund Returns.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| **Inflation and Cost Escalation**<br><br>**Inflationary pressures will continue to drive cost escalation across Council activities**<br><br>Council has assumed that inflation will continue to affect the cost of delivering services, maintaining assets and undertaking capital projects throughout the period covered by this Plan. Inflation forecasts provided by Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL), including the Local Government Cost Index, have been used to estimate future operating and capital expenditure applied (see table on page 13).<br><br>Council has assumed fuel and energy costs will also be a contributor to cost uncertainty and will generally align with available market forecasts when preparing this Plan. | Moderate | Inflation is influenced by factors outside Council's control, including global economic conditions, supply chain disruptions, energy costs, labour market pressures, exchange rate movements and domestic monetary policy settings. Actual inflation outcomes may differ from current economic forecasts over the life of the Plan. | Actual price changes / costs vary significantly from the levels assumed in the Plan. | At the time of preparing this Plan, inflationary pressures remain a source of uncertainty, although current economic forecasts indicate inflation is moderating. The BERL indices used in preparing the Plan reflect the best information available at the time, but actual inflation outcomes may differ from those forecast in any year of the Plan.<br><br>Higher-than-forecast inflation would increase the cost of delivering key services including maintaining flood protection and river management assets, undertaking environmental programmes and delivering capital projects.<br><br>Depending on the scale and duration of any increase, this could result in increased operating expenditure, higher borrowing requirements, reprioritisation of planned activities, delays to projects or reduced levels of service.<br><br>Lower-than-forecast inflation could reduce expenditure requirements and improve financial capacity.<br><br>Cost increases experienced by contractors and suppliers may also flow through into contract pricing and project delivery costs. | Medium | Inflation assumptions are incorporated into the Long Term Plan, Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy and supporting financial forecasts.<br><br>Independent economic forecasts and sector-specific cost indices have been used to estimate future operating and capital expenditure requirements over the life of the Plan.<br><br>Inflation and cost assumptions will be reviewed regularly through annual planning and budget processes, with significant cost pressures monitored and incorporated into future forecasts as better information becomes available.<br><br>Inflationary pressures are considered when setting budgets, funding requirements and capital programme delivery. | Same underlying assumption but expanded. Stronger focus on affordability, service delivery, capital projects and financial sustainability. The level of uncertainty has not changed.<br><br>Assumptions about fuel and energy costs reflect increased concern about geopolitical risk, supply chain disruption, energy security concerns, and global market volatility, which have increased the importance of fuel and energy prices as distinct cost drivers. |
| **Interest Rates and Borrowing Costs**<br><br>Expected interest rates on borrowing will broadly align with current market forecasts<br><br>Council has obtained external advice on the expected cost of borrowing over the period covered by this Plan. Based on this advice, the average borrowing rate applied is 5.41% per annum over the 10-year period.<br><br>Council primarily accesses borrowing through the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA). | Moderate | Interest rates are influenced by inflation, monetary policy settings, economic growth, debt market conditions and global economic events.<br><br>Actual borrowing costs may differ from forecast levels as market conditions change over the life of the Plan. | That interest rates will vary from those forecast. | Interest rate assumptions have been based on external advice, however, future borrowing costs remain subject to market conditions that are difficult to predict with certainty.<br><br>Higher-than-forecast borrowing and associated interest costs would increase debt servicing costs and place additional pressure on operating budgets, rates requirements and the affordability of planned capital investment. As debt servicing costs are a fixed obligation, higher borrowing costs may reduce Council's financial flexibility and the funding available for service delivery, asset renewals and new investment.<br><br>If a rates capping framework is introduced, higher debt servicing costs may further constrain Council's ability to respond to cost pressures or fund planned investment.<br><br>Conversely, lower-than-forecast borrowing costs may reduce debt | Low | Council obtains independent treasury advice and regularly reviews borrowing assumptions as part of its annual planning and long-term planning processes.<br><br>Borrowing is managed in accordance with Council's Treasury Management Policy and Financial Strategy, with debt levels maintained within prudential limits and borrowing requirements actively monitored.<br><br>Council regularly reviews the affordability and delivery of its capital programme, funding requirements and debt servicing costs to ensure planned investment remains financially sustainable.<br><br>Where necessary, Council may adjust the timing of capital expenditure, seek alternative funding sources or | Similar assumption but stronger focus on debt servicing costs, affordability, capital programme impacts and interaction with rates capping. Materiality decreased from Medium to Low.<br><br>The level of uncertainty has not changed. |

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| | | | | servicing costs and improve financial flexibility. | | reprioritise investment to maintain financial flexibility and respond to changing economic conditions. | |
| **Investment Fund Returns**<br><br>Forecast investment returns will align with long-term market expectations<br><br>Council's investment fund return assumptions are based on a long-term real return of 4.9% per annum on the capital value of the fund, after inflation and fees.<br><br>A provision of 2.6% per annum has been made for inflation. | Moderate | Investment returns are influenced by market performance, inflation, interest rates, geopolitical events, economic conditions and currency movements.<br><br>Actual returns may differ from long-term assumptions, particularly over shorter time periods. | Actual investment returns are lower than those assumed in the Plan. | Council's investment fund is invested in a diversified portfolio designed to achieve long-term returns while managing risk.<br><br>The investment return assumptions used in this Plan reflect long-term market expectations; however, actual returns will vary from year to year and may differ materially from those assumed.<br><br>The investment equalisation reserve provides a mechanism to smooth the impact of short-term market volatility. However, sustained periods of underperformance may reduce the reserve balance and limit Council's ability to maintain planned distributions from the fund. | Low | Council's investment fund is managed in accordance with its Investment Policy and Strategy and is invested across a diversified portfolio of asset classes.<br><br>Independent investment managers are engaged to manage the fund, and performance is monitored regularly by Council's investment adviser against agreed benchmarks and long-term objectives.<br><br>Council maintains an investment equalisation reserve to help manage short-term market volatility and support stable funding distributions over time.<br><br>The investment strategy and asset allocation are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain aligned with Council's risk appetite and long-term funding objectives. | Core assumption unchanged. |

**7. Technology and Organisational Capability**

Assumptions relating to organisational adaptability and resilience, potential disruptions, and the future operating environment.

- Artificial Intelligence
- Cyber Security
- Organisational Resilience and Adaptability.

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Artificial Intelligence**<br><br>AI and automation are expected to increasingly influence productivity, customer channels, cyber risk, workforce capability, procurement, data governance and decision-making over the life of the LTP. | **High** | The speed of AI adoption will be influenced by technological change, and reallocation of resources across service and sectors.<br><br>If the US/Israel war continues, then exports for things like fossil fuels for electricity generation, helium, and naphtha may be a handbrake on chip manufacturing, which may in turn slow down AI.<br><br>The risk of a significant adjustment in the valuation of some of the major AI companies and the sustainability of current levels of investment may also create future uncertainty. | New technology occurs that fundamentally disrupts local government at a pace or scale that overwhelms the sector's ability to adapt. | There could be wide and varied impacts on the council and the Waikato regional community depending on the nature of the disruption, including improved efficiencies.<br><br>There may be more innovative and participatory democracy processes available to be used, such as citizen assemblies and AI may enable a greater understanding of Council's roles and responsibilities.<br><br>AI and automation may create opportunities to improve productivity, service delivery and decision-making. However, Council may also need to invest in technology, cyber security, data governance, workforce capability and system upgrades to realise these benefits and manage emerging risks.<br><br>The pace of technological change may require reprioritisation of investment programmes and could influence future operating costs, capital expenditure and service delivery models. | Medium | Council is considering the implications of AI and emerging technologies through its digital, information management, cyber security and workforce planning activities.<br><br>Technology investment decisions, operating models, governance arrangements and workforce capability planning will continue to be reviewed as the opportunities and risks associated with AI become clearer.<br><br>Council has had a deliberate strategy of partnering with key organisations that will progress availability of AI within our existing core enterprise solutions, minimising the risk of additional, separate and potentially misaligned investment.<br><br>In addition to the technology investment, there are likely to be costs associated with the workforce capability shifts required to be able to leverage advancements. | New assumption for 2027, with Technology previously bundled into a generic disruptive technology assumption.<br><br>Rapid advancements in artificial intelligence have increased the potential for technology to influence productivity, service delivery, customer engagement, decision-making, workforce capability and organisational governance.<br><br>AI is now being treated as a distinct strategic planning consideration due to the scale of potential opportunities, investment requirements and associated risks. |
| **Cyber security**<br><br>Cyber security threats are expected to continue increasing in frequency, sophistication and potential impact over the life of the LTP. | **High** | New technology is fundamentally disrupting processes, but the pace and impact of change is uncertain, including the technology available to prevent cyber security threats. | The cybersecurity challenges occur at a pace and speed that overwhelms council processes. | Cybersecurity challenges at a pace and speed that overwhelms council processes, could result in privacy breaches and risks to ratepayer information.<br><br>This could have both a reputational and legal impact on Council.<br><br>Significant cyber incidents could require unplanned expenditure on incident response, system recovery, specialist support, legal advice and enhanced security controls. This may increase operating costs, impact service delivery and require reprioritisation of planned expenditure.<br><br>Increasing cyber threats may also require ongoing investment in technology, monitoring, staff capability and cyber resilience to maintain appropriate levels of protection.<br><br>Significant cyber incidents may also affect insurance costs, excess levels and the availability of cyber insurance cover. This could increase operating costs and require Council to retain a greater proportion of cyber-related risks. | Medium | Cyber security considerations are reflected in Council's technology planning, information management, digital service delivery and business continuity planning activities.<br><br>The LTP includes provision for ongoing investment in cyber resilience, technology capability and digital systems to support the secure delivery of Council services.<br><br>Cyber security requirements will continue to be considered through strategic planning, budgeting and technology investment decisions as threats, technologies and regulatory expectations evolve. | New assumption for 2027. Previously only implicitly included under technology. Now recognised as a strategic risk with direct financial, legal, operational and reputational consequences. |

| Assumption | Level of uncertainty: | Source of uncertainty: | Risk | Potential effect of uncertainty on financial estimates, service delivery and other matters | Financial Materiality | Planning response | What's changed since the last LTP |
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| **Organisational Resilience and adaptability**<br><br>Council will maintain sufficient organisational, financial and operational resilience and adaptability to continue delivering critical services during significant disruption events. | **Moderate** | Geopolitical conditions remain uncertain, with international rules-based order under significant stress, and many governments shifting focus towards national security and domestic priorities and international trade becoming more uncertain/less stable. | Multiple crises happen at the same time, like a series of weather disasters that damage infrastructure and cause issues with logistics and distribution of important goods and services, which could cascade into other problems like financial, economic, biosecurity risks or health crises. | Global crises affecting supply chains, fuel availability, financial markets or critical infrastructure and could increase operating costs, elevating bio security risk, delay projects and disrupt service delivery.<br><br>Recent experiences with pandemics have shown that if there was a need for widespread isolation, quarantine or complete lockdown, there would be an impact on public transport requirements, as well as other customer-facing, direct contact activities.<br><br>National or global economic downturns may affect council expenditure and funding, investment fund performance and Council revenue.<br><br>Depending on the scale and duration of an event, Council may need to reprioritise expenditure, defer planned activities or utilise reserves and borrowing capacity to maintain critical services. | Medium | Global disruptions and organisational resilience considerations are reflected in Council's Long Term Plan, Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy and emergency management planning.<br><br>Council considers the potential impacts of global events, supply chain disruptions, economic shocks, fuel availability, pandemics and other significant disruptions when assessing service delivery, infrastructure investment, business continuity and financial resilience.<br><br>Strategic planning and budgeting processes continue to consider the role of reserves, funding flexibility, prioritisation, insurance arrangements and borrowing capacity in supporting Council's ability to respond and adapt to significant disruption. | This was a non-financial assumption in the previous LTP, and the level of uncertainty has changed from Medium/High to High.<br><br>Similar assumption but updated from COVID-era thinking to a broader resilience lens including geopolitical conflict, supply chains, fuel security and concurrent crises.<br><br>Recent experience has also highlighted the importance of organisational resilience, business continuity, service continuity and financial flexibility when responding to significant disruptive events. |

# 2.4 WAIKARE-WHANGAMARINO ACTION FRAMEWORK: APPROVAL PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

**Rā | Date:** **8 September 2026**

**Kaituhi | Author:** **Mike Scarsbrook, Principal Technical Lead**

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** **Tracey May, Director, Science, Policy and Information**

## TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. Review feedback on the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Action Framework and identify options for Council to consider when making a final decision on releasing the Framework and moving to implementation planning.

## KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland are highly degraded and there is a common desire to implement actions to improve these waterbodies.
3. Over the last two and a half years, Waikato Regional Council has worked with a range of partners and stakeholders to develop the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Action Framework. The purpose of the Framework is to identify actions that, if implemented, are likely to improve the health and wellbeing of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland.
4. Twenty, high-level, actions have been identified in the Framework. They address the complex and inter-connected drivers of catchment degradation and have been grouped into three categories that reflect their scale of benefit and implementation challenges.
5. Following concerns expressed about the limited nature of catchment engagement, Council directed staff to undertake additional engagement events and to extend the feedback period. Three stakeholder events were held in August 2026, and the engagement period extended to receive feedback. The catchment engagement events were well attended (we estimate by more than 200 people), and in addition to these public events staff continued to receive comments from those interested in the project. The Action Framework continued to attract both supportive and non-supportive comments, reflecting the complexity of both the issues identified and solutions needed.
6. All partners and stakeholders agree on the need for action, however disagreement remains on what actions should be prioritised, and who should have primary responsibility for fulfilling these actions. Polarising and competing views remain both as to causation and response. It was never the intent of the Action Framework to arrive at consensus across these views, rather it was to capture these in a manner that would provide for targeted and prioritised investment going forward.
7. Much Feedback received identified that issues are needing to be addressed ‘by others’ or it is ’others’ who are exacerbating issues. Aas previously mentioned, all within the catchment need to invest in efforts which are under their sphere of control.
8. Restoration actions that have been undertaken in the catchment to date have been acknowledged, but more is needed. If we are to achieve positive catchment wide improvements more is needed by each individual and by each entity operating within the

catchment. Investment by one person or by an entity singularly on their discrete part of the system will deliver a component of the collective effort. The Action Framework is clear in that responsibility for improved catchment outcomes requires all who operate in the system to implement change. For some this change will be a continuing journey, for others it may require a substantive shift – the Action Framework has been developed to assist this.

9. The complex issues facing the catchment can only be addressed through collective action – everyone doing their part. This includes Waikato Regional Council taking responsibility for impacts associated with past and present catchment management decisions that fall under our statutory mandate.

10. In this workshop we will review feedback from community engagement (including resolutions from catchment landowners) and consider the views of Working Group members and partner organisations on the 'fitness for purpose' of the Framework.

11. An important direction sought from the workshop will be the development of several options that would be incorporated into a report to Council. These options would support Council decision-making relating to the approval and release of the Framework, along with next steps for implementation planning.

12. Next steps should also consider Minister Potaka's recent commitment of $2million from the International Visitor Levy as a contribution to implementing the 'Whangamarino Action Plan'. It is understood that these funds are provisioned for a targeted purpose and not for widespread application throughout the catchment area.

13. As a starting point, and having documented reasons throughout the workshop, Council provides staff with the direction to:

    (a) halt work on the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Action Framework, and thank the Working Group for their efforts to date. With this option it is assumed that this would include the direction of <u>not</u> developing an LTP investment case for further investment in the Whangamarino/Waikare catchment (other than what is already in existing budgets)

    (b) Defer/delay the Action Framework approval until further investigations have been completed. Council direction will be required into the matters that council believes will require further investigation. This direction would include Council making provision for any resourcing needed to undertake these further investigations (and process to secure the resources), and the likely time frame that Council would expect investigations to be complete by

    (c) Advance the Action Framework through to Council endorsement at either September or October Council meetings, and move into an implementation planning phase in collaboration with partners. Noting that this direction would signal to staff that an Investment Case for the LTP process would be required.

14. With any of the direction that Council provides, it is important that the working group are thanks for their efforts to date. Associated with this will also be communications to project partners, iwi, stakeholders and interested community members who have given their time and input to the process.

## ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

**1. Lake Waikere and Whangamarino Wetland Actions Framework (Doc # 38579653)** ⇩

**2. Resolution to the Waikato Regional Council by ratepayers and residents of Te Kauwhata community ⇩**

1

# Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Actions Framework



*Lake Waikare and Waikato River in flood from Rangiriri Pa –Alfred Sharpe, 1876.*

**Whangamarino Working Group**
**August 2026**

Doc# 38579653 31/08/2026

## Contents

## Summary[1]

Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland are highly valued, being of cultural, social, economic and environmental significance at local, regional and even international levels. Both waterbodies are highly degraded, with Lake Waikare ranking among the most polluted lakes in New Zealand. The current state of these waterbodies falls below statutory environmental outcomes and is not acceptable to the surrounding community.

Issues with these waterbodies have developed over a long time and both causes, and solutions, are extremely complex. There is a growing sense of frustration among the wider community regarding current management of these waterbodies and a common desire to improve their health and wellbeing. This is an intergenerational task, requiring significant investment of time and resources by multiple parties.

A collaborative Working Group, formed by interested parties, has built a collective understanding of catchment issues, defined environmental outcomes, collated and assessed potential restoration actions and made recommendations for implementation. Extensive engagement with iwi Māori, farming landowners, urban/rural community, youth and technical experts has ensured everyone has had opportunities for a voice in the process. The Working Group also benefitted from an extensive knowledge base on Waikare and Whangamarino, reflecting many generations of experience, decades of research and several previous catchment management initiatives.

It is important to recognize existing efforts of landowners, mana whenua and statutory agencies in reducing environmental impacts in the catchment. Over many years, investments of time and resources have focused on extensive riparian planting, improving farm management practices, pest management, erosion and sediment control and important upgrades in built infrastructure (e.g., the recent Te Kauwhata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade). This is a valuable base of rehabilitation efforts and the suite of actions set out in this document will build on this foundation over time. However, degrading trends are continuing despite this investment. Reversing decades of decline will require transformational changes in how we manage and use land and waterways in the catchment.

The Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Action Framework (the Framework) is a non-regulatory tool and places no commitments on individuals or organisations. It identifies a suite of integrated actions that, if implemented, are likely to result in significant improvements in the health and wellbeing of Waikare and Whangamarino over time. It is important to note **there is no one solution to fix the complex issues in the catchment**.

Many actions identified in this document are already underway (e.g., predator control, farm environment plans and riparian planting) or can be implemented largely with existing knowledge (e.g., increasing wetland extent, protecting taonga species). However, there is a need for a major change in approach with several transformational actions identified (e.g., integrated management of water levels and flows, widescale erosion control, reduced land use intensity or improved mitigation measures, addressing legacy sediment and nutrient issues, and controls on invasive species). These transformational actions will require sustained investment and substantial planning as part of long-term implementation programmes.

[1] Whangamarino Action Plan | Waikato Regional Council

The transformational actions are the most challenging aspect of this Framework, representing a major shift in current catchment management. Implementation of these actions is likely to have significant implications for property owners in the catchment, requiring robust decision-making processes to ensure economic, social, cultural and environmental values are appropriately considered. Transformational actions will almost certainly require central government assistance and funding to support implementation and deliver improved outcomes.

With this Framework in place, the critical next step of implementation planning must begin. A 5-year initial implementation planning phase, developed in collaboration with partner agencies[2] is recommended. As a starting point for implementation planning, the Framework recommends several collaborative initiatives over the next five years, with partner agencies contributing to implementation programme governance and management, while also being responsible for sourcing funding, driving implementation programmes, monitoring and reporting plan effectiveness and benefits gained from the work.

Measures of success will be determined on a project-by-project basis and combined to give an overall picture of progress that will be reported back to the community. At a high level, these measures include delivering improvements in overall water quality, reduced numbers of invasive species and increased native biodiversity in the catchment.

Effective delivery of the actions to benefit Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland will depend on early implementation readiness across partner agencies. This includes anticipating the need to respond to disturbance events (e.g., fire, fish kills and delivery setbacks).

## Purpose

The fundamental purpose of the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Actions Framework is to identify actions that, if implemented, will drive significant improvements in the health and wellbeing of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland. As such, the Framework responds to heightened community concerns about the continuing degradation of these highly-valued waterbodies.

The Framework seeks to give effect to the overarching vision provided by Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato and Waipaa Rivers (Te Ture Whaimana), which directs us to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of Waikare and Whangamarino for generations to come. There are additional legislated mandates to improve degraded waterways that will help ensure action over time[3].

## Waikare and Whangamarino

The scope of this Framework covers Whangamarino Wetland, Lake Waikare and all the interconnected waterways and land that drain into these waterbodies within the area we term the Whangamarino Catchment (Map 1).

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[2] Partner agencies include Department of Conservation, Waikato-Tainui, Ngaa Muka Development Trust, Waikato River Authority, Auckland Waikato Fish & Game, Waikato District Council and Waikato Regional Council.

[3] Note that Resource Management and Local Government Reforms are proceeding at pace and create significant uncertainty in how we will manage our catchments in future.

Relevant aspects of Whangamarino and Waikare are briefly described below. Please see the companion volume of this Framework document for more details on catchment context and the process of Framework development.

## Whangamarino Wetland

Whangamarino Wetland (7,100 hectares) is formally recognised as a wetland of international significance (a Ramsar Site)[4]. A key objective under the Convention of Wetlands is to maintain the ecological health of Ramsar Sites. This has been challenged in recent years by repeated fish and bird kill events caused by poor water quality, as well as habitat loss (e.g., fire) and loss of cultural and recreational values[5].

During summer and autumn, waterways within the wetland can experience periods of low dissolved oxygen and elevated water temperatures that stress aquatic life. These conditions can occur during both droughts and cyclonic storm events. In some circumstances low dissolved oxygen conditions can be severe and prolonged resulting in significant fish mortality. Fish kills and subsequent decomposition can trigger outbreaks of avian botulism, which if not appropriately managed can have devastating impacts on populations of both native and introduced waterfowl. The wetland is also under significant pressure from elevated nutrients and sediment from catchment sources, and an altered water level regime.

In October 2024, a human-induced fire burnt over 1,039 hectares of the Whangamarino Wetland. The fire led to the loss of indigenous vegetation and significant habitat for threatened species. Fire remains a major risk to Whangamarino Wetland, with the potential to trigger significant secondary impacts following events, including water quality degradation and rapid weed establishment, requiring active intervention and resourcing to prevent longer term degradation.

## Lake Waikare

Lake Waikare is a culturally and ecologically significant natural waterbody. Recognising the significance of the lake to Waikato-Tainui, the bed of the lake is vested in the name of King Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maaori King[6].

Lake Waikare is the second-largest lake in the Waikato Region (3,442 ha). The lake is shallow (average depth of 1.5 m) and has very poor water quality. Based on 2024 monitoring data, Lake Waikare is the most polluted large lake in New Zealand, overtaking Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, a highly eutrophic coastal lake in Canterbury[7]. Levels of nutrients and sediments within the lake breach environmental bottom lines set in current national regulation[8].

[4] Whangamarino | Ramsar Sites Information Service

[5] Robertson H, Moynihan Magsig R, Blyth J, Tupuhi G, Dixon L, Sandwell D (2026) Assessment of ecological change of the Whangamarino Wetland Ramsar Site, New Zealand: Applying an integrated cultural framework to assess ecological character (health) of a Wetland of International Importance. Prepared for the Department of Conservation, February 2026.

[6] The lakebed was formerly administered by DOC and Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) but was transferred to Waikato-Tainui as part of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010.

[7] Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) - Lake Quality

[8] State of the environment monitoring Waikato lake water quality | Waikato Regional Council

Pre-1900, Waikare had clear water[9] and beds of aquatic plants. Native vegetation collapsed in the 1970s and the lake is now dominated by algae, including potentially toxic cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). Persistent cyanobacterial blooms render the lake unsafe for contact recreation, and public signage discourages any direct contact with the water[10].

The lake also acts as an important flood storage reservoir for the Lower Waikato-Waipa Flood Control Scheme. Water level control gates placed between the Waikato River and Lake Waikare, and at the exit of Lake Waikare to the Pungarehu Canal, have decreased the average lake level by approximately 1m. These gates primarily control the extent of lake level fluctuation to a narrow range to enable flood water to be diverted from the Waikato River into Lake Waikare when required. Without this diversion, downstream properties, scheme assets and highly productive land would be put at greater risk.

Lake Waikare's poor condition is a result of modifications associated with the flood scheme (including lowering of lake levels), wastewater discharges, water takes, nutrient and sediment inputs from human activities (e.g., farming, forestry) in the catchment, and invasion by plant and animal pests (e.g., koi carp). These issues occur at a large scale, often reflect previously accepted practices and combine to create an extremely challenging restoration scenario.

## Summary of catchment issues

Human activities over a long period within the Whangamarino Catchment have changed:

- i) The natural hydrological regime (e.g., diversion of Lake Waikare outflow to Whangamarino Wetland, Mangatangi Dam diverting water to Auckland Region, changes to Waikato River levels/flows)
- ii) Vegetation cover on the land (e.g., shifts from indigenous vegetation to pasture and plantation forestry) and in waterbodies (e.g., loss of rooted aquatic plants from Lake Waikare)
- iii) Nutrient dynamics (e.g., increased inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus from human activities and continuous re-cycling within the system)
- iv) Physical habitat (e.g., sediment erosion, transport and deposition, as well as re-suspension)
- v) The invasive plant and animal species present in the catchment (e.g., Koi carp, alligator weed)
- vi) The ability of ecosystems to respond to a changing climate
- vii) The health, numbers and distribution of taonga species (e.g., tuna/eel and kaeo/mussels)
- viii) The ability for people to connect with waterbodies in the catchment

These eight issues were translated into desired outcomes below, and these influenced the suite of actions in the Framework. They will also serve as a baseline to monitor benefits and success.

Adding to the complexity of catchment management, issues vary in extent and priority across sub-catchments within the wider Whangamarino Catchment. For example, the Matahuru Stream sub-catchment is a high priority for sediment controls, due to its susceptibility to erosion[11]; nutrient and water level management is needed to reduce harmful algal blooms in Lake Waikare; and, in Whangamarino Wetland, invasive species control, fire risk mitigation and water level management are critically important. The tailoring of specific

[9] ***Lucas, K. (1904) A bathymetrical survey of the lakes of New Zealand. Journal Royal Geographical Society 23:744-760.***
[10] Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) - Lake Waikare
[11] TR25-10.pdf

actions to individual sub-catchments was beyond the scope of this document but will be critical for targeting future implementation investments. Similarly, the Framework does not attempt to identify specific actions that fall on individual landowners, catchment groups or organisations. A collective responsibility for action and a principle of working collaboratively underpins the Framework.

The human-induced issues above interact and contribute to significant degradation of the environmental, social, cultural and economic values within the whole catchment. The challenge is daunting, but if these pressures are reduced through restorative actions, the health and wellbeing of Whangamarino Wetland and Lake Waikare will improve over time.

## Vision, Objectives & Outcomes

Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River) provides the overarching Vision for the Action Framework:

*"Our Vision is for a future where a healthy Waikato River sustains abundant life and prosperous communities who, in turn, are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, and all it embraces, for generations to come."*[12]

The Framework also responds to a directive in the Vision & Strategy to *"Develop and implement a programme of action to achieve the targets for improving the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River"*.

In addition to adoption of Te Ture Whaimana as the Vision, the Working Group defined a suite of Objectives and Outcomes for the Action Framework (Fig. 1). Achieving these outcomes includes strengthening ecosystem resilience and supporting recovery from disturbance events, recognising that recovery actions are sometimes required to restore and maintain ecological health.

[12] *Vision & Strategy - Waikato River Authority*

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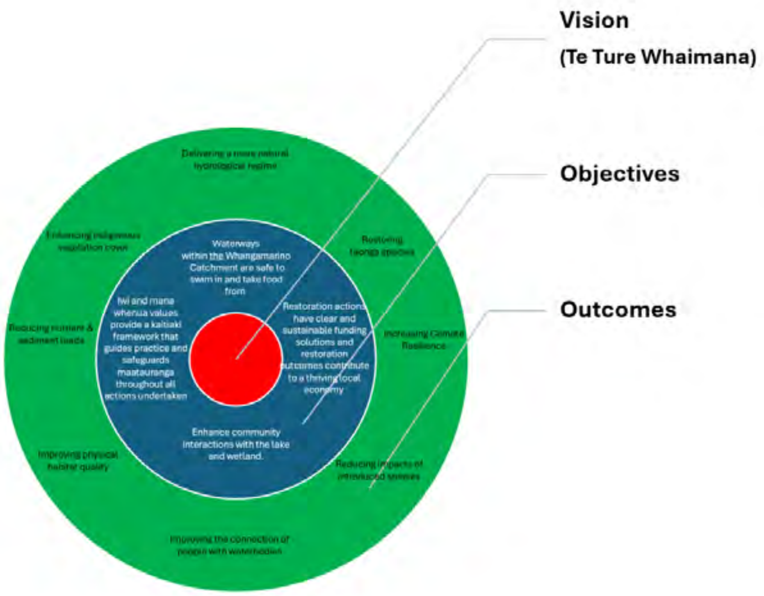


**Figure 1. The relationship between the Vision, Objectives and Outcomes driving the Action Framework.**

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## Measures of Success

The measures of success below are intentionally high level but indicate what we expect to see over the short-term (by 2036) and long-term (by 2096[13]) due to implementation of identified actions. More detailed numeric targets should be developed at the project/programme level once the approaches to implementation, responsibilities, funding and monitoring etc are confirmed. We recognize the multi-agency nature of delivery and the need for consistency across actions and partners, while still providing clear indicators of expected improvement over time.

| Short-term (by 2036) – Achievable but challenging | Long-term (2096) - Aspirational |
|---|---|
| • Improving trends for nutrients and indicators of ecosystem health (e.g., see Kaitiaki Framework) at long-term monitoring sites.<br>• Reduced sediment loading to waterways from hillslope and bank erosion (modelled).<br>• Reduced frequency and severity of harmful algal blooms in Lake Waikare.<br>• Reduced sediment and organic matter loading to Whangamarino Wetland.<br>• Reduced frequency and severity of anoxic events (reduced fish kills and botulism outbreaks).<br>• Sustained reductions in koi biomass within targeted sub-catchments.<br>• Reduced risk of fire within Whangamarino Wetland.<br>• Increased numbers of taonga species (e.g., Matuku-huurepo/bittern, tuna/eel, kaeo/mussels).<br>• All targeted plant and animal pests show declining populations.<br>• Increased wetland extent in the catchment.<br>• Community has greater opportunities for cultural and recreational connection with waterbodies. | • No harmful algal blooms in Lake Waikare (lake is safe to swim in and take food from).<br>• Lake Waikare is meeting water clarity and nutrient loading targets/limits set in the Regional Plan (or equivalent).<br>• Native aquatic plants are re-established in Lake Waikare.<br>• Ecosystem health of Whangamarino Wetland is considered 'Good'.<br>• Taonga species (e.g., Matuku-huurepo/Bittern, tuna/eel, kaeo/mussel) are flourishing.<br>• Pest plants and animals are controlled to low numbers, with eradication where feasible.<br>• Koi have been eradicated from targeted sub-catchments and maintained at low biomass throughout the catchment.<br>• Lake Waikare and Whangamarino are treasured and protected by all. |

### Kaitiaki Taiao Framework

Recognising the need for co-governance and co-management under Te Ture Whaimana, mana whenua partners have developed a Kaitiaki Framework that will provide a partnership approach to restoring and protecting the Whangamarino Wetland and Lake Waikare catchment. Grounded in whakapapa and

[13] This 2096 timeframe aligns with Plan Change 1/Te Ture Whaimana.

maatauranga, the framework aligns with Te Ture Whaimana and responds to generations of environmental degradation by reinforcing the central role of marae, hapuu, and iwi in decision making.

The catchment holds deep cultural, historical, and ecological significance for Waikato Tainui and associated marae, with strong involvement from entities such as the Ngaa Muka Development Trust and Waahi Whaanui Trust. The taiao is recognised as a living taonga, home to both physical and spiritual kaitiaki, and a repository of maatauranga, taonga species, mahinga kai, and intergenerational responsibility.

Waananga with mana whenua will be central to the framework, supporting the development of shared understandings of historical relationships with the taiao and collective aspirations for its present and future health.

Key guiding principles include seeking to uphold mana whakahaere, protecting mauri, embedding maatauranga Maaori across all processes, and applying integrated and precautionary management approaches. Framework components include cultural values mapping, dual-knowledge (tikanga and science) environmental assessments, and tikanga-centred governance contributions through a Project Kaitiaki Roopuu that ensures decisions align with Te Ture Whaimana and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.

Monitoring is grounded in cultural indicators—such as sensory assessments and identification of atua influences—alongside scientific measures including hydrology, sediment and nutrient tracking, taonga species monitoring, and fish passage evaluations. These insights inform regular reporting and annual adaptive review.

The framework aims to deliver key mana whenua outcomes: strengthened kaitiakitanga and leadership; culturally grounded environmental action; effective collaborative governance; measurable recovery of taonga species and ecosystems; enhanced capability and capacity within marae and hapuu; sustainable resource use; active rangatahi involvement; and full adherence to Treaty settlement obligations and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles.

Overall, the framework sets a clear path for restoring the mauri of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino while empowering mana whenua as leaders and guardians of their ancestral taiao.

## Actions

An initial 'longlist' of over 300 actions was collated from previous catchment management initiatives, advice from technical experts, literature reviews, koorero tuku iho [14]and direct input from the Whangamarino Working Group, marae and the wider community. As expected, there was substantial overlap and repetition in this longlist.

The longlist was refined with the support of an Artificial Intelligence tool (Microsoft Co-Pilot) to cluster actions according to the eight outcomes being sought for the catchment (Fig. 1). This process generated a list of around 40 actions. Further analysis refined this list down to a shortlist of 19 primary actions. One additional action was added following community feedback, taking the final list of primary actions to 20.

[14] **Koorero tuku iho –** Mana whenua stories that have been passed down by tupuna.

The Waikare-Whangamarino Action Framework (Fig. 2) was developed linking these 20 primary actions to three tiers of environmental benefit and implementation challenge:

- **Good Management Practice (GMP).** These are actions where we know what to do and could start today. Indeed, many of these actions are already underway (e.g., work by landowners and catchment groups such as the Mangatangi-Maramarua Catchment Group). Cumulative benefits are positive but, given the scale of the issues, these actions alone cannot be expected to deliver on all outcomes across the catchment.
- **Stretch Actions.** Technical knowledge exists to carry out these actions, and some may be underway, but there may be unresolved barriers to implementation. These actions will deliver catchment-scale benefits. They will improve system resilience but do not necessarily address major drivers of degradation. Costs to deliver these actions are significant and likely to require specific and collaborative business cases, cost benefit analysis and programmes of work to deliver them.
- **Transformational Actions.** These actions focus on the primary drivers of current degradation and offer the biggest benefit in terms of environmental improvement. It is unlikely that desired outcomes will be achieved unless these actions can be addressed. They are extremely challenging technically, socially and/or financially, and may require intergenerational change. All five of the actions at this level will require substantial investment beyond the likely ability of the local, or regional community to pay. Funding pathways need to be identified as well as roles and responsibilities of local and central government, and appropriate phasing of these transformational actions.



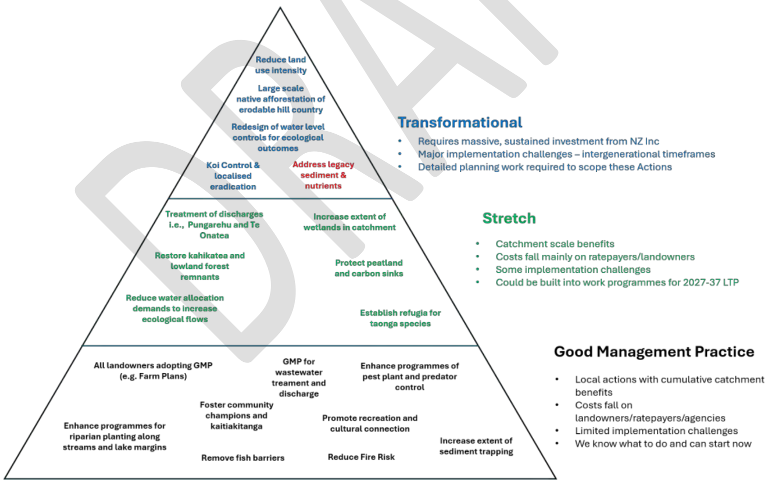


**Figure 2. Waikare-Whangamarino Action Framework. Note: The colours used for the three tiers of actions are repeated in the assessment figures below. Description of individual actions is given in Appendix 1. Note: The proposed action in red "Address legacy sediment and nutrients" was added based on feedback received from community events in August 2026.**

## Action Assessment

A Representative Panel, drawn from the Working Group, assessed the initial 19 primary actions. The Panel met four times to consider the assessment approach and undertake scoring. The Panel ranked actions according to overall environmental benefit, technical feasibility, rough order costs of implementation and the likely timeframes for benefits to accrue (See Fig. 4). The final, 20th Action was assessed by the whole Working Group on 26 August 2026 using the same assessment criteria.

Summary of Action Assessment findings:

- The most significant environmental benefits stem from the Transformational actions - these come with significant cost, complexity and extended timeframes.
- There are several Stretch Actions and Good Management Practice (GMP) actions that generate high levels of environmental benefit. Many of which are already underway but will need bolstering to make a significant difference.
- Most actions are technically feasible with existing examples within the region or wider NZ. Some will require feasibility studies, cost benefit analysis, and modelling support to implement.
- The majority of GMP actions could deliver benefits within five years, and the Stretch Actions within 10 to 20 years.
- The implementation plan will need to consider all the factors for delivering the highest environmental benefit at the lowest cost, in the quickest possible time. These actions will be phased in line with funding cycles (e.g., WRC Long Term Plan) and available resources.
- A low action rank does not mean it will not be implemented – all identified actions have environmental benefits.
- An important recommendation from the Representative Panel was that maatauranga Maaori, koorero tuku iho, and other forms of specialized knowledge should be integrated into all restoration actions. This is consistent with objectives in Te Ture Whaimana.
- Total rough order costs, across the three tiers, are very significant and likely to extend over several generations. This staged, multigenerational investment is represented by a hypothetical example in Figure 3. They are included to reflect the scale of change required, rather than to prescribe fixed funding commitments. Decisions on investment will be staged over time and informed by business cases including cost benefit analysis, feasibility work, monitoring results, and demonstrated progress against agreed milestones.

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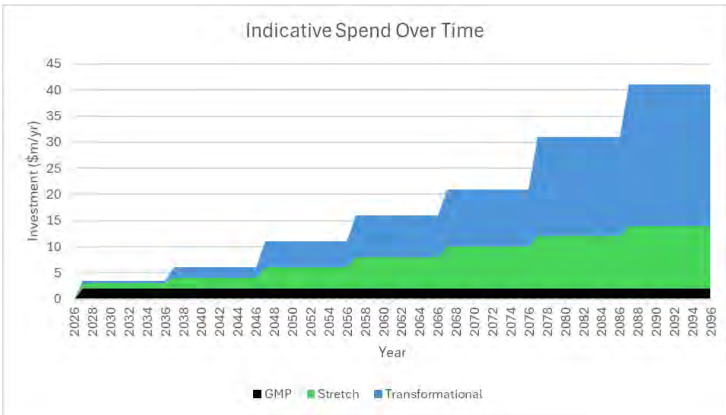
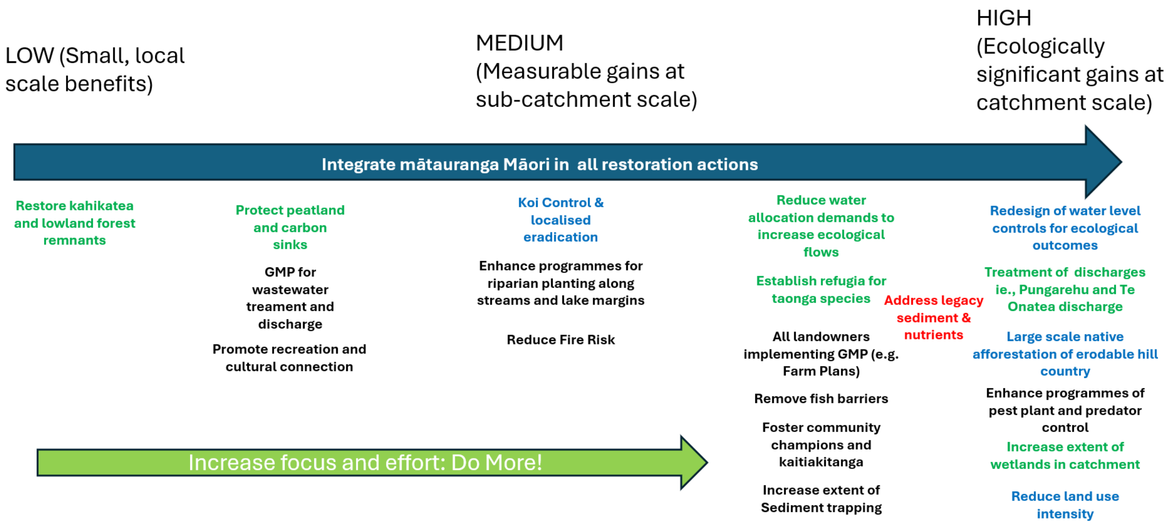



**Figure 3: Hypothetical breakdown of investment in restorative actions over time. This reflects a continued baseline investment in Good Management Practice (GMP) and increasing investments in Stretch and Transformational actions as resouces beome available over the next 70 years.**

It is important to note that the Framework identifies actions that are likely to drive significant environmental improvements in Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland. The potential impacts of these actions on other outcomes (e.g., regional economy) have not been fully considered at this stage, as this was beyond the scope of the project. Such analysis will be mandatory when seeking funding for Plan implementation, including business cases for Waikato Regional Council Annual Plan and Long-term Plan investment cycles, as well as central government funding.

## Environmental Benefit

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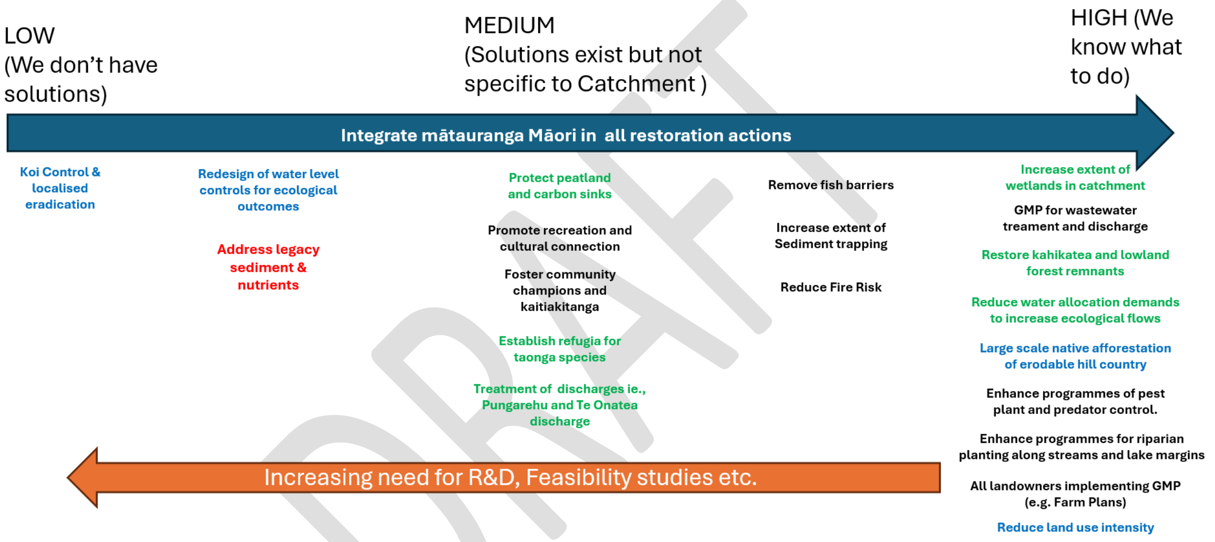
## Technical Feasibility



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## Timeframes for Environmental Benefit

SHORT (<5 yrs)

MEDIUM (10-20 yrs)

LONG (25 yrs+)

**Integrate mātauranga Māori in all restoration actions**

**SHORT (<5 yrs)**

- Promote recreation and cultural connection
- Foster community champions and kaitiakitanga
- Establish refugia for taonga species
- Enhance programmes of pest plant and predator control
- Enhance programmes for riparian planting along streams and lake margins
- GMP for wastewater treament and discharge

**Between SHORT and MEDIUM**

- All landowners implementing GMP (e.g. Farm Plans)
- Increase extent of Sediment trapping
- Reduce Fire Risk
- Address legacy sediment & nutrients

**MEDIUM (10-20 yrs)**

- Treatment of discharges ie., Pungarehu and Te Onatea discharge
- Reduce water allocation demands to increase ecological flows
- Redesign of water level controls for ecological outcomes
- Increase extent of wetlands in catchment
- Reduce land use intensity
- Restore kahikatea and lowland forest remnants
- Protect peatland and carbon sinks

**Between MEDIUM and LONG**

- Koi Control & localised eradication
- Remove fish barriers

**LONG (25 yrs+)**

- Large scale native afforestation of erodable hill country

Influenced by feasibility and consenting.



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## Overall Rough Order Costs

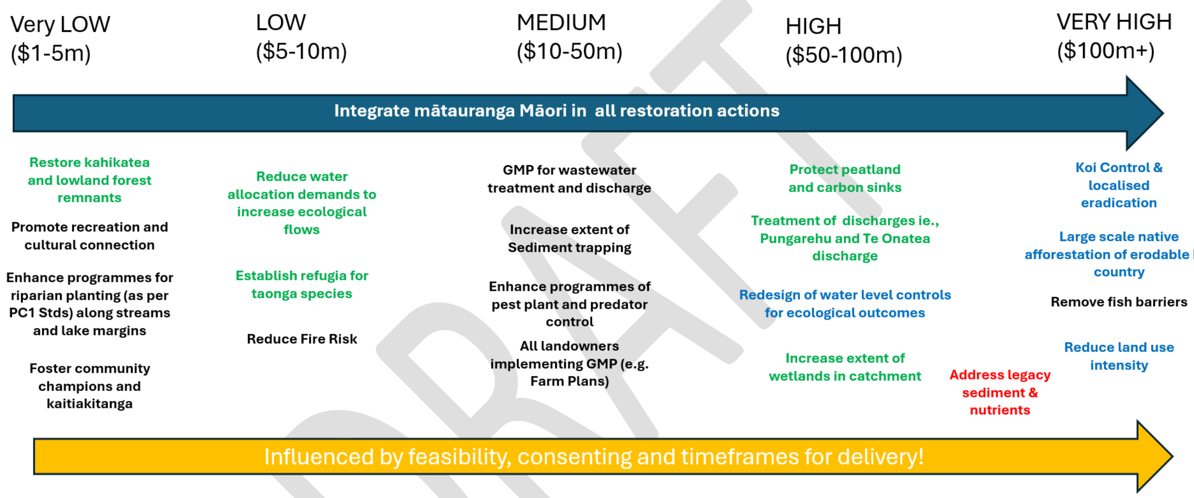


**Figure 4. Rankings of 20 primary actions by Environmental Benefit, Technical Feasibility, Timeframe for Benefits realization and Estimated Costs.**

## Implementation

Action implementation was always out of scope of this Framework, but the Working Group and partner agencies have already started implementation planning. It is recommended that an initial Implementation Programme cover a five-year period (2026-2031) and involve close collaboration among all Action Framework partners. Several additional organisations, including DairyNZ, Beef & lamb NZ and Hort NZ have indicated interest in also being part of implementation planning to support farmers and growers in the catchment.

The initial focus of implementation is on actions that commence immediately or within the first year of adoption. These early actions are intended to help stabilize degrading trends, build momentum with delivery, and support readiness for more substantial investment, such as large-scale system change. Progress on these actions will be used to inform sequencing, resourcing and refinement of subsequent stages of implementation.

Effective implementation will require preparedness across partner agencies, including clarity on delivery structures, roles, and responsibilities at governance, management, and operational levels. This includes identifying which existing roles across partner organisations can be formally aligned to support delivery, and where additional or time-bound roles may be required to coordinate implementation, integrate technical inputs, and respond to emerging issues. Early agreement on these arrangements will reduce implementation risk and support a smooth transition from plan adoption into action.

The Action Framework itself is another step in a long-term, adaptive management process for the catchment. We recommend a full review of this Framework and subsequent Implementation Plan within five years (i.e., by 2031) with annual reporting to interested parties on progress in the meantime[15].

Implementation assumes a baseline level of operational capacity across partner organisations to deliver planned activities. However, unplanned events or system pressures may require additional surge capacity to maintain progress toward outcomes. Fire is a clear example where additional recovery effort may be required, but similar pressures may arise from hydrological events (e.g., blackwater events), infrastructure issues, or other disturbances. Anticipating and planning for this flexibility is an important component of early implementation risk management.

The following timeline is proposed as a starting point:

1. Year 0 (30 September 2026)
   - Final Action Framework endorsed by Working Group and approved by Waikato Regional Council
2. Year 1 (July 2026-June 2027)
   - Adoption of the Action Framework by partners, including taking opportunities to reconfirm priority actions in existing operational plans and build new programmes of work where additional funding becomes available.
   - Establishment of a Waikare-Whangamarino Partnership Agreement that sets out roles, responsibilities and commitments across partner organisations that align with the Action Framework.

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[15] The Natural Environment Bill is currently being finalised. This Bill contains provisions for Catchment Action Plans that will need to considered when reviewing Waikare-Whangamarino implementation plans.

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- Development of a business case for WRC's 2027/37 Long Term Plan that covers priority actions for Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland.

3. Years 2-5 (July 2027 to June 2031)
   - Implementation Plan milestones being met
4. Year 5 (July 2030 to June 2031)
   - Implementation Plan milestones being met
   - Review of Whangamarino Catchment Programme
5. Year 6-10 (June 2031 – July 2036)
   a. Implementation of reviewed catchment programme

Within the first year of implementation, priority will be given to actions that reduce the most significant risks to ecological health, improve system resilience, and enable faster recovery from environmental disturbances. These priorities are not exhaustive but represent areas where early intervention is expected to deliver immediate and visible benefits.

Based on our prioritisation of actions, the following elements are recommended for inclusion in the initial 5-year Implementation Programme:

1. Integration of agreed work programmes across partner organisations to ensure efficiency and sharing of information (e.g., integrated environmental monitoring and reporting, and coordination of critical pest management, erosion control and riparian planting initiatives). [Noting that individual organisations would still make final decisions on their individual work programmes].
2. Development of a whole catchment approach to water level management (covering all flood control, land drainage, water take and water level / flow control infrastructure). This will ensure investments in major infrastructure are affordable, sustainable and generate multiple benefits. Short-term ('no-regret') improvements in water level /flow management would also be in scope.
3. Design and implementation of measures to mitigate impacts of Lake Waikare's discharge on Whangamarino Wetland. This recognises that efforts to rehabilitate Lake Waikare will take many decades and mitigation measures are needed in the short-medium term.
4. Implementation of a programme to enhance populations of taonga species (e.g., tuna, kaeo) in the catchment.
5. Reduction of water quality impacts from koi carp and other invasive species through targeted control measures (noting that critical biosecurity issues are addressed under 1).
6. Development and implementation of measures to mitigate the risk of human-induced fire in Whangamarino Wetland.
7. Reduction of catchment nutrient and sediment sources to improve water quality in Lake Waikare and Whangamarino.

Those priority actions that fall within the responsibility of Waikato Regional Council will be captured within a Business Case for consideration under the 2027-37 Long Term Plan. The Business Case will include an overall assessment of the environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects of the actions and anticipated benefits. These will be aligned with (or incorporate) any implementation programme required once Plan Change 1 becomes operative.

## Governance principles

Implementation of the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Action Framework will require robust governance and coordinated management. It is recommended that a core of partner agencies contribute to oversight of the implementation programme.

The following Principles will be applied to governance:

1. Use existing governance and management structures wherever practicable to reduce complexity and overhead costs.
2. Ensure governance (either standalone or as part of existing structure) has Terms of Reference and representation that are closely aligned with the purpose and scope of the Framework.
3. The Whangamarino Working Group operated in an inclusive and collaborative environment. Positive relationships and trust have been built during this process. This environment of trust and collaboration should be reflected in any governance and operational structures.
4. The primary task of governors will be oversight of the implementation of priority actions. Aligning with the implementation timeframe, governance should be in place for 5 years from 2026/27.
5. Governance should include representation from mana whenua (including marae representation), landowners, the local community and potentially youth/rangatahi, as well as those organisations with statutory responsibility relevant to the catchment area (i.e., Waikato Regional Council, Waikato River Authority, Waikato-Tainui, Waikato District Council, Department of Conservation, Auckland Waikato Fish & Game and Ngaa Muka Development Trust. Collectively known as the Partner Agencies).
6. The governance structure for the Action Plan should reflect the mana whakahaere of mana whenua in accordance with the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 and Te Ture Whaimana. This would include:
   a. A Kaitiaki Roopuu (or Mana Whenua Governance Group) represented at the highest decision-making level
   b. Co-design of governance processes and monitoring frameworks
   c. Tikanga-based decision-making procedures
   d. Direct reporting channels between governance bodies and marae/hapuu
   e. Visibility of mana whenua priorities across all workstreams
7. The Kaitiaki Taiao Framework should be used as a guiding document for governance and management processes, ensuring decisions uphold cultural values, protect maatauranga, and restore the mana and mauri of the Taiao.

Commented [MS1]: From Julian Williams "Acknowledgement that Conservation Lands (DoC) were gifted back to DoC for the purposes of conservation for all New Zealanders." As referenced in section 16.3 of Deed of Settlement 1995.

**How we will operate:**

Partner agencies would commit to operating in a way that is:

- Transparent: We're clear about our priorities and expectations of all stakeholders in achieving these collectively.
- Risk and benefits based: We prioritise our actions and expectations to address the biggest risks and benefits to catchment health.
- Proactive: We anticipate risks/challenges, provide proactive guidance/communication and support and look for opportunities to improve how we do things.
- Proportionate: We consider the size, complexity and risk profile of all agreed actions, as well as the costs of different options to improve catchment conditions while ensuring compliance.

- Consistent with the Te Ture Whaimana and gives effect to the Kaitiaki Taiao Framework (see Appendix X in Companion volume).

**Monitoring and Reporting**
Partner agencies, catchment groups, mana whenua and individuals undertake a wide range of monitoring activities in the catchment. There are also multiple resource consents that have requirements for environmental monitoring. The coordination of these monitoring efforts and subsequent reporting to the wider community will be an important element of the Implementation Plan.

Reporting will also include the assessment of changes in the ecological character (health) of the Whangamarino Wetland Ramsar Site as required under the Convention on Wetlands.

**Potential Funding**
Many of the actions identified in this plan will require transformational changes over an inter-generational timeframe. This scale of change is beyond the scope of local communities to resource.

Linking back to one of the Plan's four Objectives, it is critical that restoration actions have clear and sustainable funding solutions and restoration outcomes contribute to a thriving local economy. Multiple funding sources will need to be utilised for implementation of this Action Framework, including targeted investment from central government (e.g., relating to actions with national or international significance) and long-term investment from regional ratepayers (both via general and targeted rates).

There is an expectation that all Plan partners will contribute to accumulating the resources needed to deliver the Plan. In all cases, robust business cases will be required that quantify the costs and benefits of action across environmental, economic, social and cultural criteria.

## Acknowledgements

The Whangamarino Working Group acknowledges the funding support provided by Waikato Regional Council and Waikato River Authority. The contributions of many salaried and non-salaried working group members and other contributors are also gratefully acknowledged. We also recognise the input of a wide array of technical experts for sharing their extensive knowledge of the catchment.

We mourn the recent passing of Aareka Hopkins. His extensive knowledge is reflected in the Action Plan and will help restore the mauri of Waikare and Whangamarino. **Haere ki tua, e te whetū.**

### Whangamarino Action Plan Working Group


**Members of the Whangamarino Working Group (2024-2026).**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mike Scarsbrook – Chair - WRC | Noel Smith – WRC Councillor |
| Shaun Hodson – Project Director - WRC Contractor | Robbie Cookson – WRC Councillor |
| Kelvin Tupuhi – Ngaa Muka Development Trust | Michelle Lewis – Department of Conservation |
| Nadia Coombe – Ngaa Muka Development Trust | Niwha Jones – Department of Conservation |
| Jaedyn Falwasser – Waikato-Tainui | Tuti Cooper – Waikato River Authority |
| Lorraine Dickson - Waikato-Tainui | Tracie Dean-Speirs – Waikato River Authority |
| Tamoko Ormsby - Waikato-Tainui | Antoine Coffin – Waikato River Authority |
| Mike Peters – Landowner | Michelle Hodges – ex Waikato River Authority |
| Peter Buckley - Landowner | John Cunningham – Te Kauwhata Community Board |
| Robyn Budd – Landowner | David Klee – Auckland Waikato Fish & Game |
| Oliver McLeod – WRC | Danielle LeLievre – Auckland Waikato Fish & Game |
| Liz Tupuhi – WRC Contractor | Kawekura Nikora – Waahi Whaanui |
| Julian Williams – WRC Contractor | Te Ngaungau Tukiri – Ngaati Hine |
| Tracy Nelson – WRC | Kim Parker – Waikato District Council |
| Bill Malone – WRC | Garret Huelson – ex Waikato District Council |
| Brendan Manning - WRC | |

## Map 1. Spatial extent of Whangamarino Catchment.

## Appendix 1: Description of Actions and tools to support implementation.

| Action Tier | Actions | Description | Tools to support implementation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transformational Actions | Native Afforestation of Erodible Hill Country | • Native afforestation is preferred because pine afforestation generates significant sediment during forestry operations.<br>• WRC has a prioritisation framework in place to identify areas to target for afforestation with Whangamarino being a priority catchment.<br>• Large-scale afforestation will likely require land purchase.<br>• Sediment loads to Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland are excessive and have significant adverse effects on freshwater ecosystems.<br>• The most effective way to substantially reduce sediment loads in the long term is to reforest erodible hill country. | • Catchment modelling tools will support prioritization of afforestation and likely benefits of change.<br>• Application of SedNetNZ in the Waikato region to support NPS-FM 2020 implementation \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Catchment-scale LiDAR-based SedNetNZ modelling of erosion and suspended sediment loads in Waikato CEM catchments \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Home \| QEII National Trust |
| | Redesign of Water Level / Flow Controls for Ecological Outcomes | • A range of options have been proposed to reduce environmental impacts of Flood Protection and Land Drainage assets (e.g., raising or fluctuating Lake Waikare levels, re-designing Whangamarino Weir, re-connecting Lake Waikare and Waikato River).<br>• This action requires a formal review of water level and flow management throughout the catchment with improved environmental outcomes as a fundamental design principle.<br>• Current water flow and level management throughout the catchment is poorly understood and integrated. This is a key driver of degraded ecological outcomes.<br>• The Whangamarino Catchment is an integral part of the Lower Waikato Flood Control Scheme (LWFCS). There are also multiple drainage compartments within the catchment that must be taken into consideration.<br>• Whangamarino Weir controls minimum water levels in Whangamarino Wetland and contributes to summer low flow water quality issues, while reducing risk of wetland drying out due to modifications elsewhere in the catchment. | • Ecosystem and Hydrological models will be needed to test scenarios for future changes.<br>• Rehabilitation of Lake Waikare: Experimental investigations of the potential benefits of water level drawdown \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Modifying hydrological regime and catchment land use to improve water quality in Lake Waikare: Modelled insights<br>• Shallow lakes restoration review: A literature review \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Hydrodynamic modelling of Lake Whangape and Lake Waahi<br>• Wetland restoration handbook Chapter 7 Hydrology<br>• Rangiriri and Lake Waikare Hydraulic Review |
| | Koi Control | • Develop a national strategy with the support of central government that identifies how koi will be addressed.<br>• Koi populations are uncontrolled and have unimpeded access throughout a large portion of the lower Waikato River catchment.<br>• Koi contribute to lowland waterway degradation.<br>• Koi control in the whole Waikato River system is not technically feasible.<br>• Koi control in closed systems (e.g., physically isolated waterbodies) may be feasible but will be costly and require long-term commitments to stop re-invasion. | • Koi carp control tools<br>• Responses of the fish community and biomass in Lake Ohinewai to fish removal and the koi carp exclusion barrier \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• "The CarP-N neutral Project": Removal, processing and reuse of invasive fish in local terrestrial conservation projects - David - 2018 - Journal of Applied Ecology - Wiley Online Library |

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| | | • Koi biomass reduction does have benefits (e.g., nutrient removal) but may be less cost-effective than dealing with contaminants at source. | • Evaluation of koi carp as a fertiliser for establishing native sand binders on coastal dunes in the Waikato region – first year trials \| Waikato Regional Council |
| | Reduce Land Use Intensity | • Many waterways within the Whangamarino Catchment do not meet current National Bottom Lines for water quality.<br>• Lake Waikare requires very significant reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus to achieve targets.<br>• Substantial land use change and/or reduced land use intensity may be needed to meet targets.<br>• Land use change may require ratepayer/tax payer investment to compensate land owners. | • Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 (PC1) \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Investment approaches to land use change in Upper Waipā River catchment \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• State of the environment monitoring Waikato lake water quality \| Waikato Regional Council |
| | Address legacy sediment and nutrient | • Changes in the hydrological regime of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland, along with increased sediment and nutrient loading from the surrounding catchment over many decades, have combined to become major drivers of the current degraded state.<br>• A range of actions have been proposed in the past to address these 'legacy' nutrients and sediments. These actions might include flushing flows through the lake and wetland to move contaminants through the system, or removal of contaminants through engineering solutions, including dredging, suction and advanced treatment processes or nature-based solutions. | • Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere Opening Regime Management - Waihora Ellesmere Trust<br>• Alum dosing Lake Rotorua - Sediment aluminium content of Lakes Rotorua and Rotoehu: 2024 monitoring survey<br>• Waituna Lagoon Lagoon Management - Whakamana te Waituna<br>• Marke Wadden (Netherlands) Marker Wadden - English version \| Natuurmonumenten |
| Stretch Actions | Increase Wetland Extent | • Much of the wetland area within the catchment has been lost.<br>• Continued wetland loss contributes to the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.<br>• Increasing wetland extent will increase biodiversity but also provide opportunities for contaminant removal and sediment trapping, as well as greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation.<br>• Develop a specific programme of work to identify potential areas for wetland creation or restoration, including investigating opportunities for constructed wetlands and woodchip bioreactors integrated with wetlands. | • There is a wealth of information on both contructed wetlands and restoring natural wetlands:<br>• Fresh water wetlands \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Wetlands: Habitats<br>• Whangamarino Wetland: Arawai Kakariki wetland restoration programme<br>• Constructed wetland guidelines \| Earth Sciences New Zealand \| NIWA<br>• Baldwin Dairy Farm Wetland - Waikato River Authority |
| | Treatment of Pungarehu Discharge | • The discharge of Lake Waikare water into the Pungarehu Canal represents a significant and ongoing risk to the health of Whangamarino Wetland.<br>• Treatment of the discharged water to remove sediment, organic matter and nutrients would be a valuable medium-term action to reduce the potential impacts on Whangamarino Wetland.<br>• Treatment technology including constructed wetland and other natural options already exist, although implementation in a natural lake could be challenging.<br>• This action includes options to change or remove the outlet structure to reduce sediment discharge (e.g., Obermeyer Gate). | • Advanced Pond Systems \| Earth Sciences New Zealand \| NIWA<br>• Pneumatically Actuated Gates \| Obermeyer Hydro, Inc. |

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| | Manage Water Allocation Demands | • Mangatangi Dam has a capacity of 39 million m³, supplying nearly a quarter of Auckland's bulk water, removing a substantial amount of water out of the Mangatangi/Maramarua and Whangamarino rivers.<br>• There are multiple other consumptive water takes in the catchment.<br>• A review of consumptive takes should be undertaken to determine if greater environmental flows might be achieved, particularly in summer. | • Waikato Regional Plan: Variation No. 6 - Water Allocation \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Water security in the Waikato \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Auckland Water Strategy |
| | Restore Kahikatea and Lowland Forest Remnants | • Significant biodiversity benefits would be achieved by increasing the extent of lowland forests.<br>• Kahikatea, Kohekohe and other local species flourish in wet areas and can be re-established alongside wetland restoration, strengthening biodiversity and helping retain peatland. This action could include creation or extension programmes. | • Planting guide for Hamilton Basin - Kahikatea remnants<br>• Kahikatea Green Wheel \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Home \| QEII National Trust |
| | Protect and restore peatland and reduce GHG emissions | • Drainage of organic soils leads to land subsidence and significant greenhouse gas emissions.<br>• Areas of peatland within the catchment will be prioritised for restoration work.<br>• This could be associated with increased wetland restoration, so could be added to development of a wetland extent programme in the catchment.<br>• Includes measures to reduce the likelihood of human-induced fire through prevention, advocacy, and land management practices. | • Managing peat \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Review of potential management interventions to reduce peat subsidence and CO2 emissions in the Waikato |
| | Establish refuges for taonga species | • Restoring the health and wellbeing of Whangamarino will take generations.<br>• Providing spatial refuges for taonga species (e.g., tuna/kaeao) enables remnant populations to retain a foothold in the catchment, while also providing a source of recruitment to new areas of the catchment as habitat and water quality improve.<br>• This action would be incorporated into specific taonga species enhancement programmes such as tuna or kaeao.<br>• Develop a specific programme of work to identify and remove existing constraints on taonga species populations (e.g., barriers, habitat quality, competitors)<br>• An objective to increase taonga species populations would link with many other actions in this list.<br>• This may be an important 'integrating' action that would have high community buy-in.<br>• Re-establish native plant communities in Lake Waikare | • Environmental Plan – Waikato-Tainui<br>• RotoTurf: Aquatic plant 'life rafts' in degraded lakes \| Earth Sciences New Zealand \| NIWA<br>• Kākahi \| Earth Sciences New Zealand \| NIWA<br>• 8. Restoring and enhancing tuna. Handbook: Te reo o te repo – kei konei tonu au \| The Voice of the Wetland – I am still here<br>• WRA14-019-Restoring-Tuna-A-Guide-For-The-Waikato-and-Waipaa-River-Catchment-2016.pdf<br>• Annual monitoring data for Matuku-huurepo/Bittern and other wetland bird populations in Whangamarino / DOC<br>• Monitoring of fish populations in Whangamarino / DOC |
| Good Management Practice (GMP) Actions | Landowners adopting GMPs (Farm Environment Plan) | • It is likely that all catchment farming operations will be required to develop and implement a Farm Environment Plan (FEP), noting that many already have them.<br>• The FEP will identify actions that can be put in place on farm to address environmental risks that are relevant to the catchment context. | • Fonterra Farm Environment Plans<br>• Online tools for FEP - Dairy Country<br>• Freshwater farm plans \| Ministry for the Environment |

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| | | • This constitutes a major collective action across pastoral farming in the catchment. | |

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| | Best Management Practice applied to Wastewater Treatment and Discharge | • Removal of all direct wastewater discharges to waterways in the catchment is considered best management practice.<br>• This includes Te kauwhata Wastewater Treatment Plant implementing its planned wetland discharge project and ensuring septic tank and other waste / stormwater disposal systems are environmentally sensitive and are operated and maintained to manufacturers recommendations. | • Wastewater standards \| The Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai<br>• Te-Kauwhata-Fact-Sheets.pdf |
| | Increase Extent of Sediment Trapping | • There are already successful sediment trapping initiatives in the catchment.<br>• Using natural solutions to trap sediment before it reaches sensitive downstream waterbodies is an important practice and should be considered as a priority for more investment.<br>• The use flow control for reducing sediment transfer from the lake to the wetland should continue to be a priority operational practice for WRC. | • Sediment reduction and mitigation principles – a review of New Zealand literature<br>• A guide to sediment trap construction.pdf |
| | Remove Fish Barriers | • Most of our native fish species undergo migrations during their life cycles. Removing barriers to native fish migration is an important component of health fish populations.<br>• Any assessment of fish barriers needs to consider the risks of spreading invasive fish species.<br>• This action could be incorporated into a tuna enhancement programme. | • Pathways to the Sea Strategy (PTTS)<br>• New Zealand Fish Passage Guidelines \| Earth Sciences New Zealand \| NIWA |
| | Foster Community Champions and Kaitiakitanga | • We need leaders in the community who can speak for the waterways and ensure the issue and actions remain high on the public agenda.<br>• These leaders need to be properly supported to reduce risk of burnout.<br>• There also needs to be clear succession planning to develop future leaders. | • Community Waikato \| Capability and capacity building with community organisations<br>• New Zealand Landcare Trust - Sustainable Land & Water Management<br>• Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund (SSCIF) \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Natural Heritage Fund (NHF) \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Environmental Initiatives Fund (EIF) \| Waikato Regional Council |
| | Enhance Riparian Planting Programmes | • Significant progress has been made in the catchment to date. These programmes need to be sustained and broadened to support other programmes (e.g., wetland extent programme). | • Plant Selection Tool - Waikato River Authority<br>• Funded Projects - Waikato River Authority |
| | Enhance pest control programmes | • Our collective biosecurity programmes assist our native ecosystems but with limited resourcing, new threats (e.g., gold clam) and a changing climate, not all pest species are being successfully controlled.<br>• Pest control programmes need to be sustained and enhanced to include a wider range of pest species.<br>• Work with central government and or their agencies to review the status of Koi and other invasive species so they are given the appropriate level of management priority. | • Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan 2022-2032 \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• 2022-2032 Regional Pest Management Plan \| Tūtohu Mahere Whakahaere Ā-Roheo Waikato Mō Ngā Kīrearea \| Waikato Regional Council<br>• Wetland restoration handbook Chapter 11 Pests |

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| | Promote Recreational and Cultural Connections | • We recognise that stronger connections between people and nature builds the wellbeing of both.<br>• We need to invest in re-connecting people with waterways in the Whangamarino catchment.<br>• Sites of significance can be recognised in the catchment, bringing people to the area to learn of the joint history that has taken place | • Te Kauwhata Community Committee Plan<br>• Koi Classic (Bow hunting)<br>• Auckland/Waikato - Fish & Game<br>• Whangamarino Wetland: Waikato places to visit |
| | Reduce risk of human-induced fires and implement post fire recovery | • Includes measures to reduce the likelihood of human-induced fire through prevention, advocacy, and land management practices.<br>• Implement post-fire recovery actions when fire events occur which may include rapid ecological assessment, erosion and sediment control, weed management, and habitat stabilisation. | • Fire management: Managing conservation: Our work |

# Resolution to the WRC by ratepayers and residents of Te Kauwhata community

## *We request the Waikato Regional Council adopts the Lake Waikare, Whangamarino Action Plan and continues to develop an Implementation Plan and business cases for the actions identified in the Plan.*

*The rate payers and residents of Te Kauwhata are the largest and most directly impacted population on the shores of Lake Waikare and the Whangamarino wetlands*

*We **support the Action Plan's** vision and ambitions to improve the quality of our lake and wetland's habitat and water*

*While we recognise our rural neighbours are concerned this Plan will impose requirements on them that may impact the management of their land, we also recognise that to **delay** this plan risks both losing momentum and potential for external funding from Government and philanthropy.*

**We recommend that:**

1. A strategic approach identifies actions that are:
   a. Acceptable on an environmental, social, cultural and economic basis
   b. Foundational and enable future works without significant reworking of any first start projects
   c. Consider future generations and the impact of any work undertaken or not undertaken.

2. All works take into account climate change and the associated impacts of changing weather patterns.

3. That WRC, WDC, DoC the WRA and Fish and Game NZ build work programmes that are complimentary and cumulative in their impact and communicate these with the communities of interest.

4. That the WRC, WDC and DoC along with mana whenua and the community (including the rural community) seek funding from central Government as required.

5. That good management practices continue to be implemented and there is transparency in this process. All community members must be able to see that all organisations are behaving as good citizens and supporting their communities.

**We recommend the Plan includes:**

a. Whangamarino Catchment Hydrology Review

b. Flagship Weed Control & Restoration Case Study

c. Whangamarino Post-Fire Readiness & Ecological Surveillance Programme

d. Mana Whenua–Led Kaitiakitanga & Capability Programme

e. Community Kaitiaki & Catchment Connection Initiative

f. Koi control initiatives

g. Flushing the Lake

**Resolutions to WRC by active Landowners in the Catchment**

Landowners in the Whangamarino / Lake Waikare catchment support work to achieve better environmental outcomes. But we also seek cost effective solutions that will achieve positive identifiable outcomes within a realistic timeframe.

Council is asked to clearly acknowledge in all its thinking and actions the trade-off at play: Lake Waikare and the Whangamarino Wetland were deliberately engineered as flood-storage assets within the Lower Waikato–Waipā Flood Control Scheme. These assets deliver major regional flood-protection benefits. The same engineering imposes significant ongoing environmental costs on the local lake and wetland.

These benefits and costs are inseparable. Any credible process must openly acknowledge, quantify and weigh both sides before decisions are made.

**OUR REQUEST**

**"We, as landowning ratepayers in the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino catchment REQUEST Waikato Regional Council DEFER consideration, adoption or implementation of the Whangamarino Action Plan until the priority investigations/assessments below have been completed and reported back to Council.**

This is not a request to stop environmental action. **It is a request to undertake the right investigations first.**

We believe the focus should be on the following priority actions;

**PRIORITY ACTIONS**

1. Obtain independent engineering advice on the potential of introducing fresh river water into the southwestern end of Lake Waikare to assist in flushing the lake, without which it will remain as a stagnant water body.

2. Obtain independent engineering advice to address the hydraulic performance of the Weir within the Whangamarino River.

3. Establish who benefits and who should pay by undertaking a beneficiary and counterfactual assessment of the Waikare–Whangamarino flood-storage system and develop a case for appropriate central-government participation and funding of the above investigations and assessments. The aim is to aid decision-making in mitigating long-term environmental effects.

4. Continue to actively seek resolutions to manage Koi Carp, including elevating it to a pest of National Significance requiring biosecurity input and funding rather than simply classifying it as an unwanted organism and noxious fish.

5. Recognise the environmental work landowners in this catchment have already undertaken at their own initiative and expense, and support further action by providing the latest science that enables decisions balancing economic cost and environmental benefit.

## Resolutions to WRC by active Landowners in the Catchment

Landowners in the Whangamarino / Lake Waikare catchment support work to achieve better environmental outcomes. But we also seek cost effect solutions that will achieve positive identifiable outcomes within a realistic timeframe.

**"We, as landowning ratepayers in the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino catchment request Waikato Regional Council delay the adoption of this costly proposal and funding of a governance and implementation committee and instead focus initially on identifying and implementing achievable cost-effective outcomes for all New Zealanders"**

1. Obtain independent engineering advice on the potential of introducing fresh river water into the southwestern end of Lake Waikare to assist in flushing the lake, without which the lake will continue as a stagnant water body.

   *Note: this is a diversion - not a water take. Concerns over sending silt into the river are negated because flushing of silt from the Rangiriri and Te Onetea streams was historically part of the lake's natural flushing cycle which transferred silt into the river.*

2. Obtain independent engineering advice to address the hydraulic performance of the total system, from the lake to the discharge at Mercer.

   *Note: remove the current fixed weir and install a controlled gate which would be opened in tandem with the Lake Waikare gate to channel water down the Whangamarino river and out into the Waikato rather than allowing it to spread out contaminating the wetland areas*

3. Present a formal business case study to central government for funding both works (No. 1 and No. 2 above) based on the premise that the serious environmental issues in Lake Waikare are a direct result of central governments funding of the construction and implementation of the LWFPS which did not recognise the long-term consequences of isolating Lake Waikare from the Waikato River, historically its flushing source.

   *Note: The LWFPS could not have been constructed without Lake Waikare flood storage*

4. Continue to actively seek resolutions to manage Koi Carp, including seeking to have it elevated to a pest of National Significance requiring biosecurity input and funding rather than simply classifying it as an unwanted organism and noxious fish.

   *Note: It is easy to put this problem into the too hard basket, but no gains will be made unless we find a solution. The problem is now so serious it requires a national input and funding strategy.*

5. Recognise the current environmental work landowners in this catchment have already implemented at their own volution and expense and encourage further action by providing landowners with the latest and greatest science that enables environmental decisions that balance the economic cost and environmental benefit.

6. Support and encourage the landowners outside of the Mangatangi-Maramarua Catchment Group to form groups and collectively support each other to identify and tackle the environmental issues in a pragmatic way.

# Lake Waikare -Whangamarino Catchment

Everyone in our community wants a better lake and environment

**Te Kauwhata residents and WDC** have stepped up and funded the new sewage treatment Plant which is allowing continued development and community benefits

**Farmers** have spent $millions of their own income over the last 50 years to deliver water into Lake Waikare and Whangamarino swamp of far better quality than that in Lake.

**Water quality** Today the water running into Lake Waikare and Whangamarino by Councils own records is all of significantly better quality than the water already there. In the case of the Matahura stream, in the last 18 years, turbidity has gone down 21%, Phosphate levels down 36%. N stable. The Mangatangi catchment discharges water with low N and P levels. The Waerenga catchment - minor N and P levels. So, the problem exists in the lake and after 60 years a stagnated lake will remain without remedial action.

## We ask how does this plan fix the water quality in lake Waikare and Whangamarino?

We need to remember the flood control scheme was installed by Government to protect the towns of Huntly and Otorohanga, the state highway and rail infrastructure.

It also protected 17500 ha of agricultural land. The scheme could not have been built without flood storage The Rangiriri and Te Onetea streams which flushed the lake into the river were closed. The impact of isolating Lake Waikare for 60 years was not foreseen. Its current degraded status is a direct result of those flood works, and we believe it appropriate the Government now step up and finance a solution.

**Koi Carp.** Many of today's issues have been caused by Carp. It is estimated the are 1.4 million tons of Kio carp in Lake Waikare. The damage they are doing is incalculable. Nothing will improve lake Waikare or the Whangamarino until a solution to reduce or attempt to eradicate carp takes place. No water quality improvements will occur without the introduction of another water source. A ban on discharging silt to the river, as happened naturally before the flood scheme, will mean no possible improvement in lakes' water quality.

## Whangamarino –RAMSA status

The Whangamarino wetland spans more than 7,000 hectares of swamps, fens and peat bogs. It was naturally a Highmore peat dome, dry in summer and wet in winter. **An assessment of the Wetland confirms ecological decline.** The natural conditions that existed on this Highmore peat dome were sacrificed by raising water levels for wildfowl hunting purposes. creating significant damage to this historical area. Koi Carp are stirring up nutrients into the water. Blackwater events can be attributed to the weir raising water levels. Restoration can only commence with removal of the weir structure. The weir has also blocked the natural historical silt flow into the Waikato River and allowed silt to move up to a kilometer into the wetland. Due to concerted landowner efforts, water entering wetland is of low N and P content, and of better quality than what exists there at present. The weir consent is up for review next year.

## Lake Waikare - So how did we get here

Before 1960 Lake Waikare ebbed and flowed into river via Rangiriri and Te Onetea streams as the river rose and fell, flushing silt and refreshing the lake from river Historically the lake also spilled over into the north end of the Whangamarino, and the natural silt trap produced the fertile lands adjacent to the Waerenga road

The lake always had suspended silt, and the 1942 aerial photos show it had a dirty color compared to the river. Now the silt is trapped in the lake which has become a degraded stagnate pond, a source of disappointment to the urban and rural communities

The claim that the lake's natural level was 1200mm higher than now is a false claim. Many solutions were canvased by at least two earlier council catchment committees. Because of the color of the lake, trials were carried out showing that even if the lake was raised, resuspension of silt would remain an issue due then to wind and wave action.

**Canada Geese** have been a pest problem for many years. Farmers have been spending considerable sums of money attempting to control them. At best the work is only limiting the increase in numbers Fish and Game brought them here from the South Island where they were a known problem but have washed their hands of controlling them.

# Our request to the Waikato Regional Council

**"That landowner ratepayers in the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment request Waikato Regional Council defer consideration, adoption or implementation of the "Whangamarino Action Plan" until the technical investigations/assessments requested below have been completed and reported back to Council."**

Landowner ratepayers in the Whangamarino / Lake Waikare catchment support the need for actions that will drive significant environmental improvements in the Whangamarino and Lake Waikare to achieve better environmental outcomes. But we only support identifiable cost-effective solutions. We set out below what should be the first steps to identify achievable outcomes within a realistic timeframe. In its current form, we do not believe the Action Plan delivers on either.

**1 We ask Council to** be mindful in its deliberations and actions of the trade-off at play within the Lake Waikare and the Whangamarino Wetland which were deliberately engineered as flood-storage assets within the Lower Waikato–Waipa Flood Control Scheme. These assets deliver major regional flood-protection benefits to the whole community, but in retrospect impose significant ongoing environmental costs on the lake and wetland areas.

**2 We ask Council to** commission independent engineering advice on the potential of introducing fresh river water into the southwestern end of Lake Waikare to assist in flushing the lake, without which the Lake will remain as a stagnant water body.

**3 We ask Council to** obtain independent engineering advice to address the performance of the weir and its impact upon the historical natural environment of Whangamarino river and wetland and identify what adverse effects can be directly attributed to its instillation.

**4 We ask Council to** develop a case to justify the need for central-government participation and funding for the above investigations and assessments to achieve mitigation of the long-term environmental effects created by the commissioning and funding of the construction and implementation of the LWFPS on Lake Waikare

**5 We ask Council to** continue to actively seek resolutions to manage Koi Carp, including seeking to have it elevated to a pest of National Significance requiring biosecurity input and funding rather than simply classifying it as an unwanted organism and noxious fish and ask government to make legislative chances to allow commercial harvesting to be permitted.

**We Oppose any changes to the flood control scheme, changes to drainage schemes, and expenditure on any non-scientifically proven actions until the issues we have identified have been addressed. There is no cost benefit analysis, and no indication how the enormous costs of funding this proposed plan will impact upon all ratepayers. It is our belief that the current action plan does not meet community expectations and is therefore not fit for purpose.**

*This pamphlet has been produced by concerned ratepayers in the Whangamarino Lake Waikare catchment.*

# LAKE WAIKARE – WHANGAMARINO ACTION PLAN

**PROJECT SCOPE:**

The fundamental purpose of the Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan is to identify actions that will drive significant environmental improvements in Whangamarino and Waikare *(Source: Final Draft Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan, April 2026).*

**HOW DID THE WATERS DEGRADE:**

Degradation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland has been a result of human, natural and pest causes.

1. Human intervention in many forms including but not limited too: urbanisation, ruralisation, engineering modifications (e.g. Lake Waikare, Whangamarino Weir); forestry; Mangatangi Dam; roading etc..
2. Natural DNA of the landscape (the geology under the soil) around these water bodies - this part of the Waikato is highly erodible and we see evidence of this in established native bush (e.g. Hunua Ranges) and on farms alike.
3. Introduced pests (Koi Carp, Geese etc..) are a fundamental cause and exacerbator of the sediment and pollution in the water bodies and also in all tributaries, including geese in the Mangatangi Dam.

**WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN DONE:**

A lot of work has been completed by farmers, Waikato District Council, Developers etc. to reduce impurities entering these water bodies.

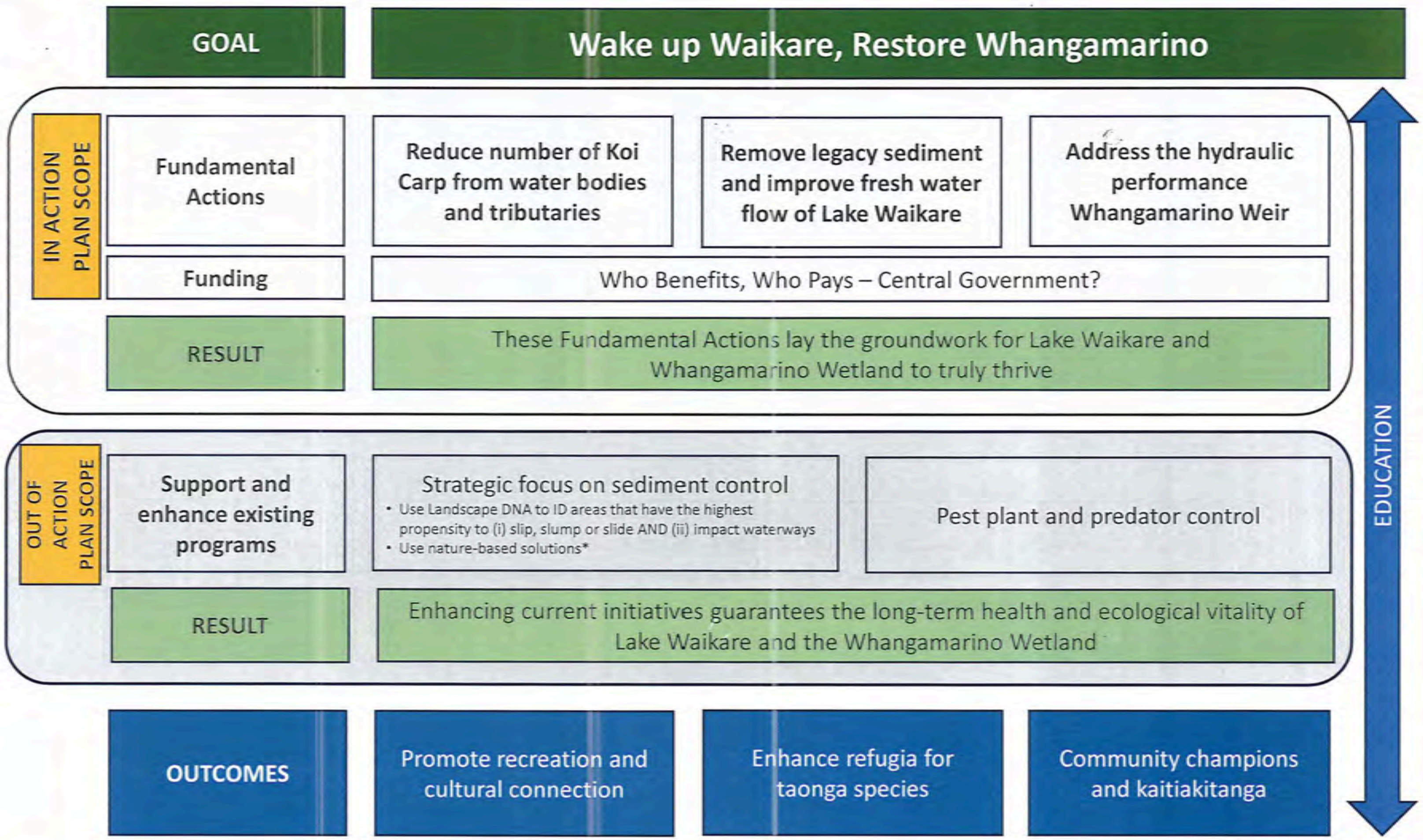
Water testing results suggest that the water quality coming into these two water bodies are of, or close to, acceptable quality.

**CORE CHALLENGES:**

1. Perception versus reality of how current situation has formed and what current situation is.
2. Pests, particularly Koi Carp, are a major inhibitor to positive improvements.
3. Receiving water bodies – Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland - are where the core issues exist.

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE** = PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE

*This pamphlet has been prepared by the Mangatangi Maramarua Catchment Coordinator representing concerned ratepayers in the Whangamarino Lake Waikare catchment.*




- *Nature-based solutions work with the natural processes of the land, such as: native plantings, sediment trapping, kahikatea and lowland forest plantings, riparian planting, poplar poles etc...*

# 3 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

| | |
|---|---|
| **Unuhia, unuhia** | **Draw on, draw on,** |
| **Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui** | **Draw on to the supreme sacredness** |
| **kia wātea, kia māmā,** | **To clear, to free** |
| **te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,** | **our heart, body and soul** |
| **i te ara takatū** | **Our pathway prepared** |
| **Koia rā e Rongo** | **Lo, there is peace** |
| **e whakairia ake ki runga** | **suspended high above** |
| **kia tina! TINA!** | **manifest!** |
| **Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!** | **draw together!** |
| | **Affirm!** |