



AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2026

Time: 9:30 am

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

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

Kaunihera | Council

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere | Terms of Reference

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

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

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Preliminary Items	4
	Nil	
3	Apologies	4
4	Confirmation of Agenda	4
5	Disclosures of Interest	4
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	5
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 30 April 2026	5
6.1	Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 21 April 2026	16
6.2	Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026	31
6.3	Minutes of the Waiora Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 5 May 2026	41
6.4	Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 6 May 2026.....	49
6.5	Minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026	58
6.6	Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026	67
7	General Items	74
7.1	Health and Safety Report - April 2026.....	74
7.2	Te Huia Interregional Passenger Rail Service: Potential Service Changes for Final Year of the Trial.....	82
7.3	Approval of 2026/27 Annual Plan	104
7.4	Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update	113
7.5	Local Government New Zealand - Annual General Meeting and SuperLocal Conference 2026	129
7.6	LGNZ AGM Remit - NZTA Bulk Funding for Transport.....	133
8	Public Excluded Items	148
9	Karakia Whakamutunga	150

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

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

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Nil

3 APOLOGIES**4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA****5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

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

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

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Ordinary Council Meeting – 30 April 2026



MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting

Thursday, 30 April 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Preliminary Items	4
2.1	Deputations - Local Government New Zealand Membership.....	4
3	Apologies	4
4	Confirmation of Agenda	4
5	Disclosures of Interest	4
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	5
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 26 March 2026	5
6.1	Minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026	5
6.2	Minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 9 March 2026.....	5
6.3	Minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026	5
6.4	Minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2026.....	6
6.5	Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 March 2026	6
6.6	Minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 30 March 2026	6
6.7	Minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2026	7
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION)	7
6.4	Risk and Assurance Committee – 16 March 2026.....	7
6.5	Intergrated Catchment Management Committee – 18 March 2026.....	7
6.6	Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee – 30 March 2026	8
7	General Items	8
7.1	Hauraki Gulf Forum - Minutes for Receipt	8
7.2	Health and Safety Report - March 2026.....	8
7.3	Waikato Regional Energy Strategy	9
7.4	Waikato Regional Council Submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 to the Waipā District Plan.....	9
7.5	Notice of Motion - Local Government New Zealand Membership.....	10
8	Public Excluded Items	10
9	Karakia Whakamutunga	10

**Waikato Regional Council
Ordinary Council Meeting**

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Thursday 30 April 2026, 9.30am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Warren Maher – Chair
 Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Chris Hughes (until 10.54am, back at 11.15am)
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams)
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer
 Cr Noel Smith
 Cr Liz Stolwyk
 Cr Angela Strange

In Attendance: Cr Dion Swiggs – Chair, Environment Canterbury (virtually via Teams, for item 2.1. *Deputations*)

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
 Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services
 Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections
 Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use
 Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono
 Karen Bennett – Executive Manager, Chief Executive’s Office
 Stuart Brown – Executive Manager, People and Capability
 Jordan Metz – Democracy Advisor
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor
 Dave Doggart – Team Lead, Democracy

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions. An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council’s public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Recording 1	Doc # 35772357	https://youtu.be/BZXSxRSHawg
Recording 2	Doc # 35769530	https://youtu.be/KAhDJ-wYss4

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at start.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) opened the meeting with a karakia.

The Team Lead, Democracy (Dave Doggart) provided a Health and Safety statement.

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

2.1 DEPUTATIONS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND MEMBERSHIP

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 10 seconds.

- a. Mr Brett Murphy opened his deputation with a prayer and spoke to his deputation.
- b. The Chief Executive, Local Government New Zealand (Mr Scott Necklan) and the Chair, Environment Canterbury and Chair, Regional Sector, Local Government New Zealand (Cr Dion Swiggs) spoke to the deputation. Mr Necklan acknowledged the sad passing of former Waikato Regional Council Chair, Alan Livingstone.

3 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 38 minutes 42 seconds.

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 38 minutes 47 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/34

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

1. That the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 30 April 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.
2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.
3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.

CARRIED

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in recording 1, at 39 minutes.

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

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 26 MARCH 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 39 minutes 12 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/35

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

That the open and public excluded minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.1 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 39 minutes 42 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/36

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.2 MINUTES OF THE RTC PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/37

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 9 March 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON

11 MARCH 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/38

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.4 MINUTES OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/39

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.5 MINUTES OF THE INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/40

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.6 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/41

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 30 March 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.7 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO RAUPATU RIVER TRUST AND WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL CO-GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2026**RESOLUTION WRC26/42****Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge****Seconded: Cr Angela Strange**

- 1. That the minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2026 be received.**
- 2. That the decisions made under delegated authority be noted.**
- 3. That the actions requested be noted.**

CARRIED**6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION)****6.4 RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2026**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 40 minutes and 36 seconds.

Presented by the Deputy-Chair, Risk and Assurance Committee (Cr Chris Hughes).

RESOLUTION WRC26/44**Moved: Cr Chris Hughes****Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta**

- 1. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee the Council Chair (Cr Warren Maher) signs the Audit Engagement Letter and Audit Proposal for the annual report audit of Waikato Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2026.**
- 2. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee, Council adopts the updated *Procedural Delegations Manual* (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 211).**
- 3. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee, Council adopts the updated *Protected Disclosures (Whistle-blower) Policy* (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 303)**

.CARRIED**6.5 INTERGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2026**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 42 minutes and 5 seconds.

Presented by the Chair, Integrated Catchment Committee (Cr Robert Cookson).

RESOLUTION WRC26/45**Moved: Cr Robert Cookson**

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That on the recommendation of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee, Council as standard practice, where a legal opinion is tabled as part of an agenda item, requests that the instructing letter and the engagement letter be included with the agenda papers.

CARRIED

6.6 WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE – 30 MARCH 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 47 minutes 54 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/46

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the recommendation from the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee for Council to include regionally consistent Key Performance Indicators for Civil Defence Emergency Management in the Long Term Plan be included in the Planning process for consideration.

CARRIED

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 HAURAKI GULF FORUM - MINUTES FOR RECEIPT

RESOLUTION WRC26/43

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

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

CARRIED

7.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - MARCH 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 48 minutes 47 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown).

Actions:

- a. That staff schedule some interactive Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) scenarios for governors, particularly within the catchment space.
- b. That a subsequent Health and Safety report contain data on trained emergency personnel.

RESOLUTION WRC26/47**Moved: Cr Noel Smith****Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge****That the *Health and Safety Report - March 2026* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.****CARRIED****7.3 WAIKATO REGIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 59 minutes 23 seconds.

The Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) introduced the Principal Strategic Advisor (Blair Dickie) and Senior Policy Advisor (Michelle White).

10.54am – Cr Chris Hughes left the meeting.

RESOLUTION WRC26/48**Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith****Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta**

- 1. That the report *Waikato Regional Energy Strategy* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the *Waikato Regional Energy Strategy* be adopted, subject to any amendments identified during discussion at the Council meeting.**

CARRIED

10.56am – The meeting adjourned. During the adjournment Cr Chris Hughes entered to the meeting.

11.15am – The meeting reconvened.

7.4 WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO PROPOSED PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 37 TO THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT PLAN

Item commenced in recording 2, at start.

The Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) introduced the Manager, Strategic Policy Implementation (Lisette Balsom) and Senior Policy Advisor (Katrina Andrews).

RESOLUTION WRC26/49**Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta****Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard**

- 1. That the report *Waikato Regional Council Submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 to the Waipā District Plan* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the Council delegates to the Chair (Cr Warren Maher) and the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) the approval for lodgement of the proposed *Waikato Regional Council submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park***

Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan, subject to amendments identified in discussion had at the council meeting.

CARRIED

7.5 NOTICE OF MOTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND MEMBERSHIP

Item commenced in recording 2, at 16 minutes 17 seconds.

Presented by Cr Noel Smith.

Action: That a regular monthly report be tabled at Council summarising Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) activities and that LGNZ appear quarterly to provide updates and answer questions.

RESOLUTION WRC26/50

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That Council revokes the resolution WRC25/114 (Council, 23 July 2025) and withdraw from Local Government New Zealand ending Council membership.

LOST 3/10

In putting the motion, a division was called and results were recorded as:

In Favour: Crs Chris Hughes, Garry Reymer and Noel Smith

Against: Crs Warren Maher, Mich'eal Downard, Robert Cookson, Ben Dunbar-Smith, Kataraina Hodge, Keith Holmes, Gary McGuire, Jennifer Nickel, Liz Stolwyk and Angela Strange

Did not respond: Cr Tipa Mahuta

8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

There was no public excluded session. The minutes tabled in public excluded were confirmed as correct in the open session of the meeting.

9 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 2, at 1 hour 5 minutes and 18 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.21pm – The meeting closed.

6.1 MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2026

Rā | Date: 20 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the open minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 21 April 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.2 WRC RECRUITMENT PRACTICE			
That a report be tabled at a subsequent meeting of the committee detailing progress made relating to the <i>Initiatives and actions to deliver He Whare Taumatua</i> (CE Employment and Remuneration Committee Agenda, 21 April 2026 at pages 57-61).			✓

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

[Open Agenda of the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026 \(Doc # 35597347\)](#)

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 21 April 2026**



MINUTES

Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 21 April 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
6	General Items	4
6.1	People Strategy Update	4
6.2	WRC Recruitment Practice	5
7	Public Excluded Items	5
7.1	Chief Executive KPIs Quarter Three Update	6
7.2	Success of Organisation changes - Chief Executive KPI2.....	6
7.3	Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process	6
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	7
APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN		8
APPENDIX TWO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE FY26 END OF YEAR REVIEW AND FY27 KPI SETTING PROCESS REPORT		9

Waikato Regional Council
Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 21 April 2026, 1.00pm
Location: Tūi/Kōwhai Room
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Warren Maher – Chair
Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair
Cr Robert Cookson
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Cr Chris Hughes
Cr Liz Stolwyk

In Attendance: Cr Garry Reymer (virtually via Teams)

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
Paul Loof – Independent Consultant
Dave Doggart – Team Lead, Democracy

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Open Recording #1	35658105	https://youtu.be/idA_KHXp3vU
Public Excluded Recording	35663930	-
Open Recording #2	35660612	https://youtu.be/K6dExKMnRx8

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Team Lead, Democracy (Dave Doggart) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Nil

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 32 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/13

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

- 1. That the agenda of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting of 21 April 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously if required.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 7 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 25 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay) who requested the report be taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/14

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the report *People Strategy Update* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.2 WRC RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 16 minutes 3 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay) who requested the report be taken as read.

Action: That a report be tabled at a subsequent meeting of the committee detailing progress made relating to the *Initiatives and actions to deliver He Whare Taumatua* (CE Employment and Remuneration Committee Agenda, 21 April 2026 at pages 57-61).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/15

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

That the report *WRC Recruitment Practice* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 34 minutes 13 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/16

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

- 1. That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:**

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public

<p>7.1 - Chief Executive KPIs Quarter Three Update</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>
<p>7.2 - Success of Organisation changes - Chief Executive KPI2</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities</p> <p>s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>
<p>7.3 - Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>

- 2. That the Independent Consultant (Paul Loof) remains in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of their knowledge of the items to be discussed. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to those matters because of its specialised nature and the benefit to be gained from expert advice.**

CARRIED

1.35pm – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

2.31pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

The Team Lead, Democracy (Dave Doggart) closed the meeting with a karakia.

2.32pm – The meeting closed.

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

7.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE KPIS QUARTER THREE UPDATE

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/17

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

1. That the report *Chief Executive KPIs Quarter Three Update* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.
2. That the decision be reported into the open session of this meeting.

CARRIED

7.2 SUCCESS OF ORGANISATION CHANGES - CHIEF EXECUTIVE KPI2

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/18

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. That the report *Success of Organisation changes - Chief Executive KPI2* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.
2. That the receipt of the report be reported into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

7.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE FY26 END OF YEAR REVIEW AND FY27 KPI SETTING PROCESS

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/19

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. That the report *Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.
2. That the proposed process and timetable (as set out in the attached report) be approved.
3. That the decision and report be released into the open session of the meeting (*refer attachment two below*).

CARRIED

APPENDIX TWO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE FY26 END OF YEAR REVIEW AND FY27 KPI SETTING PROCESS REPORT

Public Excluded Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee
Meeting Agenda

21 April 2026

7.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE FY26 END OF YEAR REVIEW AND FY27 KPI SETTING PROCESS

Rā | Date: 16 April 2026
Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy
Kaituku | Authoriser: Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono

TĀFĀŌ!Ā,Ā«MATAITI | PUBLIC EXCLUDED

The following good reasons to withhold this report from the public exist under section 6 or 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, in accordance with section 48(1)(a)(i):

- s7(2)(a) To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.
- s7(2)(i) To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To table the report (attachment one) as supplied by the Independent Consultant, QLG Advisory Limited (Paul Loof).

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 21 April 2026) be received.
2. That the proposed process and timetable (as set out in the attached report) be approved.
3. That the decision and report be released into the open session of the meeting.

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Supplied Report: Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process (Doc # 35585019)** [↓](#)

Report to Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee

Public Excluded

Date:	April 2026
Author:	Paul Loof, Partner, QLG advisory
Authoriser:	Paul Loof, Partner, QLG advisory
Subject:	Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process
Section:	A (Committee has delegated authority to make decision)

Purpose

To enable the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee (CEERC) to approve the recommended process and timetable for:

- the Chief Executive's FY26 End of Year (Annual) Review; and
- setting the Chief Executive's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for FY27.

Executive Summary

1. CEERC is required to undertake an annual Chief Executive End of Year Review (the Review) covering performance against KPIs, competency assessment, identification of development areas, and a remuneration recommendation.
2. CEERC is also responsible for setting the Chief Executive's KPIs for the forthcoming financial year. This report recommends a combined, integrated process for both the FY26 Review and the FY27 KPI setting.
3. The recommended process involves CEERC, councillors, and the Chief Executive across April through to June 2026, with Paul Loof (PJL) conducting the independent review activities.
4. CEERC is asked to approve the timetable and process steps set out in this report, and to agree the list of external stakeholders and executive team members to be interviewed as part of the FY26 Annual Review.

Staff Recommendation: That the report 'Chief Executive FY26 End of Year Review and FY27 KPI Setting Process' (April 2026) be received and the proposed process and timetable be approved.

Decisions Required

5. CEERC is asked to approve the proposed integrated process and timetable for the Chief Executive's FY26 Annual Review and the setting of FY27 KPIs as set out in this report, and to confirm the list of external stakeholders and executive team members to be interviewed as part of the FY26 Annual Review.

Public Excluded

1. The following good reason(s) to withhold this report from the public exists under Section 6 and/or 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), in

Public Excluded Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee
Meeting Agenda

21 April 2026

accordance with Section 48(1)(a): Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons (section 7(2)(a) of the Act).

Background

- Each year CEERC is required by Council to undertake a Chief Executive End of Year (Annual) Review. This includes reviewing the Chief Executive's performance against agreed KPIs for the year, competency assessment against the requirements of the Position Description, identification of development areas, and a recommendation regarding remuneration.
- Council's practice over many years has been for the Review to include the following 360° feedback elements: an online survey of councillors; structured interviews with between 10–15 external stakeholders; and structured interviews with at least four executive team members. CEERC identifies these stakeholders each year.
- Paul Loof (PJL) conducts these interviews, analyses all data and feedback received, and presents a report and recommendations covering all aspects of the Review to CEERC. On the basis of this report CEERC determines its Review and remuneration recommendations to Council.
- Separately, CEERC is responsible for setting the Chief Executive's KPIs at the commencement of each financial year. This report recommends that the FY27 KPI-setting process and the FY26 Annual Review process be run concurrently as an integrated programme of work commencing in April 2026.

Issue

- CEERC is asked to approve the recommended process and timetable set out in this report for the Chief Executive's FY26 Annual Review and the FY27 KPI-setting process.
- CEERC is asked to confirm which external stakeholders and executive team members will be interviewed by PJL for the purposes of the FY26 Annual Review.

External Stakeholders and Executive Team Members for Interview (FY26 Annual Review)

- CEERC is asked to confirm the list of external stakeholders and executive team members to be interviewed by PJL as part of the Chief Executive's FY26 Annual Review. These will be finalised at the April CEERC meeting.
- External stakeholders are typically senior executives or chairs from a broad range of organisations that CEERC considers important to Waikato Regional Council. Executive team members to be interviewed should include at least four members of the Chief Executive's executive team.

Proposed Process and Timetable

The following integrated process is recommended for the FY26 Chief Executive Annual Review and the setting of FY27 Chief Executive KPIs.

CEERC – April

- CEERC and the Chief Executive commence discussion on FY27 KPIs. CEERC approves the timetable for FY27 KPI setting and the FY26 Annual Review.
- CEERC formally invites the Chief Executive to propose his FY27 KPIs.

2 | Page

Public Excluded Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee
Meeting Agenda

21 April 2026

- CEERC decides which external stakeholders and executive team members are to be interviewed by PJJ for the Chief Executive's FY26 Annual Review.

April – Councillor Priorities

- The Chair emails all councillors asking them to nominate their top two priorities for the Chief Executive in FY27.
- PJJ analyses councillor priorities and presents a KPI 'long list' to CEERC.

CEERC Meeting – Early May

- CEERC considers the KPI 'long list' and the Chief Executive's proposed FY27 KPIs.
- CEERC agrees the KPIs to be taken forward to the councillor workshop.

Council Workshop – May

- Councillors consider CEERC's proposed FY27 KPIs, with input from the Chief Executive.

Council Meeting – May

- Council approves the Chief Executive's KPIs for FY27.

Late May

- The Chief Executive provides his FY26 performance self-assessment to CEERC.
- PJJ commences FY26 Chief Executive Annual Review activities, including the councillor survey, external stakeholder interviews, and executive team interviews.

CEERC Meeting – Early June

- PJJ presents the draft Chief Executive FY26 Annual Review and remuneration review to CEERC.
- The Chief Executive presents his FY26 self-assessment to CEERC.
- CEERC provides PJJ with final drafting instructions for the Chief Executive FY26 Annual Review and remuneration review.

Council – June

- CEERC presents the proposed Chief Executive FY26 Annual Review and remuneration review to Council for approval.

June – Communication to Chief Executive

- The Chair conveys Council's FY26 Annual Review and remuneration review findings to the Chief Executive by way of a letter of confirmation.

Paul Loof
QLG Advisory
15 April 2026

6.2 MINUTES OF THE WRC TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2026

Rā | Date: 12 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jess Hood, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Phil King, Director, Regional Transport Connections

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.
2. That as recommended by the WRC Transport Committee, Council resolves that the remaining unallocated balance of the Community Transport Grant Fund (\$8,972.94) be allocated to the next funding pool.
3. That as recommended by the WRC Transport Committee, Council supports Option 3 (*refer WRC Transport Committee Agenda, 12 April 2026 at page 39*), that is a maximum subsidy of \$22.75 per ride regionwide (65% of up to \$35) and recommends this be included as part of the 2026/27 Annual Plan approvals in May 2026.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.2 DIRECTOR’S REPORT			
That staff provide updates and data on patronage figures are tracking during times of high fuel costs, as well as information on the increase of costs to running services due to fuel prices rising.			✓
6.4 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GRANT FUND 2026 RESULTS			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/14			
2. That the WRC Transport Committee refers to Council that the remaining unallocated balance of \$8,972.94 is allocated to the next funding pool.		✓	
6.6 TOTAL MOBILITY			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/16			
2. That the committee supports Option 3 (<i>refer WRC Transport Committee Agenda, 12 April 2026 at page 39</i>) that is a maximum subsidy of \$22.75 per ride regionwide (65% of up to \$35) and recommends this change to Council as part of the 2026/27 Annual Plan approvals in May 2026.		✓	
6.7 PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS REPORT			
Members requested a working group comprising councillors be urgently formed, to address concerns around special events operations enabling collaboration with territorial authorities.			✓

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

[WRC Transport Committee Agenda, 12 April 2026 \(Doc # 35518748\)](#)

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

- Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026**



MINUTES

WRC Transport Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
6	General Items	4
6.1	Public Forum.....	5
6.2	Director's Report	5
6.3	Fare Policy	6
6.4	Community Transport Grant Fund 2026 Results.....	7
6.5	Cambridge Public Transport Network Technical Work.....	7
6.6	Total Mobility	8
6.7	Public Transport Operations Report	8
7	Public Excluded Items	9
7.1	Community Transport Policy	10
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	10

Waikato Regional Council
WRC Transport Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 22 April 2026, 9.31am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Angela Strange – Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Warren Maher
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer
 Cr Noel Smith
 Cr Liz Stolwyk (until 12.06pm)

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

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Open Recording #1	35671650	https://youtu.be/C8oc9mrw7LY
Open Recording #2	35677557	https://youtu.be/Y6sDH8wAwx4
Public Excluded Recording	35677360	–
Open Recording #3	35680873	https://youtu.be/87g2YTqUOuE

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 15 seconds.

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

Following the karakia, the committee observed a minute of silence to formally acknowledge the passing of former Council Chair, Alan Livingston.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 32 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/10

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the apologies of Cr Chris Hughes and Cr Kataraina Hodge for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 58 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/11

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

- 1. That the agenda of the WRC Transport Committee Meeting of 22 April 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 16 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minute 28 seconds.

6.1 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no items presented for the public forum.

6.2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 3 minute 58 seconds.

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

Action: That staff provide updates and data on patronage figures are tracking during times of high fuel costs, as well as information on the increase of costs to running services due to fuel prices rising.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/12

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the *Director's Report* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.3 FARE POLICY

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 35 minute 15 seconds.

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

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/13

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Fare Policy* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.4 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GRANT FUND 2026 RESULTS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 54 minutes 3 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne) and Team Leader, Portfolio Delivery (Tofeeq Ahmed).

10.48am – The meeting adjourned.

10.58am – The meeting reconvened.
Item continued in open recording 2, at start.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/14

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

1. That the report *Community Transport Grant Fund 2026 Results* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received; and
2. That the WRC Transport Committee refers to Council that the remaining unallocated balance of \$8,972.94 is allocated to the next funding pool.

CARRIED

6.5 CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK TECHNICAL WORK

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 46 seconds.

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

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/15

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Cambridge Public Transport Network Technical Work* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.6 TOTAL MOBILITY

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 3 minutes 35 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne) and Accessible Transport Lead (Maurice Flynn).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/16

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

1. That the report *Total Mobility* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received.
2. That the committee supports Option 3 that is a maximum subsidy of \$22.75 per ride regionwide (65% of up to \$35) and recommends this change to Council as part of the 2026/27 Annual Plan approvals in May 2026.

CARRIED

6.7 PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 24 minutes 45 seconds.

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

Action: Members requested a working group comprising councillors be urgently formed, to address concerns around special events operations enabling collaboration with territorial authorities.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/17

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the *Public Transport Operations Report* (WRC Transport Committee, 22 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 57 minutes 3 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WRCTC26/18

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public
7.1 - Community Transport Policy	s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7

CARRIED

11.56am – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

12.27pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

No decisions or documentation from the public excluded session were released into open.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at start.

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

12.28pm – The meeting closed.

6.3 MINUTES OF THE WAIORA CO-GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 MAY 2026

Rā | Date: 18 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

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

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Waiora Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 5 May 2026 be received.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.1 IMPLICATIONS OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REFORM ON FRESHWATER POLICY REVIEW			
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCGC26/01</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report Implications of Resource Management System Reform on Freshwater Policy Review (Waiora Co-Governance Committee, 5 May 2026) be received. 2. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee agree to temporarily pause the policy development and engagement workstreams of the Freshwater Policy Review. 3. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee direct that remaining work on the science and economic workstreams of the Freshwater Policy Review continues to build the technical evidence base to inform policy development. 4. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee direct Te Rōpū Hautū to report back to the Committee once the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill are enacted, including advice on implications for the Freshwater Policy Review and a revised workplan. 	✓		
6.2 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE FOR THE FRESHWATER POLICY REVIEW			
That staff update the Committee on the freshwater policy review, highlighting any alignment with the Long-Term Plan at the next meeting.			✓

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Minutes of the Waiora Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 5 May 2026**



MINUTES

Waiora Co-Governance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 5 May 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	5
2	Apologies	5
3	Confirmation of Agenda	5
4	Disclosures of Interest	5
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	6
6	General Items	6
6.1	Implications of Resource Management System Reform on Freshwater Policy Review	6
6.2	Engagement update for the freshwater policy review	6
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	7

Waikato Regional Council
Waioira Co-Governance Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 5 May 2026, 11.00am

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

Members Present: Trustee Maria Nepia – Committee Co-Chair – Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board
 Cr Noel Smith – Committee Co-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
 Trustee Jackie Colliar – Waikato Raupatu River Trust
 Cr Robert Cookson – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Mich'eal Downard - Waikato Regional Council (virtually via Teams)
 Trustee Nachele Griffiths – Raukawa Charitable Trust (Interim)
 Cr Jennifer Nickel – Waikato Regional Council
 Trustee Gannin Ormsby – Te Nehenehenui
 Cr Liz Stolwyk – Waikato Regional Council

In Attendance: Cr Keith Holmes – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Warren Maher - Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Tipa Mahuta – Waikato Regional Council (virtually via Teams)
 Cr Angela Strange - Waikato Regional Council

Staff Present: Jo Ireland – Chief Executive, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust
 Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information, Waikato Regional Council
 Tramaine Murray – Group Taiao Manager, Te Nehenehenui
 Jason Nepia – Economic Manager, Te Nehenehenui
 Peter Shepherd – Manager Natural Resources, Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board
 Billy Brough – Technical Advisor, River Iwi
 Jordan Metz – Democracy Advisor, Waikato Regional Council

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Recording #1	35825296	https://youtu.be/9LQnAHui9cY
Recording #2	35825412	https://youtu.be/8rr41wvL0t0

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at start.

The Senior Policy Advisor – Water (Julian Svadlenak-Gardiner) opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 58 seconds.

APOLOGY

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCGC26/01

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the apologies of Trustee Evelyn Forrest for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

11.03am – The meeting adjourned.

11.19am – The meeting reconvened.

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 2, at start.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCGC26/02

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Trustee Jackie Colliar

1. That the agenda of the Waiora Co-Governance Committee Meeting of 5 May 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.
2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.
3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in recording 2, at 19 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 IMPLICATIONS OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REFORM ON FRESHWATER POLICY REVIEW**

Item commenced in recording 2, at 36 minutes 51 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) and the Technical Advisor for River Iwi (Billy Brough). Refer Document # 35820826 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCGC26/03

Moved: Trustee Maria Nepia

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

1. That the report *Implications of Resource Management System Reform on Freshwater Policy Review* (Waiora Co-Governance Committee, 5 May 2026) be received.
2. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee agree to temporarily pause the policy development and engagement workstreams of the Freshwater Policy Review.
3. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee direct that remaining work on the science and economic workstreams of the Freshwater Policy Review continues to build the technical evidence base to inform policy development.
4. That the Waiora Co-Governance Committee direct Te Rōpū Hautū to report back to the Committee once the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill are enacted, including advice on implications for the Freshwater Policy Review and a revised workplan.

CARRIED

6.2 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE FOR THE FRESHWATER POLICY REVIEW

Item commenced in recording 2, at 14 minutes.

Presented by the Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) and the Team Leader, Policy Implementation (Naomi Crawford). Refer Document # 35820826 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

Action: That staff update the Committee on the freshwater policy review, highlighting any alignment with the Long-Term Plan at the next meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCGC26/04

Moved: Trustee Gannin Ormsby

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the report *Engagement update for the freshwater policy review* (Waiora Co-Governance Committee, 5 May 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 2, at 35 minutes 8 seconds.

The Senior Policy Advisor – Water (Julian Svadlenak-Gardiner) closed the meeting with a Karakia.

11.56am – The meeting closed.

6.4 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 MAY 2026

Rā | Date: 6 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor

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

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 6 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.
2. As recommended by the Strategy and Policy Committee, that Council:
 - (a) Amends the Waikato Regional Plan, under section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, to give effect to the December 2025 amendment to clause 3.22 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, by incorporating the mandatory policy change relating to quarrying and mining activities affecting natural inland wetlands, as set out in the Strategy and Policy Committee Agenda, 6 May 2026 at page 12.
 - (b) Notes that, in accordance with section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, public notification of the amendments to the Waikato Regional Plan will occur within five working days of the amendments being made.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.

- (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
- (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.1 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT 2020 - S55(2A) CHANGES TO THE WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/15 2. That the Strategy and Policy Committee recommends that Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Amend the Waikato Regional Plan, under section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, to give effect to the December 2025 amendment to clause 3.22 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, by incorporating the mandatory policy change relating to quarrying and mining activities affecting natural inland wetlands, as set out in Attachment 1. (b) In accordance with section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, public notification of the amendments to the Waikato Regional Plan will occur within five working days of the amendments being made. 		✓	
6.2 A BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAIKATO REGION - ENDORSEMENT OF DRAFT STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/16 2. That the Strategy and Policy Committee endorse the Draft Biodiversity Strategy, subject to any amendments identified during discussion at the Committee meeting.	✓		
Staff to provide councillors with the consultation questions for review before they are released for public consultation.			✓

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

- 3. [Strategy and Policy Committee Agenda – 6 May 2026](#) – (Doc # 35781171)

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

- 1. **Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 6 May 2026**



MINUTES

Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 6 May 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
6	General Items	5
6.1	National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020 - s55(2A) Changes to the Waikato Regional Plan	5
6.2	A Biodiversity Strategy for the Waikato Region - Endorsement of Draft Strategy for Public Consultation.....	5
6.3	Update on National Direction - Stock Exclusion Regulations and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure	6
6.4	Waikato Residents' Environmental Perceptions Survey 2025	6
6.5	Submissions Summary Report - May 2026	7
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	7

Waikato Regional Council
Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 6 May 2026, 9.30am

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

Members Present: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith – Chair
 Cr Liz Stolwyk – Deputy Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson (until 10.35am, from 10.43am)
 Cr Mich'eal Downard
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Chris Hughes
 Cr Warren Maher
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (from 9.50am)
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer (until 11.18am, from 11.23am)
 Cr Noel Smith
 Cr Angela Strange (virtually via Teams from 10.23am, and in person from 10.35am)

Staff Present: Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Recording 1	Doc # 35770599	https://youtu.be/EBu0XXY0j6A

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 9 seconds.

The Democracy Advisor (Brooke Roebeck) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 31 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/13

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the apologies of Cr Angela Strange for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 15 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/14

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge

- 1. That the agenda of the Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting of 6 May 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 33 seconds.

Cr Noel Smith disclosed that he was a farmer with an interest related to stock exclusion requirements affecting a waterway referenced in item 6.3. *Update on National Direction - Stock Exclusion Regulations and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.*

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT 2020 - S55(2A) CHANGES TO THE WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 40 seconds

The Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) introduced the Team Leader, Water Policy (Naomi Crawford). Refer Document # 35821732 for the PowerPoint presentation (at page 3-4) or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/15

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

1. That the report *Changes to the Waikato Regional Plan Required by Freshwater Management Policy Amendment* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026) be received.
2. That the Strategy and Policy Committee recommends that Council:
 - (a) Amend the Waikato Regional Plan, under section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, to give effect to the December 2025 amendment to clause 3.22 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, by incorporating the mandatory policy change relating to quarrying and mining activities affecting natural inland wetlands, as set out in Attachment 1 (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026 at page 12-13).
 - (b) In accordance with section 55(2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991, public notification of the amendments to the Waikato Regional Plan will occur within five working days of the amendments being made.

CARRIED

6.2 A BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAIKATO REGION - ENDORSEMENT OF DRAFT STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Item commenced in recording 1, at 10 minutes 17 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Strategic Policy Implementation (Lisette Balsom), the Manager, Biosecurity and Biodiversity (Patrick Whaley) and Director, Place Group Limited (Angus McKenzie). Refer Document # 35821732 for the PowerPoint presentation (at page 5-8) or on the public website.

9.50am – Cr Tipa Mahuta entered the meeting.

Action: That staff provide councillors the consultation questions for feedback before they are released for public consultation.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/16

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

1. That the report *A Biodiversity Strategy for the Waikato Region - Endorsement of Draft Strategy for Public Consultation* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026) be received.
2. That the Strategy and Policy Committee endorse the Draft Biodiversity Strategy, subject to any amendments identified during discussion at the Committee meeting.

CARRIED

6.3 UPDATE ON NATIONAL DIRECTION - STOCK EXCLUSION REGULATIONS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Item commenced in recording 1, at 42 minutes 46 seconds.

The Director, Science, Policy and Information (Tracey May) introduced the Team Leader, Water Policy (Naomi Crawford) and Principal Advisor (Hamish Smith) who requested the report be taken as read. Refer Document # 35821732 for the PowerPoint presentation (at pages 9-11) or on the public website.

10.23am – Cr Angela Strange entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/17

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the report *Update on National Direction - Stock Exclusion Regulations and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.4 WAIKATO RESIDENTS' ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS SURVEY 2025

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 hour 4 minutes and 12 seconds.

Presented by Social Scientist (Melissa Hackell) and Engagement and Research Specialist (Louise Stone). Refer Document # 35821732 for the PowerPoint presentation (at page 12-16) or on the public website.

The *Waikato Resident's Environmental Perceptions Survey 2025* was inadvertently omitted from the agenda. Refer Document # 35840826 or on the public website.

10.35am – Cr Robert Cookson left the meeting.

10.43am – Cr Robert Cookson entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/18

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Waikato Residents' Environmental Perceptions Survey 2025* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.5 SUBMISSIONS SUMMARY REPORT - MAY 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 hour 43 minutes and 5 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Strategic and Spatial Planning (Miffy Foley) who requested the report be taken as read.

11.18am – Cr Garry Reymer left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION SP26/19

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the *Submissions Summary Report - May 2026* (Strategy and Policy Committee, 6 May 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 hour 52 minutes and 54 seconds.

The Democracy Advisor (Brooke Roebeck) closed the meeting with a karakia.

11.23am – Cr Garry Reymer entered the meeting.

11.24am – The meeting closed.

6.5 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2026

Rā | Date: 12 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Karen Bennett, Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.2 DRAFT WAIKATO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/13			
<p>2. That the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee endorses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Draft Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy (Regional Growth and Resilience Agenda, 13 May 2026, at pages 15-34). (b) the release of the draft strategy for stakeholder feedback. (c) staff to undertake targeted engagement with business stakeholders to test the feasibility and attractiveness of proposed initiatives. (d) that staff confirm contributions and develop implementation plans for proposed 2026/27 initiatives. 	✓		

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026**



MINUTES

Regional Growth and Resilience Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
6	General Items	5
6.1	Regional Growth and Resilience Committee - cost of activities	5
6.2	Draft Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy	5
6.3	Chair's Commentary	5
6.4	University of Waikato Economic Development Opportunity	6
6.5	Ministry for Primary Industries insights	6
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	7

Waikato Regional Council
Regional Growth and Resilience Committee Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 12 May 2026, 9.31am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Keith Holmes – Chair
 Cr Tipa Mahuta – Deputy-Chair
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Gary McGuire (from 10.05am)
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer
 Cr Angela Strange
 Cr Warren Maher (virtually via Teams from 11.12am, and in person from 11.23am)

In Attendance: Cr Micheal Downard (virtually via Teams until 11.04am)

Staff Present: Karen Bennett – Executive Manager, Chief Executives Office
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Tariq Ashraf – Regional Economic Development Lead
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Recording 1	Doc # 35916686	https://youtu.be/ukt3eqYXSFO
Recording 2	Doc # 35921918	https://youtu.be/IQZevOE8-Xw

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at start.

The Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office (Karen Bennett) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 30 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/01

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the apologies of Cr Robert Cookson for absence and Cr Gary McGuire for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 10 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/11

Moved: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

- 1. That the agenda of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee Meeting of 12 May 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 33 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 REGIONAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE - COST OF ACTIVITIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 22 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office (Karen Bennett) who requested the report be taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/12

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the report *Regional Growth and Resilience Committee - cost of activities (Regional Growth and Resilience Committee, 12 May 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.2 DRAFT WAIKATO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Item commenced in recording 1, at 7 minutes 58 seconds.

Presented by the Regional Economic Development Lead (Tariq Ashraf).

10.05am – Cr Gary McGuire entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/13

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

1. That the report *Draft Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy (Regional Growth and Resilience Committee, 12 May 2026)* be received.
2. That the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee endorses:
 - (a) the *Draft Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy (Regional Growth and Resilience Agenda, 13 May 2026, at page 15-34)*.
 - (b) the release of the draft strategy for stakeholder feedback.
 - (c) staff to undertake targeted engagement with business stakeholders to test the feasibility and attractiveness of proposed initiatives.
 - (d) that staff confirm contributions and develop implementation plans for proposed 2026/27 initiatives.

CARRIED

6.3 CHAIR'S COMMENTARY

Item commenced in recording 1, at 44 minutes 44 seconds.

Presented by the Committee Chair (Cr Keith Holmes). Refer Document # 35811572 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/14

Moved: Cr Keith Holmes

Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer

That the report *Chair's Commentary (Regional Growth and Resilience Committee, 12 May 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.4 UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Item commenced in recording 1, at 56 minutes 40 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) introduced the Vice Chancellor, University of Waikato (Professor Neil Quigley), Fundraising Director, University of Waikato (Dr Nicole Barrett) and Head of Engagement and Sponsorship, University of Waikato (Amanda Hema). Refer Document # 35910859 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

Following the presentation, Cr Angela Strange acknowledged and thanked the presenters for the work undertaken to date and their ongoing commitment.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/15

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the report *University of Waikato Economic Development Opportunity (Regional Growth and Resilience Committee, 12 May 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

11.03am – The meeting adjourned. During the adjournment, Cr Warren Maher left the meeting and continued attendance via Teams, and Cr Mich'eal Downard left the meeting.

11.12am – The meeting reconvened.

6.5 MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES INSIGHTS

Item commenced in recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Director, Sector Policy, Ministry of Primary Industries (Jarred Mair). Refer Document # 35938366 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

At the conclusion of the item, Cr Garry Reymer expressed his thanks to the presenter for his presentation.

11.23am – Cr Warren Maher entered the meeting in person.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RGRC26/16

Moved: Cr Garry Reymer

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

That the report *Ministry for Primary Industries insights (Regional Growth and Resilience Committee, 12 May 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 2, at 1 hour 6 minutes and 32 seconds.

The Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office (Karen Bennett) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.20pm – The meeting closed.

6.6 MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2026

Rā | Date: 20 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the open minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Aside from the standard procedural items (apologies, confirmation of agenda etc) and decisions made under delegated authority, there were no recommendations for council to consider.

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026**



MINUTES

Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga.....	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt.....	4
6	Public Excluded Items.....	4
6.1	CE KPIs for FY26/27 – Finalise KPIs for the Council Workshop	5
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	5
	APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN	6

Waikato Regional Council
Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 12 May 2026, 2.00pm

Location: Tūi/Kōwhai Room
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Warren Maher – Chair
Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair (virtually via Teams)
Cr Robert Cookson (virtually via Teams until 2.18pm, from 2.34pm)
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Cr Chris Hughes (until 3.03pm, from 3.08pm)
Cr Liz Stolwyk

In Attendance: Cr Gary McGuire (until 3.30pm)
Cr Garry Reymer (from 2.07pm until 3.13pm)

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
Paul Loof – Independent Consultant
Dave Doggart – Team Lead, Democracy

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Open Recording #1	35925583	https://youtu.be/MJm1-XwbgMA
Public Excluded Recording	35879766	-
Open Recording #2	35923504	https://youtu.be/VgSJLyg9zwl

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Team Lead, Democracy (Dave Doggart) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Nil

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 38 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/21

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

- 1. That the agenda of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting of 12 May 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 48 seconds.

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

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

6 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 7 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/22

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard
Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public
6.1 - CE KPIs for FY26/27 – Finalise KPIs for the Council Workshop	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7

2. That the Independent Consultant (Paul Loof) remains in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of their knowledge of the items to be discussed. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to those matters because of its specialised nature and the benefit to be gained from expert advice.

CARRIED

2.01pm – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

3.34pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 16 seconds.

The Team Lead, Democracy (Dave Doggart) closed the meeting with a karakia.

3.35pm – The meeting closed.

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

6.1 CE KPIS FOR FY26/27 – FINALISE KPIS FOR THE COUNCIL WORKSHOP

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION CEERC26/23

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. That the report *CE KPIS for FY26/27 – Finalise KPIS for the Council Workshop* (Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee, 12 May 2026) be received.
2. That the Independent Consultant provide a report encapsulating the KPIS, incorporating direction from this meeting, for discussion at the Council Workshop, 2 June 2026. The report to be provided to Democracy Services by end of day 25 May 2026.
3. That following the Council Workshop on 2 June 2026, the Independent Consultant provide a report to Council finalising and recommending adoption of the KPIS, to be provided to Democracy Services by end of day 17 June 2026.
4. That only the decision is reported into the open session (the report and attachments remain publicly excluded).

CARRIED

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - APRIL 2026

Rā | Date: 16 April 2026

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

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

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

KŌRERO WHAKATAHI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Councillors have clear health and safety due diligence responsibilities, which require ongoing, and active oversight. The existing Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance Plan (due diligence) provides a structured approach to meeting these responsibilities. The education session to be delivered by Karina McKlusie (Lawyer), on 17 June is intended to further embed understanding of these duties, support informed questioning, and strengthen confidence that risks are being effectively managed in practice.
3. Tier 1 and 2 leadership walkarounds are a due diligence activity and provide ELT with direct operational assurance by assessing the effectiveness of risk controls and confirming how work is conducted in practice. There were 21 scheduled Executive Leadership Governance Walkarounds from 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2026.
4. Between 1 February and 30 April, the HSW team completed three event investigation quality reviews, providing targeted coaching that is contributing to a steady improvement in manager investigation capability. HSMS documentation assurance remains largely on track, with completion rates exceeding targets for critical and common risk reviews, while HSMS document reviews are slightly below target at 73%. The documentation assurance programme continues to provide broad coverage across 122 key HSMS items, including policies, procedures, training modules, and risk registers.
5. 24 staff have expressed interest in joining the Regional Flood Response Team (RFRT). Work is under way to have these staff trained to be able to fulfil this duty when required.
6. There were 19 staff event reports for the period April 2026, 7 were events, 9 injuries, and 3 near misses. The total reports for the last 12 months (1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026) are 256. There were no serious events or report to WorkSafe or any other enforcer during this time.
7. The April 2026 onsite flu vaccination programme achieved strong uptake, with 168 vaccinations delivered and 87 vouchers issued, alongside continued promotion of winter wellbeing and flu voucher availability through to the end of May 2026.
8. In the past year 83 staff have accessed EAP Services, with an average of 2.2 sessions per person. Our utilisation rate is 13% which is within the recommended range of 7% to 15%. At

Council, 77% of all referrals were for personal reasons, compared to 23% for work related issues. These percentages are consistent within Council, and other industries.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the report *Health and Safety Report - April 2026* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

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

SECTION ONE: Gibson High Court Decision**Summary of Safeguard Article – 7 May 2026**

10. The High Court has upheld the conviction and sentence of former Ports of Auckland chief executive Tony Gibson over the death of a port worker in 2020. The appeal against that decision has been dismissed. The following information is a summary of an article from Safeguard on the 7 May 2026.
11. The Gibson High Court decision reinforces that officers' due diligence obligations require active and informed oversight of critical health and safety risks, not reliance on reports or systems alone. Officers must understand how work is 'actually performed,' regularly evaluate whether critical controls remain effective as work changes, and be curious about whether stronger controls are needed. Meaningful engagement with frontline workers strengthens officers' ability to interpret and challenge health and safety reporting.
12. Regulator recommendations must be prioritised and actioned, or clearly justified where delayed, as failure to do so can signal poor prioritisation of risk. While current prosecution settings may fluctuate, the decision confirms that courts will hold officers personally accountable where due diligence is not demonstrably exercised in practice.
13. Council has implemented a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance plan with activities that assist the CE to exercise due diligence duties, along with delegated responsibilities assigned to the Executive Leadership Team. Council treats enforcement and improvement notices with appropriate seriousness, ensuring recommendations are actioned within required timeframes. Council is notified of all WorkSafe notices and maintains oversight of the response and closure.

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

Incident Reporting Trends

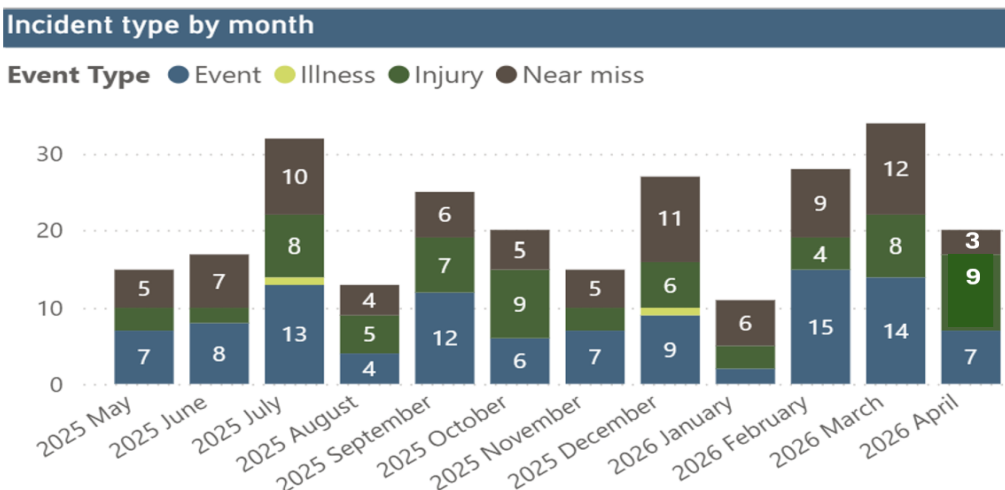
14. The total number of incidents reported for last 12 months (1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026) is 256, including the events reported for the period April 2026 (n=19).



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

Event Type by Month

- 15. Graph 2 below provides a comparison of all reports by events, injury, illness and near misses. There was a total of 19 reports for the period of April 2026, 7 were events, 9 injuries and 3 near misses.
- 16. While overall incident volumes do not suggest elevated risk, the consistency of events supports a proactive approach to reporting, and using refresher training, focused safety briefings, and manager-led conversations timed ahead of higher-activity periods helps reinforce risk awareness.



Graph 2. Incident type by month – April 2026

Events Report by Category

- 17. In April, 19 health and safety events were reported, comprising of 9 injuries, 7 events, and 3 near misses. Event reports were vehicle-related (5 events), along with people/behavioural matters with one instance of minor property damage.
- 18. The injury reports were minor in nature, with ergonomic discomfort and sprain/strain injuries accounting for the majority, alongside two isolated cuts, bruising, puncture wounds,

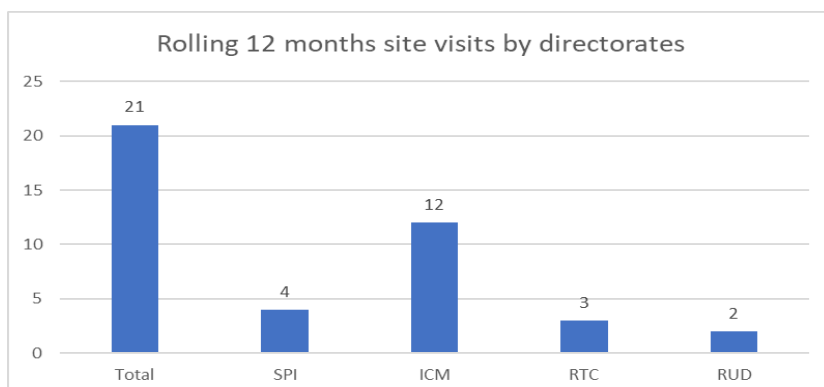
and a bite/sting. Near misses related to access/egress, equipment, and task-specific activities. No serious event incidents were reported.

Event risk category (realised risk)	Nº
People/behavioural	2
Vehicle (4 vehicle damage)	5
Total	7
Injury/loss risk category (realised risk)	
Bite/Sting	1
Bruising	1
Cut	2
Ergonomic	3
Puncture	1
Sprain/strain	1
Total	9
Potential risk category (near-miss)	
Access/egress	1
Activity/task	1
Equipment	1
Total	3

SECTION THREE: Governance and Assurance

Exercising Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance – Leadership Walkarounds

- 19. **Lead indicator:** Tier 1 and Tier 2 Governance Leadership Walkarounds are a key health and safety governance initiative that is actively supported by the Chief Executive and conducted by members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
- 20. From 1 March 2025 to 30 April 2026, a total of 21 leadership walkarounds have been completed across a range of work sites, resulting in 8 identified corrective actions. One walkaround was conducted in April 2026, with one corrective action relating to a quality-check, which has been resolved.



Graph 3. Vault checks – April 2026

21. **Lead indicator:** Senior Leadership Team (SLT) walkarounds are now embedded, as a scheduled activity to strengthen visibility and oversight of critical risks. These activities provide direct operational insight, feed to critical risk reviews, reinforce visible leadership, and support engagement with frontline teams.

Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) Assurance

22. **Lead indicators:** As part of Council's Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001) requirements, the annual assurance programme is updated at the beginning of the new financial year, and delivered by the Health and Safety Team, in collaboration with managers and their teams.
23. In April, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team have undertaken three event investigation reviews, focused on the quality of event investigations, and providing coaching that is showing a steady improvement in manager competence.
24. The Health and Safety Team uses a documentation register to track all document checks, inspections, audits, and reviews against the HSMS. Performance remains steady with 83% of critical risk reviews completed (target 80%), 83% of common risks reviewed (target 80%) and 73% of HSMS documents reviewed (target 85%). The assurance programme for documentation covers 122 key items, including policies, procedures, workflows, e-learning modules, and risk registers.

Health and Safety Leadership Capability Development

25. **Lead Indicator:** The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team continues to deliver targeted briefing sessions for people managers as part of the staged rollout of the ISO 45001 Health and Safety Management System, implemented last year. These sessions are designed to progressively uplift leadership capability and confidence, embed consistent health and safety practices, and strengthen understanding of roles, responsibilities, and assurance expectations.
26. The April 2026 education sessions focused on event investigations and further enforcement of these principles is covered in a 3-hour 'Event Investigation' session for people leaders. The May 2026 session will focus on risk management.

SECTION FOUR: Management of risk

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

Summary of critical risks review

28. The table below shows a summary of the six critical health and safety risks, risk statement, bowtie status, and the risk register review status.
29. The critical risk reviews are on track, with the Threat, Aggression and Violence Risk review slightly delayed.

Critical risk review status

WRC Critical Risk	Risk statement	Bowtie status	Risk review status
Vehicle Use	The risk of <i>losing control over the vehicle</i> leading to a crash and resulting in serious harm or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update Completed Review due November 2026
Overlapping Duties (Contractor Management)	The risk that <i>works processes are not controlled</i> , leading to serious harm or death, loss of plant, equipment or impacts on the environment.	Not undertaken	Risk Register updated Completed Next review October 2026
Working in and Around Water:	The risk of the <i>accidental exposure to water bodies</i> , leading infection, serious harm, or drowning.	Bow-tie	Risk register update Completed Next review April 2026
Working in Geothermal Areas	The risk of <i>exposure to gases and thermal heat</i> leading to asphyxiation, life threatening burns, or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update Completed Next review due July 2026
Struck by Moving Vehicles, Plant or Equipment	The risk of <i>being struck by moving vehicle, plant or equipment</i> resulting in personal injury or fatality.	Not undertaken	Risk Register update Completed Review due September 2026
Threat, Aggression and Violence	Risks of <i>confrontational interactions with members of the public</i> , leading to physical and psychological harm.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update Underway Review due July 2026

Waikato Regional Council Wellbeing Initiatives

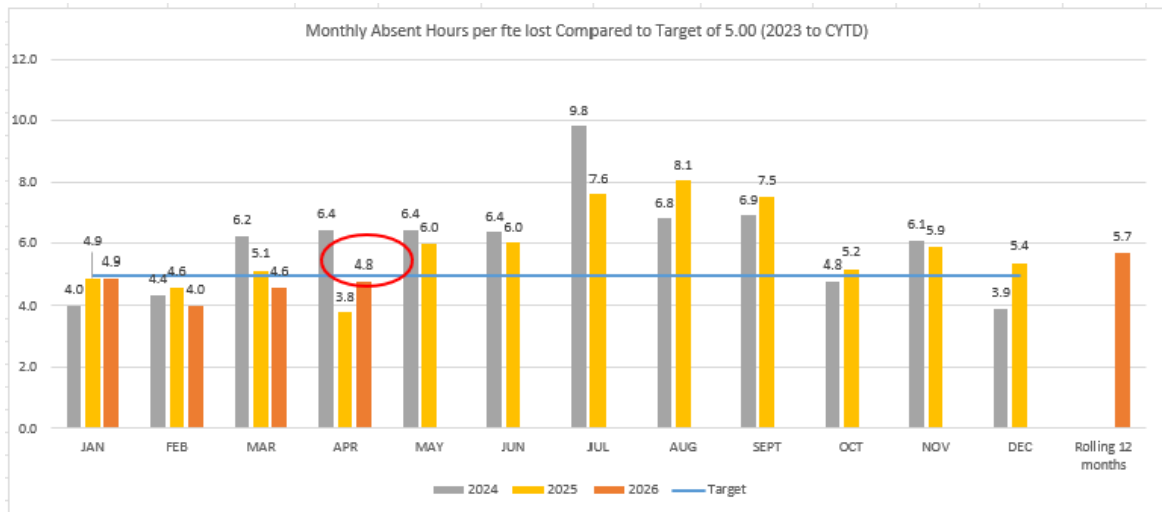
30. The onsite influenza vaccination programme was successfully delivered in April 2026, with a total of 252 staff taking up the offer. Onsite vaccinations totalled 168, with the addition of 87 flu vaccination vouchers distributed to be redeemed at nominated clinics. Flu vaccination vouchers will remain available to staff until the end of May 2026 to encourage continued uptake and support workforce health and resilience.
31. My Everyday Wellbeing is a weekly workplace wellbeing platform providing practical resources, tailored plans, and challenges aligned to Council’s Te Pae Mahutonga Framework. In April, the following wellbeing activities were delivered: promotion of corporate gym membership discounts, a weekly wellbeing puzzle to encourage engagement and personal wellbeing, initiatives encouraging staff to stay active to support physical and mental wellbeing, and newsletter content covering a three-minute breathing space, mindfulness podcast, healthy recipes, sleep routines, and ways to connect with colleagues at work.
32. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free, independent, and confidential support service provided to staff. It not only provides psychological support, but a wide range of other support services. From 1 May 2025 to 31 April 2026, 83 staff accessed EAP Services. Council’s utilisation rate is 13%, which is within the average uptake of 7% to 15%. Across all industries EAP Services access is primarily for personal issues. At WRC 77% of referrals were for personal reasons, compared to 23% for work related issues. These percentages are consistent for Council, and with other industries.

- 33. The key personal issues identified are personal relationships (n=14), stress and anxiety (n=16), and grief and loss (n=8), with work issues being relationship with manager (n=3), career (n=3), and Workload (n=6). EAP Services can be contacted 24/7, by phoning 0800 327 669.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

Sick Leave Statistics

- 34. Graph 5 below shows sick leave numbers reported for April (4.8) is higher than the sick leave reported over March (4.6) April is below the national benchmark of 5.0.



Graph 5. Hours of Sick Leave by Month

Regional Flood Response Team (RFRT) – Expressions of Interest

- 35. Recently, 24 staff have expressed interest in joining the RFRT, Council’s internal staff capability that supports organisational response and recovery activities when surge capacity is required. Expressions of interest were received from five directorates: Integrated Catchment Management (9), Science, Policy and Information (11), Customer and Corporate Services (2), Regional Transport Connections (1), and Resource Use Directorate (1), providing strong cross-Council representation. This level and spread of interest provide assurance that Council has sufficient and diverse internal capability to support planned response arrangements.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

- 36. Event reporting remains strong, with 256 staff reports submitted in the last 12 months, including 19 for the period April 2026. Encouragingly, the quality of investigations continues to improve, driven by active support from the Health and Safety Team through monthly event reviews and coaching. These efforts are fostering greater trust in the reporting process, growing manager expertise and strengthening our overall safety culture.
- 37. Supported by the Chief Executive, Tier 1 and 2 walkarounds are a key health and safety due diligence initiative, with 21 completed between April 2025 and April 2026. This programme has now been extended to Senior Leadership Teams, who will focus on critical risks reviews during their visits. These walkarounds demonstrate visible leadership commitment, strengthen engagement with frontline teams, and provide valuable insights into risk

management, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with organisational safety priorities.

38. Council's HSMS assurance programme supports a safe, compliant, and continuously improving approach through systematic review of HSMS components. Results are encouraging and indicate that recent efforts are starting to embed, particularly through strengthened education and assurance, supporting movement toward a learning-focused environment and improved worker participation. While positive progress is evident across the first (operational leaders) and second line (senior manager, health, and safety specialist) of defence, continued focus is required to consistently mature and sustain effective risk management practices.
39. Council's EAP is a free, confidential support service available 24/7, with a 13% staff utilisation rate which is within the industry average. Most referrals (77%) are for personal issues, such as relationships, stress, and life transitions, consistent with national trends.

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.2 TE HUIA INTERREGIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE: POTENTIAL SERVICE CHANGES FOR FINAL YEAR OF THE TRIAL

Rā Date:	28 May 2026
Kaituhi Author:	James Llewellyn, Contractor
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to assess and, if appropriate, recommend changes to the Te Huia interregional passenger rail service in the final year of the trial. Four potential changes have been considered.
 - (a) Increases to passenger fares.
 - (b) Changes to levels of service.
 - (c) Marketing initiatives to encourage more people to travel.
 - (d) Governance arrangements.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. This report considers changes to Te Huia for the final year of the trial – which runs from 01 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. The prospect of Te Huia becoming a permanent service will be tied to its performance across the whole trial period, including the final year. There is a need to optimise and balance objectives to increase fare revenue and passenger numbers - so that performance against targets is maintained and enhanced where possible.
3. A wide range of changes to passenger fares have been modelled, and the staff recommendation is for a 10% increase to all fare types, which is in line with that proposed for Council funded bus services across the region. This option is the most deliverable approach as it can be implemented in conjunction with the fare changes for buses.
4. Whilst various potential changes to Te Huia services have been suggested and investigated, the staff recommendation is to retain the current service pattern for the remainder of the trial period, primarily as there is insufficient time to implement any changes at the same time the new City Rail Link (CRL) timetable, whose start date is not yet confirmed. There is also no additional local share or NZTA funding to improve services to an extent which would encourage further passenger growth. Passenger numbers show significant increases in the first four months of 2026 compared with the same period last year.
5. The final year of the trial requires a very strong marketing push to persuade as many people as possible to use Te Huia so there is good performance against the performance targets.
6. The previous Te Huia Councillor Working Group has not met since the October 2025 Council elections and staff recommend that it is re-established.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Te Huia Interregional Passenger Rail Service: Potential Service Changes for Final Year of the Trial* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received.
2. That Council approve a fare increase of 10% for Te Huia, as part of the general change across the region's public transport system.
3. That Te Huia service patterns remain substantially the same for the final year of the trial.
4. Council requests that staff make significant efforts to enhance the marketing of Te Huia services.
5. That an informal Te Huia Working Group - comprising Councillors from Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council - be re-established.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

7. In February 2026, both New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and Council agreed to fund a one-year extension to the Te Huia interregional passenger rail service. A draft end of trial review report – attached to the agenda of the 25 February Council meeting - concluded that despite challenging operational conditions Te Huia had met most of its targets and would merit continuation as a permanent service. The decision to extend the trial for a further year was based on the need to align any potential funding for a permanent service with the next Long Term Plan (LTP) and National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). A decision on whether to make Te Huia permanent will therefore be made in early to mid-2027.
8. Recent geopolitical events in the Middle East have significantly increased fossil fuel prices which are both an opportunity and a threat for Te Huia. The opportunity is that people will see the train as a resilient and affordable alternative to the car for longer distance travel. Te Huia passenger numbers in March and April 2026 are 5,183 (52%) above the same months in 2025. This suggests that higher car fuel prices resulting from the Middle East conflict may be having a positive impact on rail patronage. For the first four months of 2026, passenger numbers are 7,480 (45%) higher than the same period in 2025. In addition to fuel costs, this reflects the benefits of reducing the number of days when Te Huia has not run because of blocks of line.
9. The threat is that the cost and supply of diesel could increase Te Huia's operating costs to a point where fares need to rise and / or further operating subsidy is required. This topic is considered in more detail within the 2026-27 Annual Plan report to be presented to this meeting. The situation remains under regular review.
10. A key Te Huia performance metric is farebox recovery – the proportion of operating costs covered by passenger fare revenue. The Te Huia farebox recovery ratio for July 2025 to February 2026 is 20.1% - the highest since the service began and above that of the region's bus network. Attachment 1 summarises a June 2024 assessment of Te Huia's farebox recovery performance compared to that of Capital Connection. A key conclusion is that whilst it is informative to benchmark farebox recovery against other public transport services, the process of setting Te Huia fares should be based on the specific geography, service attributes and passenger willingness to pay. This means that fare increases need to reflect the Te Huia context. As a trial service, Te Huia fares have been relatively cheap and

clearly encouraged demand for what is a functional but basic service from Waikato to Auckland. Passenger satisfaction with fare levels and overall value for money is high.

11. The 2024 independent review concluded that Te Huia needs a package of interventions to improve its financial performance, including fares, journey speed increases, new stations and higher frequencies. These matters are currently being investigated by the Future Services Single Stage Business Case (SSBC). Large fare increases in the absence of service improvements are unlikely to significantly improve farebox recovery towards levels achieved by Capital Connection.
12. Since the independent review in mid-2024, Te Huia fares have increased by 10% per annum, which has been reflected in stronger farebox recovery performance. However, passenger numbers have taken a hit from the repeated blocks of line from late 2024 and throughout 2025. Making the Te Huia service more attractive to Auckland may assist with financial contributions to Te Huia. Simply increasing fares because they are thought to be artificially low risks choking off demand and increasing travel costs at a time of pressure on fuel prices.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

13. The final year of the Te Huia trial – which starts on 01 July 2026 – is an opportunity to consider and implement further measures to both increase passenger numbers (a particular concern for NZTA) and farebox revenue (important for ratepayers). The key measure to achieve this is changes to passenger fares.
14. The challenge is to strike the right balance between maximising both passenger numbers and fare revenue. Whilst charging higher fares should increase passenger revenue, increased travel costs may dissuade some people from using the service and put at risk a key performance metric of concern to NZTA. Furthermore, if fares are increased to a level where passenger numbers are significantly reduced there is a risk that fare revenue could actually go down as well.
15. One issue is that (consistent with the current regional fares policy) adult and child fares are currently the same on every Te Huia service, irrespective of time of day and how busy a train is. In reality, passenger demand for travel and willingness to pay varies by journey purpose and personal circumstances. For example, commuters and businesspeople – who have less choice around when to travel – can generally tolerate higher fares. These people tend to have larger incomes which also helps with willingness to pay. For many within this passenger cohort, current fares could actually be lower than their willingness to pay, which means that Te Huia could be missing out on additional revenue. In contrast, leisure travellers and people on lower incomes are price sensitive and therefore more likely not to travel if they perceive fares to be too high. If people don't travel this may mean that Te Huia again misses out on revenue, with empty seats remaining "unsold".
16. Therefore, a strategy of simply increasing Te Huia fares across the board may not always optimise both passenger numbers and fare revenue. An alternative would be to introduce a degree of variable pricing to better reflect willingness to pay for different target markets. However, any variable pricing approach to fare increases has to be deliverable.
17. To investigate the potential impact of different strategies, staff have undertaken high-level modelling on a range of scenarios to change both the level and structure of Te Huia fares based on the 2025-26 levels (included within the options outlined below). These scenarios include:

- a) Fares freeze: No increase on 2025-26 levels.
 - b) Flat fare increase: Between 8% and 108% for all ticket types.
 - c) Variable fare increase: Between 8% and 108% for adults, reduced by 50% for children and concessions.
 - d) Flat fare increase with peak / off-peak differential: Between 8% and 108% for peak trains, with a 50% discount for off-peak trains.
 - e) Variable fare increase with peak / off-peak differential: Between 8% and 108% for adults on peak trains, reduced by 50% for children and concessions, with a 50% discount for off-peak trains.
18. In the absence of specific survey data which would establish willingness to pay, modelling uses basic demand elasticity analysis which describes the impact on passenger numbers and revenue for a certain percentage change in fares. To give an example, an elasticity of -0.35 means that for every 10% reduction in fares there will be a 3.5% increase in patronage. This outcome will be the exact opposite for fare increases.
 19. The section immediately below sets out three options from the analysis for consideration. Attachment 2 provides the patronage and fare revenue analysis of various scenarios and options.
 20. The highest fare increase scenarios (+66% and +108%) have the largest revenue totals and per passenger figures, but very low confidence that demand would actually hold up in response to such an increase. Almost certainly demand would be a lot lower, as passengers are not getting sufficient service improvement for such a high fare increase. Therefore, fare increases of this magnitude would not be recommended unless accompanied by significantly faster and higher frequency services. Such matters are currently being investigated by the Future Services Single Stage Business Case which will report later in 2026.
 21. Implementing lower off-peak and concession fares does not make as much difference to patronage and revenue as might have been imagined. Nor does fare capping have much impact. This may be due to the relatively basic demand elasticity approach used in the current modelling methodology, and absence of bespoke elasticity values for Te Huia passengers. Given that variable fares would be challenging to implement in the trial it is recommended not to pursue these kinds of approaches for now; but re-visit them for the permanent service.
 22. The other measures in this report – changes to service levels, publicity / marketing and governance – are discussed in the “Other Issues” section below.

NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA | OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

23. Based on fare change modelling and wider considerations around deliverability, three options from those tested have been proposed in this report:
 - a) Option 1 (Status Quo): freeze fares at 2025-26 levels.
 - b) Option 2 (Current Trajectory): flat fare increase of 10% on 2025-26 levels.
 - c) Option 3 (Enhanced Revenue): flat fare increase of 25% on 2025-26 levels.
24. These options have been assessed for three performance metrics:
 - a) Passenger numbers per annum: measured as one-way journeys.

- b) Fare income per annum: from Bee card and cash sales.
 - c) Fare revenue per passenger: which is fare income divided by passenger numbers.
25. The last metric is not the same as the average fare per paying passenger, because it is reduced by SuperGold users who travel free off-peak.
26. The following tables summarise each option.

Option 1: Status Quo	
Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa Description of option	
Focus on providing a cheaper trip in order to promote patronage growth.	
Freeze fares at 2025-26 levels. Single adult Bee card fare (Frankton – The Strand): \$24.06.	
Tearo matawai i ngā pānga Impact assessment	
Pānga Impact	Modelling results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger numbers per annum: 78,106. • Fare income per annum (\$): 916,684. • Fare revenue per passenger (\$): 11.74.
Ngā Pānga Kaupapahere / Hononga Rautaki Policy Implications / Strategic Links	Objective 3 of the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is to provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable, and attracts and retains customers. Policy P34 is that public transport services will be delivered under an integrated zonal-fare structure that covers the Waikato region. Freezing Te Huia fares at 2025-26 levels – whilst increasing those for buses at the same time – would require Te Huia to be taken out of the current zonal system, and result in greater operational complexity.
Benefits	The key benefit is to achieve patronage growth. Passenger numbers and hence wider benefits such as removing cars from congested road networks are likely to be maximised, as fares will be relatively cheap compared to the cost of motor vehicle travel – especially with the current rise in fuel prices.
Ngā Pānga Putea Financial Implications	Te Huia operating costs are forecast to increase by around 3% in 2026-27 and could possibly be significantly higher given the current geopolitical situation and its potential impact on fuel costs. Therefore, freezing fares at 2025-26 levels may require a higher level of public sector subsidy, as total financial user contributions will not increase unless there are proportionally more paying passengers to cover increased operating costs.
Deliverability	If bus fares are increased in the region, freezing fares for Te Huia will effectively result in its removal from the current zonal system and generate significant extra work for staff to set up an alternative system. Whilst there may be longer term benefits in a separate fare structure for Te Huia, it may not be a good use of resources to proceed in the final year of the trial.
Ngā Tirohanga Hapori Community Views	There will be a mix of views. Some people – especially those who use Te Huia – are likely to be in favour of keeping fares at 2025-26 levels as it means cheaper travel both in real terms and relative to other

Option 1: Status Quo	
	travel options. However, some ratepayers will oppose the possibility of paying more towards any higher level of public subsidy. Bus passengers in the region may also find it unfair that they are faced with higher fares, when those people using Te Huia are not.
Pānga Kiritaki Customer impact	From a financial perspective the customer will benefit through lower fares in real terms (i.e. accounting for inflation). An absence of any changes to the fares will be easy for customers to understand.

Option 2: Current Trajectory	
Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa Description of option	
Align Te Huia with bus fare increases. Recover increased costs by increasing all fare types by 10% above 2025-26 levels. Single adult Bee card fare (Frankton – The Strand): \$26.47.	
Tearo matawai i ngā pānga Impact assessment	
Pānga Impact	Modelling results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger numbers per annum: 75,743 (-3.0% compared to Status Quo). • Total fare revenue per annum (\$): 967,143 (+5.5% compared to Status Quo). • Fare revenue per passenger (\$): 12.77 (+8.8% compared to Status Quo).
Ngā Pānga Kaupapahere / Hononga Rautaki Policy Implications / Strategic Links	Objective 3 of the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is to provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable, and attracts and retains customers. Policy P34 is that public transport services will be delivered under an integrated zonal-fare structure that covers the Waikato region. Increasing fares by the same percentage as buses would enable Te Huia to remain within the region’s zoning system.
Benefits	Passenger numbers are forecast to be 3% lower than the Status Quo, which means that there would be a modest reduction in benefits. Rail travel is still likely to be significantly cheaper than the alternative car journey.
Ngā Pānga Putea Financial Implications	Te Huia operating costs are forecast to increase by around 3% in 2026-27 and could possibly be significantly higher given the current geopolitical situation and its potential impact on fuel costs.
Deliverability	Implementing the same fare increase for Te Huia as buses will enable Te Huia to remain within the regional public transport fare zone system. This will make it much easier and quicker to implement in comparison to other options.
Ngā Tirohanga Hapori Community Views	There will be a mix of views. Some Te Huia passengers may not support a fare increase and no longer travel by train. However, ratepayers in general may be more supportive if they understand that users are paying towards service costs.
Pānga Kiritaki Customer impact	There will be a modest increase in fares paid by the passenger - \$2.41 higher for a single journey from Frankton to the Strand. In overall

Option 2: Current Trajectory	
	value for money terms, this should be offset by greater availability of services resulting from less frequent blocks of line.

Option 3: Enhanced Revenue	
Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa Description of option	
Attempt to maximise revenue, at the expense of passenger numbers. Increase all fare types by 25% above 2025-26 levels. Single adult Bee card fare (Frankton – The Strand): \$30.08.	
Tearo matawai i ngā pānga Impact assessment	
Pānga Impact	<p>Modelling results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger numbers per annum: 72,823 (-6.8% compared to Status Quo). • Total fare revenue per annum (\$): 1,041,186 (+13.6% compared to Status Quo). • Fare revenue per passenger (\$): 14.30 (+21.8% compared to Status Quo).
Ngā Pānga Kaupapahere / Hononga Rautaki Policy Implications / Strategic Links	Objective 3 of the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is to provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable, and attracts and retains customers. Policy P34 is that public transport services will be delivered under an integrated zonal-fare structure that covers the Waikato region. Increasing fare by more than the 10% regional uplift would require Te Huia to be taken out of the current zonal system, and result in greater operational complexity.
Benefits	Passenger numbers and hence wider benefits such as removing cars from congested road networks would be reduced compared to options 1 and 2. Rail travel may remain cheaper than the equivalent car journey; although some people might not travel at all.
Ngā Pānga Putea Financial Implications	Te Huia operating costs are forecast to increase by around 3% in 2026-27 and could possibly be significantly higher given the current geopolitical situation and its potential impact on fuel costs.
Deliverability	Increasing Te Huia fares at a higher level than the rest of the region’s bus network will require train service removal from the fare zone system, and the setting up of a separate tariff structure. This will increase the time and complexity of making changes and requires additional staff resource to implement.
Ngā Tirohanga Hapori Community Views	There will be a mix of views. Some Te Huia passengers may not support a fare increase and no longer travel by train. However, ratepayers in general may be more supportive if they understand that users are paying towards service costs. A higher fare increase than option 2 may gain less passenger support, but more ratepayer acceptance.
Pānga Kiritaki Customer impact	There will be a higher increase in fares paid by the passenger - \$3.61 higher for a single journey from Frankton to the Strand. However, the

Option 3: Enhanced Revenue

total Hamilton to Auckland fare (\$30.06) would still represent relatively good value for money compared to the equivalent Capital Connection service between Palmerston North and Wellington (\$40).

- 27. **Option 1 (Status Quo)** is not recommended because it would be inequitable for Te Huia passengers to be exempt from the same proposed fare increases as bus passengers. There would also be practical implications and communications challenges in terms of Te Huia’s exclusion from the regional public transport zoning system in the last year of the trial.
- 28. Given that Te Huia is still a trial, and time is of the essence in making fare changes, the staff recommendation is **Option 2 (Current Trajectory)** - to increase fares by 10% in line with the approach for the region as a whole from 01 July 2026. Compared with the status quo, this option to forecast to provide an additional \$50,000 in fare revenue in 2026-27 and potentially reduces passenger numbers by around 3,000 over the same period. For every passenger who travels, forecast fare revenue yield increases by \$1.03. It is possible that higher availability of Te Huia services compared to 2025 and early 2026 may boost passenger numbers despite the fare increase.
- 29. **Option 3 (Enhanced Revenue)** could increase level of fare revenue by another \$74,000 per annum in addition to option 2 but could take significantly longer to implement because of the need to set up a new tariff structure outside of the current zonal system. This means that the annual revenue earning potential would not be as high as estimated in the above analysis, as it could not be implemented until around October / November 2026.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

Changes to Service Patterns

- 30. Council has considered the options for, and practicalities of, introducing changes to train service patterns in the final year of the trial. The major challenge is that there is no additional funding – either from NZTA or Council – to make changes in the final year. This means that only changes within existing budgets could be considered, and increasing levels of service is unaffordable.
- 31. Various changes to Te Huia service patterns have been considered, including a higher number of short-working trains between Hamilton and Pukekohe. However, the likely costs of making these changes are outside of current budgets.
- 32. Aside from cost, a major challenge for any service change is that of practicality in the context of the trial’s final year. The introduction of City Rail Link (CRL) necessitates a major timetable change across the whole of the Auckland network, which will impact Te Huia. Furthermore, any additional Te Huia changes that have more services north of Pukekohe would require agreement by the Auckland Timetable Committee.
- 33. At the time of writing CRL service timetable testing is ongoing and there is no confirmed date for when the change will take place. However, it is likely to be September / October 2026 at the earliest. This means that any service changes for Te Huia will only have a maximum of eight or nine months before the trial comes to an end. This is insufficient time to understand the impact of changes and also risks disruption to what is a well-understood service pattern

34. Furthermore, there is a risk that changing the service pattern – especially if it involves fewer direct services through to Auckland – may alienate passengers if combined with a fares increase. The potential negative impact on patronage would not assist with meetings targets of importance to NZTA.
35. Therefore, a more appropriate time to investigate and recommend service changes would be for consideration as part of any permanent service starting in July 2027. It is therefore recommended that no substantive service changes are undertaken in the final year of the trial but are actively considered as part of the permanent service planning and funding process.

Publicity and Marketing

36. Publicity for Te Huia has been effective insofar as most people generally understand what the service offers; whether they use it or not. The high response to last year's survey demonstrates that awareness and interest in Te Huia is strong. The Customer Focus team is very active on social media, and the web site does a good job in explaining what the service is.
37. However, the need to get more people on the train requires a proactive approach to marketing the service – which means going beyond awareness into persuasion and (ultimately) active usage. The challenge has been that with service disruptions being a constant feature of Te Huia's history, marketing something that is not always optimal has been seen as risky.
38. With service disruptions becoming less frequent, and City Rail Link (CRL) being close to commencing, there is an opportunity to make a greater marketing push. As an example, the team has already identified school holidays as a travel marketing opportunity, because services will now be running during them.
39. A draft Publicity and Marketing Plan has put forward a range of other opportunities, including:
 - a) Partnerships and promotions as part of weekend / holiday tourist visits to Waikato.
 - b) A greater range of Auckland destinations through transfer to CRL.
 - c) People saving fuel and money by travelling on Te Huia for longer-distance journeys.
 - d) Te Huia as productive work time for businesspeople.
 - e) Student travel to / from Auckland and Waikato Universities.
40. Other opportunities will be identified and implemented on a regular basis.

Governance

41. For most of Te Huia's history, the governance approach has included a specific committee with Councillor representation from Waikato Region, Hamilton City and Waikato District. Most recently, a Working Group met every quarter to receive updates from staff and to provide strategic guidance on future direction of the service. However, since the October 2025 elections there have been no such meetings which has resulted in fewer opportunities to have valuable discussions across the three Councils.
42. With Te Huia now extended until June 2027, and discussions around its future to take place through Council Long Term Plans, there is an opportunity to reset appropriate political collaboration to provide strategic oversight and guidance. Staff consider that the previous

Working Group was a valuable forum and recommend its re-establishment. If Councillors agree, invitations will be sent to interested parties across the three Councils.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

43. This decision will have no impact on the ability of Council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.

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

44. Changes to passenger numbers on Te Huia will have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions if people choose to drive instead of using the train. Te Huia requires an average of 55 passengers per train to “break even” in greenhouse gas emission terms, and so it is important that as many people use the service as possible to keep above that number.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

45. Te Huia remains a service which – if well-used – demonstrates the ability to move significant numbers of people for a lower greenhouse gas footprint. The Publicity and Marketing Plan will consider any opportunities to promote this message.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

46. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the LGA and Council’s *Significance and Engagement Policy*, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision making requirements contained in Part Six of the Local Government Act (LGA) and its requirements have been met.

TE HOROPAKI Ā-TURE | LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

47. Te Huia is planned and funded under the Land Transport Management Act, and Te Huia is a service which is integral to the region’s public transport network. As such Te Huia is organised into a unit and provided with NZTA and Council subsidy.
48. Te Huia operations are governed by relevant legislation which regulates the activities of KiwiRail.

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

49. The preferred option is for a 10% fare increase based on the current service pattern. This option is the easiest to implement and strikes the right balance between passenger numbers, fare revenue and deliverability.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

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

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

51. As this report mostly deals with tactical and operational matters there are no specific items which impact on Māori.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

52. Te Huia has shown very strong passenger growth in the first four months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025 – likely to be a mix of more services being available and motor vehicle fuel costs encouraging more train travel.
53. Based on an assessment of passenger impact, ratepayer value for money and deliverability retaining the current service pattern and increasing fares by 10% provides the best balance of objectives and benefits for the final year of the Te Huia trial.
54. For reasons for affordability and timescales, it is not proposed to make any significant service changes and instead concentrate on running Te Huia as effectively and efficiently as possible.
55. For a future permanent Te Huia service, all feasible and affordable options are on the table for changes to service patterns and fares; and these will be investigated over the next few months.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

56. The following reference have been consulted during production of this report:
- NZTA Monetised Benefits and Costs Manual: [Monetised benefits and costs manual | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi](#)
 - NZ Treasury inflation forecasts: [Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2025 | The Treasury New Zealand](#)
 - Waikato Regional Council Annual Plan meeting: [2026-02-25 - Council Agenda Open - 25 February 2026](#)
 - RNZ article: How does Te Huia’s subsidy compare to roads? [How does Te Huia's subsidy compare to roads? | RNZ News](#)
 - Auckland Transport Annual Report: [auckland-transport-annual-report-2025.pdf](#)
 - Auckland Transport fare increases: [Public transport fare changes 2026](#)
 - Greater Wellington (Metlink) fare increases: [Greater Wellington — Metlink fares to increase 3.1 percent from 15 May 2026](#)

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Te Huia Farebox Recovery Assessment** [↓](#)

2. Te Huia Fare Increase Modelling [↓](#)

Attachment 1: Te Huia Farebox Recovery Assessment

A key Te Huia performance metric is **farebox recovery** – the proportion of operating costs covered by passenger fare revenue. This metric is different from “private share”, which is a more recent concept and applied at a regional rather than service level. The Te Huia farebox recovery ratio between July 2025 to February 2026 is 20.1% - the highest since the service began and above that of the region’s bus network.

This document considers farebox recovery performance for Te Huia against that seen for the Capital Connection service (Palmerston North to Wellington); as well as Auckland and Wellington metro rail services.

Capital Connection

The most interesting comparison is with Capital Connection, the only other regular interregional passenger rail service in New Zealand. Capital Connection runs once a day (weekdays only) from Palmerston North to Wellington in the morning, returning in the evening.

In June 2024, WRC concluded an independent review of Te Huia’s cost and revenue performance, at a time when farebox recovery was 14.8%. A benchmarking comparison was undertaken against Capital Connection, which for many years was a commercial service. The review noted that Capital Connection had a farebox recovery of 53.8%, which was attributed to a wide range of factors based on data from 2023-24:

- **Relatively higher fares for Capital Connection:** \$35 single fare at the time, (62% higher than Te Huia) for Palmerston North to Wellington, a similar distance as Hamilton to Auckland.
- **Capital Connection has longer six to seven car trains:** Te Huia has been limited to four cars (an NZTA safety case condition) which means that operating costs are spread over fewer seats and fare paying passengers.
- **Capital Connection picks up passengers at five intermediate stations between Palmerston North and Wellington:** At the time of the review Te Huia only stopped at Rotokauri and Huntly, which meant there were fewer locations where people could get on, reducing potential patronage.
- **Around one third of Capital Connection passengers board the train within the Wellington region:** People can now get on Te Huia at Pukekohe, which has helped with increasing passenger demand. However, as a percentage of total patronage the numbers are still far lower than for Capital Connection.
- **Capital Connection runs right into the central area of Wellington:** Te Huia cannot access Waitemata station and instead must terminate at The Strand, which is less well-located for the centre of Auckland.

For these reasons it is not as simple as saying that Te Huia fares should be increased in one go, to match those of Capital Connection, as it is a very different service. Te Huia is a trial service, whilst Capital Connection has been operating for around 20 years. The 2024 independent review concluded that Te Huia needs a package of interventions to improve its

financial performance, including fares, journey speed increases, new stations, higher capacity rolling stock and higher frequencies. These matters are currently being investigated by the Future Services Single Stage Business Case (SSBC).

If service improvements are made as part of any permanent service, it may be appropriate for Te Huia fares to be increased in a staged way towards those charged by Capital Connection. However, making very large one-off fare increases, in the absence of service improvements, risks passenger demand falling off a cliff and compromising the future viability of Te Huia.

Auckland and Wellington Metro Services

There is also a question around how Te Huia compares with Auckland and Wellington Metro rail services. Before considering farebox recovery there is the interesting matter of cost efficiency of moving people over distance travelled.

Compared to the Auckland Metro Te Huia performs relatively well in terms of **subsidy per passenger kilometre**. An RNZ article from March 2024, based on analysis of NZTA data, concluded that (at the time) Te Huia subsidy per passenger kilometre was around 25% lower than Auckland Metro services: [How does Te Huia's subsidy compare to roads? | RNZ News](#). This is primarily because interregional journeys on Te Huia are much longer than those of Metro services, with costs spread over a much larger passenger kilometre figure. It is also why interregional passenger rail can be a relatively cost efficient way of moving people over longer distances. For the first eight months of financial year 2025-26, Te Huia subsidy per passenger kilometre was 75 cents.

Farebox recovery information for Auckland and Wellington rail has been assembled through a series of web searches, as information is not easy to find. The 2025 Auckland Transport annual report provides a farebox recovery performance of 34%, which is for both buses and trains. Figures for rail are not reported separately. Given that rail operating costs are much higher than buses, it is likely that train service farebox recovery will be lower than 34%.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2017-18 Greater Wellington rail network farebox recovery was around 55%, easily the highest in New Zealand. Post pandemic performance appears to be substantially lower because of a fall in passenger numbers, although obtaining rail-specific information is challenging. In April 2025, Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) was proposing an indicative private share target (partly made up of passenger fares) of 25.7% for both bus and rail. The NZTA proposed target by 2027 was 42% - a substantial difference and perhaps reflecting past rather than current performance. GWRC performance reporting from early 2026 suggests that whilst the bus network is doing well, rail is still struggling to attract passengers back. Therefore, it could be surmised that rail farebox recovery performance may be somewhere below 25%.

Interestingly, things are no better in Australia, despite population being much higher. As an example, farebox recovery on Sydney trains hovers around 20%, and is actually slightly higher if regional New South Wales services are added in.

Metro rail services generally do not increase fares by large percentages. In Auckland, fares went up by 5.2% from early February 2026. In Wellington there has been a recently

announced 3.1% increase. Both these percentage fare increases are well below what is being proposed in the Waikato region (including Te Huia).

Conclusions

Whilst it is informative to benchmark farebox recovery against other public transport services, the process of setting Te Huia fares should be based on the specific geography, service attributes and passenger willingness to pay. This means that fare increases need to reflect the Te Huia context.

As a trial service, Te Huia fares have been relatively cheap and clearly encouraged demand for what is a functional but basic service from Waikato to Auckland. Passenger satisfaction with fare levels and overall value for money is high. Since the independent review in mid-2024, Te Huia fares have increased by 10% per annum, which has been reflected in stronger farebox recovery performance. However, passenger numbers have taken a hit from the repeated blocks of line from late 2024 and throughout 2025. A recent recovery in the first four months of 2026 (45% higher than the same period in 2025) is notable.

If higher fare increases – significantly above 10% - are desired, they are most likely to optimise passenger demand and farebox recovery if accompanied by service improvements, including frequency, reliability, journey speed and new station calls. Also making the Te Huia service more attractive to Auckland may assist with financial contributions to Te Huia. Simply increasing fares because they are thought to be artificially low risks choking off demand and increasing travel costs at a time of pressure on fuel prices.

Planning for a permanent Te Huia service will not only consider fare increases but also investigate a more sophisticated ticketing and yield management strategy to ensure that service capacity and revenue is optimised, both of trains that are currently well-used and also those that are not.

1 Methodology

The methodological approach is the same as that taken for the private share, patronage, and fare revenue forecast for the draft 2026/27 Annual Plan deliberations.

The most recent full year of patronage and fare revenue data (2024/25) is used to forecast the current year (2025/26) and then the next year (2026/27) given standard assumptions about fare and service level elasticities, service level changes, and CPI (Customer Price Index) / inflation, which are outlined below.

1.1 Assumptions

Note the following key assumptions:

- **Service levels.** Continuation of Te Huia through to July 2027 at existing service levels (including Sunday return service) with no major service level enhancement.
- **Demand elasticities.** Passenger demand due to fare and service level changes is based on standard elasticity values as set out by the New Zealand Transport Agency (see: Monetised Benefits and Costs Manual Table 81).
 - **Fare elasticity.** Standard fare elasticity is -35%. Overall fare change includes effect of expected CPI / inflation as forecast by New Zealand Treasury. Forecast CPI for 2026/27 is 2.1%.
 - Fare elasticity varies based on trip purpose. Accordingly, the fare elasticity for leisure trips, which is assumed to be all trips taken on the weekend, is taken as -53% and commuting trips, which is assumed to be all trips taken during weekday peak travel, is taken as -26%.
 - **Service level elasticity.** Service level elasticity is 45%. As Te Huia services are infrequent and timetable-based (rather than frequency-based, i.e. “every two hours”), service level is measured as the number of services per day in each direction.
 - Passengers who do not pay a fare (i.e. Accessibility and off-peak SuperGold concessions) are impacted only by service level elasticity and not fares.
- **Baseline growth.** No baseline growth factor due to change in population or economic activity is included. It is assumed that the majority of growth comes from changes to the service level.

1.2 Limitations

Note the following modelling limitations:

- **Low confidence for very high fare increase scenarios.** Demand elasticities have reduced explanatory power under very high change scenarios – e.g. doubling fares. Therefore, the confidence in the modelling outputs for these scenarios is low.
- **Relative general costs are not modelled (“tipping points”).** In very high fare change scenarios, there is likely to be a “tipping point” where many passengers abandon public transport as it becomes more expensive than other modes - i.e. driving or coach. This eventuality would have a catastrophic impact on patronage and therefore fare revenue. This has not been explicitly included in the modelling but is expected to have an impact in the very high fare change scenarios

(>66%). A return on Intercity bus service between Hamilton Central and Auckland Central is approximately \$80.

- **Intangible factors are not modelled.** Intangible factors, such as perceived service quality and reputation, are not modelled but assumed to have a marginal impact on overall patronage and therefore fare revenue.
- **Fare revenue results are GST exclusive.** Fare revenue is calculated exclusive of GST (15%).
- **Baseline data is unreliable.** Any modelling for Te Huia is inherently complicated due to a lack of continuous scheduling since the service commenced – various service shutdowns, impact of COVID-19 lockdowns, changes in tariffs impacting ridership behaviour etc. There is a large margin for error in the forecasts, and validation against actual patronage will be undertaken.

1.3 Scenario Notes

- **Peak / off-peak service determination.** For determination of peak / off-peak fare differentials, the following are considered peak services:
 - Monday-Friday, from Hamilton, 6.05am.
 - Monday-Friday, from the Strand, 5.45pm.
 - Thursday-Friday, from the Strand, 3.25pm.

All other services are considered off-peak.

- NB – A lower off-peak fare is presented as the amount removed from the base (peak) fare, i.e., a 25% discount implies the passenger pays 75% of the base fare.
- **Child / Concession category.** Children (up to age 15) and all concession products eligible for a discount on Te Huia. The following concession products receive a discount for rail travel: AA staff, Community Service Card holders, GENESIS staff, University of Waikato students. The following concession products do not receive a discount for rail travel: Waikato Regional Council staff, Rakaumanga School students. Additionally, children up to age 15 receive half-price travel without a concession (children between 16-18 pay full price).

2 Other Considerations

2.1 Timeline

- Implementation by 1 July 2026 is unlikely to be achieved because of the practicalities of changes to the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) and requirement to reprogramme ticket machines.
- Fare changes are implemented through the following sequenced tasks:
 - Waikato Regional Council staff update the Tariff Policy document which sets out the new rules for the system. (*MINIMUM: 1 week.*)
 - Ticket supplier implements tariff changes in the “backend” and push the technical solution to testing machines. (*MINIMUM: 2 weeks.*)
 - Waikato Regional Council staff test that the tariff system is working as specified. (*MINIMUM: 1 week.*)

- If errors are detected, these are escalated to the supplier and retesting may be needed. (*MINIMUM: 2 weeks.*)
- The new tariff solution is pushed to all ticketing machines.

Even if there are no delays to any part of the process, a minimum of six weeks is required to implement new tariffs. Given the Council meeting on 28 May, this puts the earliest date of implementation at mid-July.

Note that this timeline assumes dedicated staff resources to design the new tariff policy, liaise with the supplier, and undertake testing.

- There are several factors that are likely to result in further implementation delays:
 - Many public transport authorities in New Zealand will be increasing or changing fares on 1 July 2026, and such the ticketing system supplier will have reduced capacity to implement changes and resolve any errors.
 - Given the complexity of the modelling scenarios, significant changes will be required to many parts of the tariff policy (e.g. to decouple rail and bus fares) and additional time will be required to ensure its accuracy.
 - In addition to time required to redesign the tariff, errors would be expected due to the increased complexity of the tariff, which require additional time to resolve.
- Ideally fare changes should not be implemented after 1 July 2026 as this makes future modelling and monitoring unnecessarily difficult (reporting and modelling scenarios are based on financial years, but the tariff would not have changed with the financial year).

2.2 Technology

- The current tariff system is near the limit of the current ticketing solution (the number of unique fare values is high). The modelling scenarios herein increase the complexity of the tariff system (by increasing the number of unique fare values) and may not be technically possible to implement or would require significant staff and supplier time to work around, which is already constrained by the short timeframe for implementation.

2.3 Administration and Communication

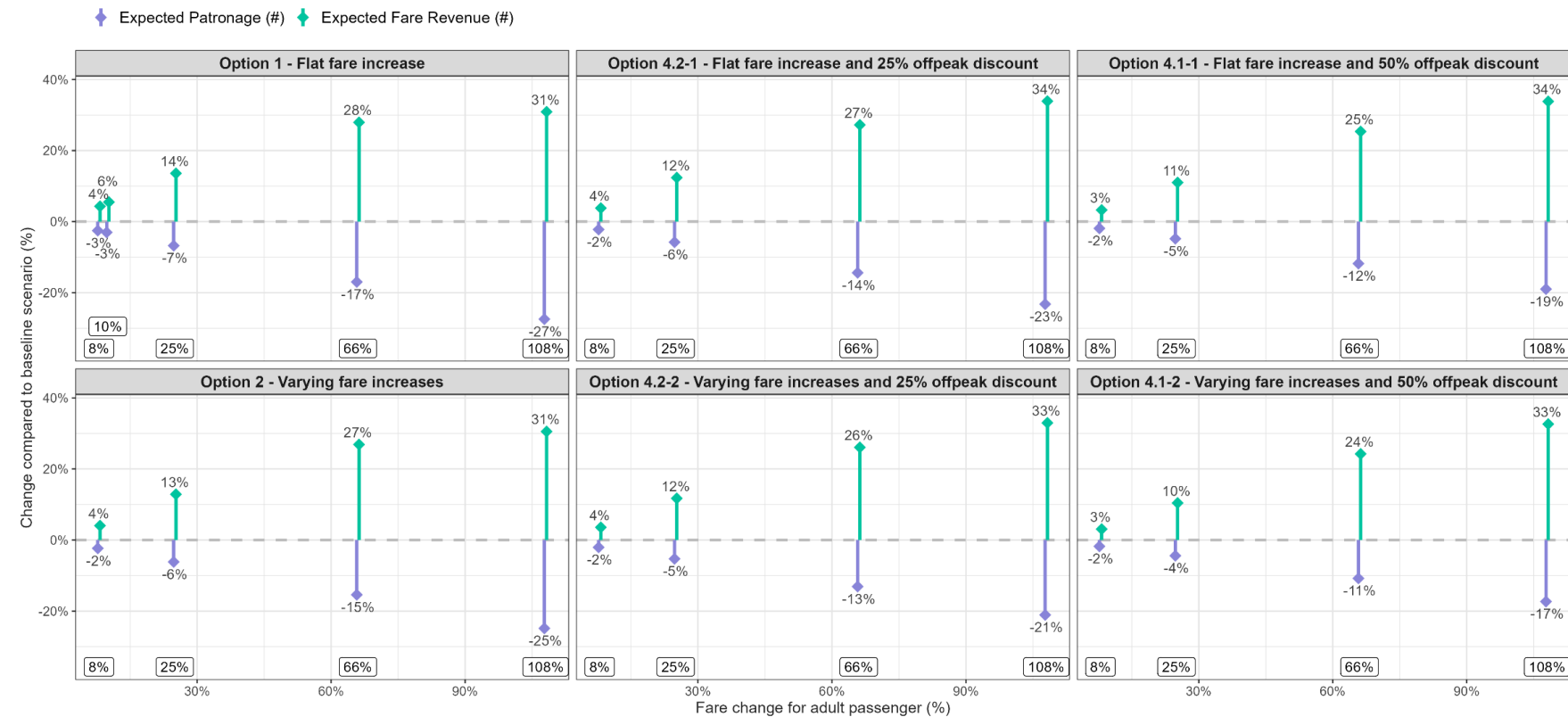
- Higher complexity increases staff time required for testing, issue resolution, and investigations.
- The increase in complexity requires significant staff time for sufficient communication and marketing to explain the changes to passengers. There is also a requirement placed on customer service and frontline staff to deal with frustrated or confused passengers, which negatively impacts the overall customer experience.

3 Results

The percentage difference between the baseline (no fare increase) scenario for patronage (purple) and fare revenue (green). Results are by scenario groups (i.e., flat fare increase, flat fare increase with 25% off-peak discount, etc.) and arranged by the overall fare increase. See the table on the next page for more details.

Generally, all scenarios are expected to result in an increase in fare revenue but a reduction in patronage compared to the baseline scenario.

Te Huia passengers and fare revenue in 2026/27 under fare change scenarios
 Comparison to baseline scenario (no further fare increases)



Scenario	Fare Increase from 2025/26 Fare (%)	Off-Peak Discount (%)	Patronage (#)	Fare Revenue (\$)	Notes
Baseline Scenarios					
No fare increase	0% (\$24.06)	0%	78,106	\$916,684	"Baseline" scenarios, against which all other scenarios and options can be compared.
Current trajectory	10% (\$26.47)	0%	75,743	\$967,143	
Scenario Group 1 – Flat fare increases					
Option 1.1	8% (\$25.99)	0%	76,132	\$956,222	
Option 1.2	25% (\$30.08)	0%	72,823	\$1,041,186	
Option 1.3	66% (\$39.94)	0%	64,844	\$1,172,740	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Option 1.4	108% (\$50.05)	0%	56,671	\$1,199,966	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Scenario Group 2 – Varying fare increases					
Option 2.1	Adult – 8% (\$25.99) Child/Concession – 4% (\$25.02)	0%	76,282	\$953,774	
Option 2.2	Adult – 25% (\$30.08) Child/Concession – 12.5% (\$27.07)	0%	73,291	\$1,034,707	
Option 2.3	Adult – 66% (\$39.94) Child/Concession – 33% (\$32.00)	0%	66,079	\$1,163,086	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Option 2.4	Adult – 108% (\$50.05) Child/Concession – 54% (\$37.06)	0%	58,691	\$1,196,653	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Scenario 4.1-1 – Flat fare increases and 50% off-peak discount					
Option 4.1-1.1	8% (\$25.99)	50%	76,621	\$946,666	
Option 4.1-1.2	25% (\$30.08)	50%	74,352	\$1,017,460	
Option 4.1-1.3	66% (\$39.94)	50%	68,879	\$1,149,163	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Option 4.1-1.4	108% (\$50.05)	50%	63,274	\$1,226,859	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Scenario 4.1-2 – Varying fare increases and 50% off-peak discount					
Option 4.1-2.1	Adult – 8% (\$25.99) Child/Concession – 4% (\$25.02)	50%	76,718	\$944,818	
Option 4.1-2.2	Adult – 25% (\$30.08) Child/Concession – 12.5% (\$27.07)	50%	74,655	\$1,012,227	
Option 4.1-2.3	Adult – 66% (\$39.94) Child/Concession – 33% (\$32.00)	50%	69,679	\$1,138,822	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).

Doc #35864796

5

Scenario	Fare Increase from 2025/26 Fare (%)	Off-Peak Discount (%)	Patronage (#)	Fare Revenue (\$)	Notes
Option 4.1-2.4	Adult – 108% (\$50.05) Child/Concession – 54% (\$37.06)	50%	64,582	\$1,215,756	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Scenario 4.2-1 – Flat fare increases and 25% off-peak discount					
Option 4.2-1.1	8% (\$25.99)	25%	76,376	\$951,521	
Option 4.2-1.2	25% (\$30.08)	25%	73,588	\$1,030,074	
Option 4.2-1.3	66% (\$39.94)	25%	66,862	\$1,166,192	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Option 4.2-1.4	108% (\$50.05)	25%	59,972	\$1,227,442	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Scenario 4.2-2 – Varying fare increases and 25% off-peak discount					
Option 4.2-2.1	Adult – 8% (\$25.99) Child/Concession – 4% (\$25.02)	25%	76,500	\$949,366	
Option 4.2-2.2	Adult – 25% (\$30.08) Child/Concession – 12.5% (\$27.07)	25%	73,973	\$1,024,143	
Option 4.2-2.3	Adult – 66% (\$39.94) Child/Concession – 33% (\$32.00)	25%	67,879	\$1,155,660	Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).
Option 4.2-2.4	Adult – 108% (\$50.05) Child/Concession – 54% (\$37.06)	25%	61,636	\$1,218,806	Maximum allowable Bee Card balance is \$299. In this scenario, card can only hold up to six trips. Low confidence for very high fare increases (greater than 50%).

3.1 Impact of fare capping

The current fare capping regime allows free travel after paying for nine trips (for children this applies after 6.5 trips) within a seven day (i.e. one week) period. Instead of applying each fare cap scenario (4 trips, 6 trips, and 8 trips) to the fare increase scenarios above, the impact is tested by modelling changes in patronage and fare revenue if fare capping is introduced with no other changes.

Note the following assumptions:

- Fare capping for children.** Children aged less than 18 years received free travel after 6.5 trips, but children (up to age 15) and passengers with concession products are included in one category for analysis. However, differentiation is not required as
- The majority of trips on Te Huia are from Frankton / Rotokauri to the Strand.** Most passengers on Te Huia travel through to the Strand, with a small proportion of passengers alighting in Pukekohe or Puhinui and a smaller proportion alighting in Huntly. Therefore, the Zone 9 fare (\$24.06) can be broadly applied to the analysis as representative of fares paid.
- Calendar week.** The calendar week for the purpose of calculating the trips eligible for free travel is Monday to Sunday.

Fare Cap Scenario	Patronage Impact (%)	Fare Revenue Impact (%)
8 trips per week	0.04% increase	0.58% decrease
6 trips per week	0.24% increase	2.78% decrease
4 trips per week	0.79% increase	7.74% decrease

7.3 APPROVAL OF 2026/27 ANNUAL PLAN

Rā Date:	7 May 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Janine Becker, Director, Customer and Corporate Services
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. This report presents those matters that Council requested further consideration of before the approval of the 2026/27 Annual Plan. It includes an update to the budget position that was approved for the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan at the 25th February 2026 Council meeting.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. At Council's February 2026 meeting to approve the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan, a range of matters were identified where information was to be brought back to Council prior to the adoption of the final 2026/27 Annual Plan and budget. These matters are canvassed within this report.
3. In addition to this, as staff have continued to monitor Council's financial performance over the 2025/26 as well as emerging issues in our operating environment a series of further changes to the budget approved by Council in February 2026 are proposed.
4. If approved, these budget changes result in a reduction in the required rates revenue for 2026/27 from \$157.076 million to \$156.371 million, representing a reduction in the estimated increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers from 1.4 per cent to 0.9 per cent.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Approval of 2026/27 Annual Plan* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received.
 - (a) That Council approves the 2026/27 Annual Plan budget, with an estimated total rates revenue requirement of \$156.371 million resulting in an estimated increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers of 0.9 per cent in 2026/27.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

5. A proposed Annual Plan budget was presented to Council on 25th February 2026. Following changes agreed by Council, the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan budget was approved, with total rates revenue of \$157.076 million, and a proposed increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers of 1.4 per cent. This position included the application of \$2.5 million of unallocated prior year surplus funds as a one-off reduction in the general rate funding required.

6. At that meeting, Council identified several matters that were to be resolved before the final Annual Plan is adopted in June 2026. These items are addressed in this report.
7. As staff have continued to monitor financial performance over the 2025/26 financial year, as well as emerging issues in our operating environment a series of further changes to the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan budget are proposed.
8. Overall, the recommended changes to the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan budget result in a revised increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers of 0.9 per cent – a reduction of \$760,000 (0.5 per cent) from the rates revenue impact approved in February. This compares to the projected rates revenue increase included in the 2024 – 2034 Long Term Plan for 2026/27 of 4.2 per cent. The application of unallocated prior year surpluses to provide a one-off reduction to the general rate revenue requirement in 2026/27 accounts for 1.7 per cent of the reduction, with the remaining reduction of 1.6 per cent due to changes made through the budget setting process by staff and elected members.
9. Subject to any decisions made by Council on the remaining issues outlined in this report, the 2026/27 Annual Plan document and rates setting report will be presented to Council on 25th June 2026.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

Funding impacts for local government reform and transitional arrangements

10. The 2026/27 Annual Plan has been prepared in an environment of proposed generational change to the structure and operation of local government in New Zealand. As part of this reform programme, the government released a draft proposal in November 2026, to 'simplify local government' and change the future governance arrangements for regional councils. Public consultations on the 'Simplifying Local Government' proposal closed on 20th February 2026.
11. On 5th May 2026, the Government announced a Head Start pathway for councils wishing to reorganise quickly. Councils have until 9th August 2026 to submit proposals for new unitary authorities that combine regional and territorial council functions. Regional councils cannot submit proposals themselves.
12. Officials will assess the proposals against set criteria. A 'backstop' process will be used for those councils that do not progress through the Head Start pathway. The backstop process would begin following the 2028 local government elections, noting that there would be no regional council election. A new interim body would be formed to govern regional councils and develop plans for regional reorganisation.
13. Given this process, and the uncertainty in relation to funding that may be required to support it, the 2026/27 Annual Plan does not make any financial provision for local government reform or transitional arrangements. It is assumed that any funding would be made available through unallocated surplus funds.

Te Huia interregional rail services

14. At the Annual Plan meeting in February 2026, Councillors discussed the draft Strategic Investment Proposal (SIP) for a Te Huia replacement rolling stock business case. There was a general view that a business case would be premature in advance of a decision on funding a Te Huia permanent service.

15. Since that time New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) has agreed to a safety case variation for existing rolling stock for up to another ten years. Subject to successful completion of additional safety work, this means that there is no immediate risk of the current carriages being unsuitable for passenger service.
16. There have been further discussions on rolling stock with Ministry of Transport (MOT) and New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), which have concluded that whilst an early business case could mitigate risk of significant procurement costs (for example by enabling use of the existing Greater Wellington order), there is no central government funding to support any financial contribution from Council.
17. In the light of these developments, it is considered pragmatic to postpone commencement of the replacement rolling stock business case until 2027/28, which is the start of the new National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). Therefore, funding currently provided for in the Draft Annual Plan is not required, which reduces the rates requirement by \$269,500.
18. Through the third quarter financial forecast, and alongside confirmation of the 2026/27 Annual Plan budget, staff have reviewed the projected balance in the Te Huia reserve at 30 June 2027.
19. After taking account of the adjustments identified in the third quarter forecast the Te Huia reserve balance is expected to be approximately \$98,000 at the conclusion of the current trial. Noting price uncertainty due to current fuel cost variability, this position provides some protection against minor cost increases but presents a funding risk for the Annual Plan should fuel prices continue at a higher rate in the short to medium term.
20. Most recent operating costs indicate a monthly increase of \$50,000 due to higher diesel prices. If current pricing were to continue throughout the plan period, this would result in additional operating costs of \$600,000 which have not been provided for in the Draft Annual Plan. Whilst there has been some offsetting benefit from increased patronage over the last month, actual results remain uncertain. Funding from NZTA will cover 60 per cent of any net cost increases in accordance with the current Funding Assistance Rate, resulting in an estimated increase in the local share of \$240,000. It is recommended that the local share of potential fuel price increases is added to the budget.
21. Taken together, projected funding for Te Huia remains largely unchanged from what was included in the Draft Annual Plan – noting however that the business case would have been funded through the general rate, where service-related costs are funded through the Te Huia targeted rate.

Total Mobility

22. In December 2025, the Ministry of Transport (MoT) requested that the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) work with councils to reduce the fare cap of Total Mobility Scheme services trips by an average of 10%.
23. Options to achieve this directive for the Waikato Region, while maintaining the maximum, and an equitable, level of service for our Total Mobility service users were considered by the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) Transport Committee at its meeting held on 22 April 2026.
24. For historical reasons, the Waikato Region has had varied maximum subsidies paid for Total Mobility trips by territorial authority areas, (where part of the Scheme). The options presented to the Committee also included moving to a standard maximum subsidy paid (fare cap) for the Region that would also achieve the intent of the MoT request to reduce

spending on Total Mobility trips by up to 10%. The WRC Transport Committee resolved as follows (unconfirmed minute):

25. That the committee supports Option 3 that is a maximum subsidy of \$22.75 per ride regionwide (65% of up to \$35) and recommends this change to Council as part of the 2026/27 Annual Plan approvals in May 2026
26. The new, standard maximum fare subsidy would apply from 1 July 2026. The staff reporting showed that at this maximum subsidy amount Council and NZTA spending on Total Mobility services in 2026/27 is expected to be in line with the approved budget for Total Mobility services and therefore has no budget impact for 2026/2027.

Freshwater Clam Management

27. Invasive freshwater clam (*Corbicula Fluminea*) was detected in the Waikato region in May 2023. To minimise the risk of further spread of *Corbicula*, the Ministry and Primary Industries (MPI) (through the Biosecurity Act 1993) has declared *Corbicula* an Unwanted Organism and put in place a Controlled Area Notice (CAN) across a significant section of the Waikato River. This imposes specific requirements on users of the Waikato River, including enhanced check-clean-dry (CCD) protocols.
28. In response to this, and in support of Council's obligations under the CAN, through the 2025/26 Annual Plan process Council approved a one-off capital budget of \$414,000 and an operational budget of \$170,000 per annum for 3 years.
29. This funding enables Council to reinstate activities within the Waikato River that have been restricted or deferred due to CAN and CCD requirements. It also ensures that Council has appropriate systems in place to support staff and contractors in understanding and complying with these requirements while delivering services.
30. Before finalising the 2026/27 Annual Plan, staff have completed a review of work that has been completed or still required to support risk management.
31. The capital expenditure budget provided for *Corbicula* has been fully allocated with further work needed to upgrade facilities in the Cambridge, Pokeno, Northgate, Paeroa and at 160 Ward St, including increased environmental monitoring equipment costs across the Waikato River hydro lakes.
32. It is proposed that the 2026/27 operational budget for *Corbicula* be reduced from \$170,000 to \$52,500 to reflect improved operational practices, including adjustments to contractor numbers working in the Controlled Area Notice (CAN), careful job management, and the use of existing business contingencies. Budget is still required to ensure contractor compliance in cases where current management methods are not feasible, or in the event of unforeseen contractor response events. The reduced budget is also expected to be reflected in the 2027/28 operating budget.

ICM capital works programme review

33. The capital portfolio budget will increase from \$19.407 million to \$20.89 million to recognise the carryover of funds for the purchase of the Waihou pump station generators (\$1.0 million) and the costs associated with land purchases that are in progress in the Piako zone (\$483,000).
34. The Waihou generators are in the final stages of procurement and will be contracted by the end of the financial year but due to delivery times will not yet be on site.

35. There are a number of land purchases at varying stages of settlement in the Piako zone which are progressing but will not be complete by the end of the financial year. The funding of these projects will be required to complete transactions next financial year. Given this a rephrasing of the previously approved budget, the impact on borrowing and subsequent interest expenses is immaterial.

Prior Year Surplus

36. As part of the setting of the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan, Council resolved to utilise the unallocated prior year surpluses to 30 June 2025 to reduce the general rate revenue requirement for one year.
37. In addition to this, Council had made available up to \$1.0 million of prior year surplus funds to support organisation review processes led by the Chief Executive in 2025. To date, approximately \$631,000 of these funds have been allocated, with further costs to be settled by the end of May 2026 as redeployment processes are completed, and key roles are recruited.
38. Staff have continued to track financial performance across three forecast processes in the 2025/26 financial year. The third quarter results reported to the Finance and Performance Committee on 13th May 2026 project a \$2.123 million general rate surplus at the end of this financial year.
39. Council may wish to consider how these funds may be utilised through the Annual Plan. Alternatively, considering the recent announcements by the government in relation to local government reform, Council may wish to hold these funds to support work on future local government arrangements for the Waikato region. As noted earlier in this report, no separate provision of funding for this work is included within the Draft Annual Plan.

Other proposed changes to the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan

40. In addition to the matters canvassed above, and in light of the forecast financial performance for the 2025/26 financial year, further changes to the budget included in the Draft Annual Plan are proposed to reflect changes in forecast revenue levels, as well as to reflect likely cost increases in response to inflationary cost drivers – including but not limited to fuel costs.

Penalty income

- (a) Rates penalty income in 2025/26 is \$800,000 higher than the Annual Plan budget, and average revenue over the last two financial years. This can, in part, be attributed to a tightening of the policy on the remission of penalties – now requiring a payment arrangement to be in place within 4 weeks of the penalty being applied.
- (b) While it is not Council's intention to generate revenue through penalties, the additional revenue levels signal the need to reconsider the budgeted provision for these.
- (c) To mitigate some of this increase, staff are increasing their focus on the follow up of outstanding balances to settle amounts that have been subject to penalties over the last 12 months.
- (d) Staff recommend that the provision for rates penalty revenue is increased from \$1.8 million to \$2.1 million for 2026/27.

Inflation

- (e) The conflict in the Middle East and disruption of major shipping routes is adding pressure to global fuel prices with New Zealand exposed to these pressures as an importing nation.
- (f) The Government has released a National Fuel Plan to respond to the fuel supply uncertainty. New Zealand is currently at Phase One, with fuel supply currently stable, and stocks remaining sufficient. Additional fuel supply security has been achieved through agreements between the government and Singapore, as well as additional fuel stock holdings. However, this is an evolving situation, with the price of petrol and diesel expected to continue to remain elevated for some time.
- (g) Waikato Regional Council is exposed to the impacts of fuel disruption - diesel and petrol is required for flood protection infrastructure and pump stations, maritime services, public transport, and for the operation of Council's vehicle fleet.
- (h) Staff have modelled cost sensitivity to changes in fuel prices across these services.
 - (i) From a fleet perspective, analysis of current monthly fuel costs has identified an increase of between \$25,000 - \$30,000 per month when compared to average costs over the second quarter of 2025/26. In response to this, early guidance was provided to staff on the avoidance of non-essential travel (both vehicle and flights).
 - (ii) Assuming fuel prices remain elevated over the course of 2026/27, this could result in additional fuel costs of up to \$350,000. The budget is based on average fuel consumption of approximately 17,000 litres per month. On this basis, a \$1.00 per litre change in fuel price equates to an increase or decrease in fleet fuel costs of around \$17,000 per month. The proposed budget has not been adjusted for this, due to the high level of uncertainty as well as the availability of reserve funds that can be utilised to meet unbudgeted costs.
 - (iii) In addition to the provision recommended in relation to Te Huia services, the impact of higher fuel prices has also been assessed in relation to bus services. Initial analysis based on a 5 per cent increase compared to the March 2026 indexation figures continuing throughout 2026/27 would increase operational costs by \$440,000. The recent rise in fuel prices has had a positive impact on patronage and therefore fare revenue. For the purposes of the Annual Plan, it is assumed that this increased patronage would continue and therefore reduce the additional cost to Council. Any net cost increases would further be offset by additional NZTA funding, with Council's share funded from the Transport reserve.
 - (iv) Council's diesel powered pump stations are in the Waihou / Piako scheme and generation costs incurred are recovered from Hauraki District Council. Therefore, sustained fuel price increases are expected to have minimal impact on Council operating costs in this area.

Land licences revenue

- (i) Following a five-yearly grazing licence fee review an additional \$125,000 of revenue has been added to the budget for Waihou, Piako and Lower Waikato.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

41. This decision will have no impact on the ability of the Council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.

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

42. This decision is likely to result in no impact in greenhouse gas emissions.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

43. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the LGA and Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision making requirements contained in Part Six of the LGA and that the decision making requirements of the LGA have been met.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

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

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

45. This report outlines the key updates and to the 2026/27 Draft Annual Plan following the Council meeting in February 2026, alongside emerging financial and operational pressures identified through ongoing monitoring.
46. Several areas of uncertainty have emerged since the approved of the Draft Annual Plan, including further direction from the Government on the pathway for local government reform, as well as notably fuel price volatility. The recommended treatment for the management of fuel price risk is set out in this report, while financial provisions that are available to support Council’s response to local government reform are also explained.
47. The proposed changes result in a further reduction to the rates revenue required to fund Council’s operations over the 2026/27 financial year, with an estimated increase in rates revenue from current ratepayers of 0.9 per cent.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

APPENDIX ONE

Estimated impact of proposed budget changes to 2026/27 Annual Plan

PROSPECTIVE STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE

2026/27 ANNUAL PLAN

	2025/26 Annual Plan	2026/27 Draft Annual Plan	Estimated impact of changes proposed	2026/27 Annual Plan	2026/27 LTP
	\$000	\$000	\$000		\$000
General rates	48,588	46,618	(624)	45,994	50,433
Total UAGC rate revenue	19,340	20,745	(63)	20,682	20,510
Total all property rates	67,928	67,363	(687)	66,676	70,943
Targeted rates				-	
- Civil defence	3,115	3,353		3,353	3,199
- Regional services fund	724	735		735	735
- Natural heritage	2,917	2,968		2,968	2,981
- Stock truck effluent	18	55		55	46
- Waikato Regional Theatre rate	412	404		404	423
- Biosecurity	13,901	14,699	(133)	14,567	15,225
- Transport	21,994	25,325	231	25,556	28,693
- Catchment schemes	38,721	39,335	(172)	39,163	40,138
- Primary industry compliance	2,854	2,894		2,894	3,365
Total targeted rate revenue	84,656	89,768	(74)	89,695	94,805
Total rate revenue	152,584	157,131	(760)	156,371	165,748
Rates penalty income	1,800	1,800	300	2,100	1,451
Rates remissions granted	(775)	(800)		(800)	(650)
Net rates revenue	153,609	158,131	(460)	157,671	166,549
Government grants	27,890	30,521	304	30,825	33,224
Direct charges	8,340	8,731		8,731	8,474
Consent holder charges	6,011	6,116		6,116	6,070
Investment fund distribution income	4,450	3,578		3,578	4,733
Investment fund capital protection income	4,122	4,291		4,291	2,682
Interest income	1,422	1,620		1,620	1,920
Other income	15,643	13,583		13,583	13,449
Royalties	200	200		200	120
Rental income	758	778	125	903	646
Other gains/(losses)				-	
Total revenue	222,445	227,549	(31)	227,518	237,867
Operating expenditure	133,467	138,048	184	138,232	141,980
Employee benefit expenses	71,259	72,991		72,991	70,592
Interest expense	2,990	3,093		3,093	4,639
Depreciation and amortisation	14,497	14,096		14,096	15,766
Total cost of service	222,213	228,228	184	228,412	232,977
Operating surplus/(deficit) before taxation	232	(679)	(216)	(894)	4,890
Share of associate surplus/(deficit)	-	-			-
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax	232	(679)	(216)	(894)	4,890
Income tax expense	-	-			-
Net surplus/(deficit) after taxation	232	(679)	(216)	(894)	4,890
Other comprehensive revenue and expenses					
Gain/(loss) on property, plant and equipment reval	16,936	-			-
Total other comprehensive revenue and expense	17,168	(679)	(216)	(894)	4,890
Total comprehensive revenue and expenses	17,168	(679)	(216)	(894)	4,890
Transfer to / (from) reserves	18,898	990	(216)	774	5,298
Total comprehensive revenue and expenses after reserve transfers	(1,730)	(1,669)	-	(1,669)	(408)

7.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND (LGNZ) ACTIVITY UPDATE

Rā | Date: 20 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

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

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Chair of Council (Cr Warren Maher) will provide a verbal update on the LGNZ activities since the last meeting of Council.
3. Attached are the two most recent newsletters (*Keeping it Local*) as published by Local Government New Zealand, being the 30 April 2026 and 14 May 2026.
4. Elected members should be automatically subscribed to and receiving these newsletters. If that is not the case, please let the report author know in the first instance.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the report *Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Activity Update* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

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

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

6. [Keeping it Local, 30 April 2026](#)
7. [Keeping it Local, 14 May 2026](#)

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. [Keeping it Local - 30 April 2026 \(Doc # 36031510\)](#) ↓
2. [Keeping it Local - 14 May 2026 \(Doc # 36029839\)](#) ↓

Dave Doggart

From: Information Centre <information.centre@lgnz.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 30 April 2026 12:33 pm
To: Amanda Wells
Subject: [Keeping it Local]: Which council had the highest voter turnout?

Your fortnightly newsletter keeping you updated on all things local government.

No images? [Click here](#)

KEEPING IT LOCAL



HIGHLIGHTS >>

News & views

- DIA releases detailed voter turnout stats
- Transport funding changes should benefit councils
- Political wrap: Labour meetings, dog control and fuel engagement

Events

- Upcoming Ako hours:
 - How Palmerston North took a new approach to public engagement
 - How to design and deliver a great speech
 - Navigating the CE relationship

People & performance

- Remembering Adrienne Staples



NEWS & VIEWS

NGĀ RONGO KŌRERO ME NGĀ TIROHANGA



DIA releases detailed voter turnout stats

The Department of Internal Affairs has published its 2025 Local Elections Statistics report, providing a detailed picture of the 2025 election. It covers the number of special and invalid votes, the number of sitting members seeking re-election, and turnout of residential and non-residential voters, among other interesting insights.

Highlights include:

- Total voter turnout for territorial authorities was 40%, down 1% from 2022. However, if the result from Auckland Council (where turnout was significantly lower than 2022) is excluded from the national figure, the territorial authority turnout would be 45%.
- Turnout for both regional councils and community boards was 44%.
- The body with the highest turnout was Chatham Islands Council with 71.5%, followed by the Lawrence-Tuapeka Community Board with 70%.
- The proportion of women elected members increased from 39% to 41%.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

Transport funding changes should benefit councils

NZTA has announced two changes to make it easier for councils to develop funding bids for the 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

The first is an increase to the maximum threshold for individual activities that can be included in the low-cost/low-risk programme – from \$2m to \$5m. This will allow for a greater range of

projects to be included – and eliminates the need for individual business cases for small, low-risk transport projects.

NZTA also announced it will be able to approve a programme of improvement activities, with each individual activity having an implementation cost of up to \$50m. This will allow a range of activities to be assessed at once, reducing workloads for both councils and NZTA. It will apply to public transport service improvements, and for these there will be no upper cost limit.

LGNZ is pleased to see these changes, which should mean shorter approval times and cost-savings for councils when preparing funding bids.

NZTA will provide further guidance on how these changes will work on their website in the coming weeks.

Political wrap: Labour meetings, dog control and fuel engagement

Last week LGNZ President Rehette Stoltz and Vice President Dan Gordon met with Labour Leader Chris Hipkins; Housing, Infrastructure and Public Investment Spokesperson Kieran McNulty; and Local Government and Transport Spokesperson Tangi Utikere at Parliament.

- They responded positively to our position that regional councillors should serve out their current term or remain until reorganisation plans are finalised.
- They agreed the proposed regulatory takings provision – requiring local government to compensate private property owners – should not remain in the final Resource Management Act.
- We also discussed Labour’s commitment to no new unfunded mandates being imposed on local government, and electoral reform.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister requested input on reducing dog attacks – and then adopted our key recommendation to review the Dog Control Act. This week, Minister Watts wrote to our President acknowledging this work and confirming the Government’s desire to continue working with local government on both legislative and non-legislative solutions to make our communities safer.

Minister Watts has continued to host regular Zoom catch-ups with Mayors, Chairs and Chief Executives regarding New Zealand’s fuel situation. Last week he praised local government for its contributions to informing the Government’s response. LGNZ is also part of a Department of Internal Affairs working group that supports the Government’s response.



Media scoop: Climate resilience top of mind after storms

Following recent storms that battered New Zealand, we called for more government support towards climate resilience. Rehette Stoltz spoke to media about the toll that severe storms take on councils and the need to put plans for adaptation into action. This appeared in the [Otago Daily Times](#), [RNZ online](#) and on RNZ National, 1 News Breakfast, Newstalk ZB, and in print in the Gisborne Herald.

The Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS) continued to gain traction. [The Post](#) compared the Government's \$7 million spend on consultants with the minor cost it would take for the Government to set up the scheme. The RAS also featured as the key part of a proposed "National Electrification Plan" by the Green Party, which gained media coverage in [The Press](#), [Newstalk ZB](#), [The Post](#), and [Waikato Times](#).



IN OTHER NEWS ĒTAHI ATU RONGO KŌRERO

Road Efficiency Group takes home Australasian Asset Management Award

The Road Efficiency Group is a partnership between LGNZ, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and all New Zealand road controlling authorities. At the Asset Management Council Awards in

Perth recently, the Road Efficiency Group was presented with the Innovation Award for the [Consistent Condition Data Collection project](#). Huge congratulations to all those involved.



EVENTS

NGĀ TAIOPENGA

Ako Hour: How Palmerston North took a new approach to public engagement (1 May at 12pm)

This Friday at midday, join Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith and Communications Manager Olivia Wix to discuss their multiple-award-winning, real-world engagement that goes beyond the usual council playbook. From immersive events to showing up where people already are, learn how creative, low-cost approaches reach more people, build trust and support better decisions.

[REGISTER](#)

Ako Hour: How to design and deliver a great speech (7 May at 4:30pm)

This Ako Hour with LGNZ Director of Partnerships & Advocacy Ranjani Ponnuchetty talks through how to design and deliver speeches for different settings. That might be a few words at an intimate community event, or a more formal speech to a larger audience. Either way, there are simple tips and tricks that you can master.

Join us on 7 May at 4:30pm for a practical and interactive session with real-world examples and ideas you can use straight away – while still sounding like you, and not a script.

[REGISTER](#)

Ako Hour: Navigating the CE relationship (8 May at 12pm)

The relationship between elected members and the Chief Executive is one of the most critical factors influencing council performance.

This Ako Hour on 8 May at 12pm featuring Karen Meredith from PeopleEX explores how Mayors, Chairs, committee chairs, and elected members can get the best from their Chief Executive.

This session is particularly relevant for those involved in Chief Executive performance and a lead committee role.

REGISTER



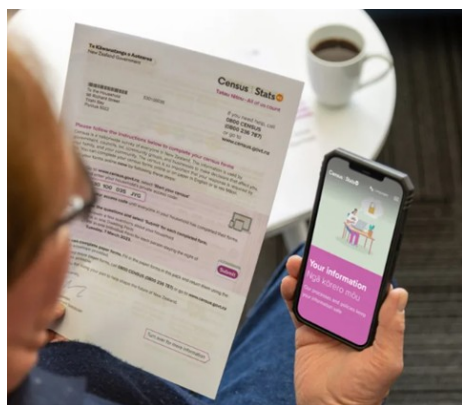
PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE NGĀ TĀNGATA ME TE TUTUKINGA

Remembering Adrienne Staples

LGNZ sadly acknowledges the recent passing of Greater Wellington Regional Council Deputy Chair Adrienne Staples. Adrienne was a former LGNZ National Council member and four-term Mayor of South Wairarapa. She will be remembered for her service to local government, her leadership, and her commitment to the communities of Wairarapa and the wider Wellington region.



READING PĀNUITANGA



The NZ Census guided vital economic and social planning. What happens now it's gone?

“The old New Zealand Census - first conducted in 1851 - is to be no more. In its place will be a new and largely untried system that could potentially undermine the statistical basis of crucial social and economic policy making and planning.”

READ THE FULL STORY

New Zealand population bombshell

“New Zealand has its head in the sand about how to manage dramatic changes to its population: fewer births, fewer workers, an emptying of rural centres and, within a few years, more Asians than New Zealand Europeans in Auckland. That’s according to Sir Peter Gluckman and emeritus professor Paul Spoonley.”



[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



**Ngā manaakitanga,
The team at LGNZ**



[f Share](#) [X Tweet](#) [in Share](#) [✉ Forward](#)

Local Government New Zealand
Level 8, 175 Victoria Street, Te Aro 6011
Te Kāhui Kaunihera o Aotearoa
www.lgnz.co.nz

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe below.

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Dave Doggart

From: Information Centre <information.centre@lgnz.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 14 May 2026 12:18 pm
To: Amanda Wells
Subject: [Keeping it Local]: Local government reacts to Head Start announcement

Your fortnightly newsletter keeping you updated on all things local government.

No images? [Click here](#)

KEEPING IT LOCAL



HIGHLIGHTS >>

News & views

- Local government reacts to Head Start announcement
- Ministers and officials discuss Head Start at LGNZ sector meetings
- Budget 2026: What to look for

Policy

- What the Climate Change Commission’s National Climate Risk Assessment tells us

In other news

- Nominations open for LGNZ President and Vice President roles
- Community Boards Executive Committee hosts first meeting of the triennium
- Governance guides available on Ākōna



NEWS & VIEWS

NGĀ RONGO KŌRERO ME NGĀ TIROHANGA

Local government reacts to Head Start announcement

Last week, Ministers Bishop and Watts announced a new process to reorganise local government. At LGNZ's sector meetings this week, Mayors, Chairs, Chief Executives and other council leaders will discuss the new process, their reaction and what support is needed.

The Government wants councils to submit high-level reorganisation proposals by 9 August. If councils choose not to submit by that date, or their proposals are not successful, an alternative backstop process will come into play. What this will look like is unclear, with decisions on that process not expected till 2027.

LGNZ is using this week's sector meetings to listen to members' reactions. We know that councils will have a range of views and this must be respected. We were pleased to see the Government announce regional councillors will serve out their elected term until 2028 – something we have advocated for since the Government's initial proposal was released last year.

Last Friday we held a zoom where LGNZ members heard from the Department of Internal Affairs and Minister Watts' key political advisor.

WATCH THE RECORDING (PASSCODE:
25659226)

Ministers and officials discuss Head Start at LGNZ sector meetings

After last week's announcement, LGNZ reset this week's sector meetings to make sure members could engage with key Ministers and officials – in both formal and informal settings.

- Minister Watts joined Metro sector's networking drinks on Wednesday.
- Minister Watts will attend Regional online on Thursday afternoon.
- Minister Bishop will engage with R&P as part of the formal programme on Friday morning.
- DIA's Executive Director Simplifying Local Government Hemi Smiler will speak and take questions at all three sector meetings.
 - New MCERT Chief Executive Jeremy Lightfoot attended/will attend:
 - Metro sector lunch on Wednesday.
 - Rural & Provincial networking drinks on Thursday.

- [Regional sector dinner on Thursday.](#)

What to keep an eye out for in Budget 2026

Budget 2026 is set to be announced on 28 May and comes at a time when the Government continued to stress the need for fiscal restraint. As an LGNZ member, you'll receive our full analysis of this year's Budget and an invite to our special Budget night zoom with Brad Olsen.

How we're supporting members to engage with the Budget:

- We have secured a spot in the Budget lock-up at the Beehive and will help set the media agenda that afternoon by providing comment on what the Budget means for local government.
- By the end of Budget Day, we'll provide members with a full summary of all the most important features of the Budget from a local government perspective.
- That evening, you're invited to our zoom with Infometrics Chief Executive and Principal Economist Brad Olsen, where he'll deliver his verdict on the Budget and its implications for local government.

Ahead of Budget Day, we've set out the key issues for local government that could feature in Budget 2026, including funding and financing of local government, implementation of reform, and transport and infrastructure.

[SEE THE LIST](#)

Political wrap: Our most recent meeting with Minister Watts

On 30 April, LGNZ President Rehette Stoltz met with Minister Watts, where they discussed a range of topics impacting local government:

- The Minister provided a broad overview of the Simplifying Local Government announcement and stressed he was keen for all those in local government to understand how it would work so those who were ready could take full advantage.
- He noted that our letter advocating for regional councillors to retain their roles for the remainder of their elected term had influenced the Government's thinking.
- Rehette discussed how the fuel crisis is impacting councils. She shared that for some councils, increased fuel costs were causing medium-long term impacts, while others had the capacity to absorb them in the short-term.
- The Minister was pleased with local government's input into the Government's fuel response. He said that while engagement will continue, the frequency of zooms for Mayors and Chairs with Minister Willis and himself was likely to reduce if New Zealand remains in phase one. The most recent of these zooms was held this Tuesday, with Minister Willis saying she welcomed suggestions on changes

to the Local Government Act that would help local government to operate effectively if phase four restrictions were imposed.

- Rehette stressed that councils need to know when the next policy decision on rates capping would be announced. Minister Watts indicated that further announcements are still some time away, as the Government wants time to consider the feedback it received.

Media scoop: Responding to the Government’s announcement, safety for elected members, and GST sharing

LGNZ’s response to the Government’s announcement on the reorganisation of local government was covered by Newstalk ZB, [The Post](#), [Waikato Times](#), [The Press](#), [BusinessDesk](#), [1News](#), and in the Rotorua Daily Post.

Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair of LGNZ Regional sector and Chair of Environment Canterbury, penned an [op-ed for Newsroom](#) highlighting the important role regional councillors play, especially amid current fuel challenges. We were pleased to see that the Government’s announcement the next day included that regional councillors would remain in their roles for the rest of their elected term.

Our submission to Parliament’s Petitions Committee about the increase in harassment of politicians and was picked up online by [1News](#), [RNZ](#), and in print in The Nelson Mail, Taranaki Daily News, Timaru Herald, Southland Times, Waikato Times, and Manawatu Standard. Scott Necklen was quoted in [Stuff](#), [1News](#), [RNZ](#), and [Bay of Plenty Times](#) about the increase in abuse and harassment towards elected members, and noted the advocacy work LGNZ does to improve safety.

Our request for the Government to introduce GST sharing on new builds as part of the 2026 Budget was picked up by Mediaworks for their radio news bulletins.

LGNZ Metro sector chair Mayor Grant Smith spoke to [RNZ Checkpoint](#) about rates capping.



POLICY & ADVOCACY

TE KAUPAPAHERE ME TE KŌKIRITANGA



Report shows climate risks are rising faster than New Zealand’s ability to adapt

The Climate Change Commission’s recently released 2026 National Climate Risk Assessment shows climate risks are increasing faster than New Zealand’s ability to manage them. Extreme weather is becoming more frequent and severe, while investment is still heavily weighted toward clean-up rather than prevention. Since 2010, 97 percent of government spending has gone to disaster response and recovery, with just 3 percent spent on reducing risk and building resilience.

The report looks at risks across infrastructure, communities, the environment, and decision-making. Water infrastructure is identified as the most urgent concern and is expected to become the first area to reach “extreme” risk within 25 years without greater investment.

Funding and governance are also highlighted as risks. The lack of clear direction on who pays for adaptation, and ongoing under-investment, leaves councils and communities with fewer options and shifts higher costs onto future generations.

The Government must respond within two years with an updated National Adaptation Plan. Changes to the Climate Change Response Act are also expected this term, including new requirements for councils to plan for climate adaptation in high-risk areas.

[READ THE ASSESSMENT](#)



IN OTHER NEWS

ĒTAHI ATU RONGO KŌRERO

Nominations are open for LGNZ President and Vice President

We’re seeking nominations for LGNZ President and Vice President for the 2026-2029 term. Nominations close on Friday 5 June.

Any elected member can stand for the role of President, as long as their nomination is supported by two member councils. Read the [President role description](#) and download the [President nomination form](#).

Any member of [National Council](#) can stand for the role of Vice President if their nomination is supported by two member councils. Read the [Vice President role description](#) and download the [Vice President nomination form](#)

If more than one valid nomination for either position is received, an election will be held at the online AGM on 31 July 2026. All LGNZ member councils have been emailed an invitation to the AGM.

Community Boards Executive Committee meets with members

On Monday evening, community board members came together to meet their committee, learn tips and tricks for being a community board member, take a tour of the Ākona platform, hear about the new micro-credentials for elected members, and be briefed on the Government’s reforms and their potential impacts on community boards.

WATCH THE RECORDING (PASSCODE:
87727562)

We have shifted LGNZ governance guides to Ākona

The governance guides previously hosted on the LGNZ website have now moved to Ākona, our learning and development platform. This change brings the guides alongside a wider range of governance training resources, making it easier for elected members and council staff to access practical support in one place. If you have bookmarked the old pages, please update your links to akona.lgnz.co.nz. If you don't have access to Ākona and would like a log-in, please contact akona@lgnz.co.nz.



READING PĀNUITANGA

Budget 2026: Nicola Willis says 'job-rich' projects will feature in \$2.2b boost to capital allowance

"Finance Minister Nicola Willis says the \$300 million slimming of the operational allowance in her Budget will allow the Government to spend more on "job-rich" capital programmes."



[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Auckland city deal has 'big hole' in funding, business group warns

"Auckland's city deal will not be credible unless the Government sets out who is in charge, how disputes with the city will be handled and how its infrastructure needs will be paid for, the Committee for Auckland says."

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Ngā manaakitanga,
The team at LGNZ



Local Government New Zealand
Level 8, 175 Victoria Street, Te Aro 6011
Te Kāhui Kaunihera o Aotearoa
www.lgnz.co.nz

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe below.

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

7.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SUPERLOCAL CONFERENCE 2026

Rā Date:	13 May 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To confirm council attendance and representation at the 2026 Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Annual General Meeting (AGM).

KŌRERO WHAKATAHI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. This report seeks Council's appointment of up to four delegates, including a presiding delegate, to represent Waikato Regional Council at the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Annual General Meeting to be held online on 31 July 2026.
3. Under the LGNZ Constitution, the Council is entitled to six votes, to be exercised by the appointed presiding delegate. This year, the AGM will be held separately from the SuperLocal Conference, which is scheduled to occur later in the year.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Local Government New Zealand - Annual General Meeting and SuperLocal Conference 2026* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received.
2. That council appoints the following Councillors as its delegates at the Local Government NZ Annual General Meeting to be held on Friday, 31 July 2026:
 - (a) Cr _____ as the presiding delegate carrying the right to vote.
 - (b) Cr _____ as a delegate and alternate presiding delegate.
 - (c) Cr _____ as a delegate.
 - (d) Cr _____ as a delegate.
3. That the presiding delegate, may support or otherwise, in accordance with council's position, any number of remits or other motions before the 2025 Local Government New Zealand Annual General Meeting on behalf of council for discussion and voting.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

4. The LGNZ AGM will be held online at 12 noon on Friday, 31 July 2026.
5. The deadline for submission of remits for consideration at the AGM closed on Monday, 25 May 2026.

6. In previous years, the AGM has been held in conjunction with the SuperLocal Conference. In 2026, the AGM will be held separately, with the Conference scheduled to take place later in the year.
7. Under the LGNZ Constitution, Waikato Regional Council is entitled to six votes at the AGM and may appoint up to four delegates to represent the Council. A presiding delegate must be appointed to exercise the Council's voting rights.
8. Observers may also attend the AGM; however, they do not have speaking or voting rights.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

9. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the Local Government Act 2002 and council's *Significance and Engagement Policy*, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the decision making requirements contained in Part Six of the Local Government Act 2002 and that the decision making requirements of that Act have been met.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

10. To the best of the writer's knowledge, this decision is not significantly inconsistent with, nor is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with any policy adopted by council or any plan required by the Local Government Act 2002 or any other enactment.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

11. Attendance at the LGNZ AGM is a matter for Council. This report seeks the appointment of delegates, including a presiding delegate, to represent the Council and exercise its voting entitlement at the AGM to be held on Friday, 31 July 2026.

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **LGNZ AGM Registration (Doc # 35944904)** [↓](#)



Register for the LGNZ AGM – Waikato Regional Council

**Local Government New Zealand’s 38th
Annual General Meeting will be held online
at 12:00pm on Friday 31 July.**

Who can attend?

All local authorities who are full financial members of LGNZ as of 15 July 2026 are entitled to be represented at our AGM.

You can be represented by elected members and/or staff.

How many votes are you entitled to?

Under LGNZ’s constitution, Waikato Regional Council is entitled to **6 votes** at the AGM. Your number of votes is determined by your membership fee.

How many delegates can you have?

Waikato Regional Council can be represented by up to **4 delegates**. This number is determined by your population.

You need to appoint one **presiding delegate** who votes on your behalf with express authority (by way of delegation) on how to exercise your Council votes during the AGM. If your presiding delegate is absent from the AGM for any reason, another delegate may vote on your behalf, as indicated by selecting the box below.

Observers, who have no speaking or voting rights, can also attend the AGM.

All delegates and observers must be registered by Friday 3 July. Please complete their details below and return this form to agm@lgnz.co.nz

// 1



Registration

Delegates

Presiding delegate's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Other delegate's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Other delegate's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Other delegate's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate presiding delegate?

Alternate presiding delegate?

Alternate presiding delegate?

Observers

Observer's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Observer's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Observer's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Authorisation

: Click or tap here to enter text.

Esignature:

: Click or tap here to enter text.

Esignature:

7.6 LGNZ AGM REMIT - NZTA BULK FUNDING FOR TRANSPORT

Rā | Date: 13 May 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Phil King, Director, Regional Transport Connections

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to share a remit prepared by council related to seeking an expansion of bulk-funding for basic and repeatable transport activities.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. A Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) remit developed by council proposes changes to the ways NZTA allocates funding from the National Land Transport Fund and seeks expansion of a bulk-funding approach for basic and repeatable transport activities.
3. Due to limited time, this was shared with councillors via email ahead of being submitted for consideration at the LGNZ Zone 2 meeting on 22 May.
4. A verbal update will be provided to this meeting to confirm whether the remit was supported at the Zone 2 meeting.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the report *LGNZ AGM Remit - NZTA Bulk Funding for Transport* (Council, 28 May 2026) be received.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

5. Following a meeting between councillors and Hamilton City Council in early May, a remit from Council seeking changes to transport funding has been prepared for consideration at the LGNZ Zone 2 meeting on 22 May.
6. This proposes changes to the ways NZTA allocates funding from the National Land Transport Fund and seeks expansion of a bulk-funding approach for basic and repeatable transport activities.
7. Due to the limited time available, feedback from councillors was sought via email prior to the remit being submitted for inclusion on the Zone 2 meeting agenda.
8. This report presents the remit to Council (Attachment One) along with an attachment that provided international examples and an analysis (Attachment Two).

TE TAKE | ISSUE

9. A verbal update will be provided to this meeting to confirm whether the remit was supported by Zone 2.
10. If supported, it would be presented to the LGNZ Annual General Meeting in July 2026.

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **LGNZ Remit - NZTA bulk funding for basic transport activities** [↓](#)
2. **Attachment to LGNZ remit - international examples and analysis** [↓](#)



REMIT APPLICATION FORM

How to submit a remit/

Remits are positions or policies put to LGNZ's AGM for a vote.

Any remit needs the support of either an LGNZ Zone, Sector or five councils.

LGNZ reviews all proposed remits to ensure they meet the criteria below.

If your council wants to propose a remit for consideration by the 2026 AGM, please complete this form and email it, along with any supporting information, to agm@lgnz.co.nz by Monday 25 May, 2026.

If you have any questions about the remit process, or want help completing your application, please contact [Simon Randall](#), Director Policy.

Criteria for remits/

1. The remit is relevant to local government as a whole, not just a single Zone, Sector or council;
2. The remit relates to significant matters, including constitutional and substantive policy, rather than matters that can be dealt with administratively;
3. The remit concerns matters that can't be addressed through channels other than the AGM.
4. The remit does not deal with issues that are already being actioned by LGNZ. This covers work programmes underway as part of LGNZ's strategy. National Council will finalise LGNZ's strategy in early 2026: if you have questions in the interim, please contact Simon.

The process from here/

Once LGNZ receives your proposed remit, it will be considered by our Remit Screening Committee. This Committee is made up of LGNZ's President, Vice-President, Chief Executive and Director Policy. The Remit Screening Committee will determine whether your proposed remit satisfies the criteria above, and whether or not to put it forward to the 2026 AGM.

We will let you know whether your remit is going forward to the AGM by Wednesday 10 June 2026.

// 1



REMIT APPLICATION FORM

Council proposing remit: Waikato Regional Council

Contact name(s):

AGM speaker:

This person must attend the AGM and be registered as a delegate.

Phone:

Email:

Remit subject: Transport - bulk funding of basic transport activities

Remit: That LGNZ:

Starting with "That LGNZ", this is a statement of the specific position or action to be progressed by LGNZ.

1. Calls on government, opposition parties and NZTA to support a move to bulk funding for basic and repeatable transport activities, thereby acknowledging the efficiency and financial gains, and reduction in funding risk, this change would provide to local government.

2. Supports Zone 2 councils to trial this proposed bulk-funding approach for the 2027 to 2030 funding round including development of appropriate accountabilities and performance frameworks.

Who supports the proposed remit?

Remits must be endorsed by either an LGNZ Zone, Sector Group, or five councils.

To be presented to Zone 2 for discussion and support on 22 May 2026.

// 2



Why is this remit important?

Briefly describe what the issue is and why it requires action.

Max. 150 words

Central government via NZTA tightly controls the distribution of transport funding to achieve national outcomes even though around 50% of all costs are funded via rates.

Most transport funding is approved project by project, requiring achievement of defined business-case and approval requirements before funding is committed. Stringent compliance and reporting requirements are imposed on the local government sector, increasing costs for councils and reducing efficiency and productivity.

Accelerating the move to bulk funding for basic transport activities, as is seen in many countries globally, would enable local government to operate more flexibly, optimising investment and improving efficiency. Councils have detailed knowledge of their networks, good awareness of resilience and lifeline requirements, and a good understanding of local need.

Maintenance and renewal programmes, public transport services and delivery of safety and minor works packages would all benefit from predictable, multi-year funding certainty.



Background and context:

You may wish to include:

- > What has caused this issue?
- > Relevant legislation, policy or practice
- > Key statistics to show the scope of the issue
- > An outline of what your council/others have already done to address this issue or bring about the proposed change.

In the OECD context, New Zealand is highly centralised. Central government via NZTA tightly controls the distribution of transport to achieve national outcomes.

Internationally, bulk funding models for transport are widely used to provide transport authorities with predictable, flexible, multi year funding approvals. This enables the central government focus to shift from assessing and approving individual projects to supporting strategic policy outcomes and enables a reduction in compliance and reporting requirements. It supports local and regional stewardship of networks while improving procurement and delivery performance. A SWOT analysis and global examples of bulk funding for public transport services are provided in Attachment One.

Max 500 words

Councils across the country are about to commence work on Long Term Plans and the Regional Land Transport Plan. These are delivered as required by the Local Government Act and the Land Transport Management Act. The LTMA requires regions to demonstrate alignment to the priorities of central government even if around 50% of the funding comes from ratepayers rather than the crown.

Due to this complex legislative structure, transport programmes (in all respects, from maintenance and renewals to public transport services, and from safety works to minor and major improvements) are required to follow multiple local, regional and national processes to secure funding.

The process of prioritising and funding transport activities could be simplified and de-risked significantly if central government and NZTA trusted local government to act in good faith on behalf of communities, and with the reassurance of accountability and appropriate performance frameworks, provided bulk funding (perhaps at regional level and perhaps in 3 or 5 year blocks) for simple, repeatable, ongoing work programmes. This would enable regions and communities to prioritise and optimise their investment in transport through smarter procurement resulting in lower administrative and regulatory burden.

Recently announced local government reform is focussed solely on amalgamation within regions and currently proposes no change to the delivery of transport activities.

// 4



Over recent funding rounds, NZTA is acknowledged in making limited progress in moving towards bulk funding, for example for some smaller councils. There may be further tweaks in the 2027-30 funding round.

This remit supports the progress made and seeks acceleration of this for all other basic, repeatable transport activities nationally.

There are multiple benefits that could be achieved from this change:

At national level, removal and de-politisation of basic transport activities (estimated at approximately 80% of the total spend) would enable the Minister via the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport to fully focus on prioritising significant investment (the remaining 20%) on central government priorities such as resilience, safety, emissions reduction or roads of national significance.

There would be a large reduction in the requirements of the National Land Transport Programme prepared by NZTA. Bulk funding of basic transport activities would save NZTA significant time and cost.

Regional Land Transport Plans could be simplified and would be fully focussed on more significant inter-regional and system-change priorities. This presents a resource and cost-saving to regional councils.

Local and regional government would be able to undertake the transport portion of their Long Term Plans with less risk and more funding certainty.



How does this remit relate to LGNZ's current work programme?

Briefly describe how the proposed remit aligns with LGNZ's Strategy (new strategy is being finalised) and policy priorities but does not duplicate existing or planned work.

Approx. 150 words

The issue directly relates to several of LGNZ's 'Key Issues for Councils':

Transport: NZ needs greater investment from central government – and more joined-up central and local government planning that prioritises building and better asset management. The current approach to investment and planning is not working, nor is it fit for the future. How to make public transport more affordable and accessible.

Funding & Financing: Advocacy for a 'toolbox' approach to funding and financing to provide councils with a range of options to align national goals with local needs.

Localism: Harnessing the power, knowledge, skills and views of local people to drive better outcomes..

How will your council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?

Briefly describe the steps that your council would be prepared to take to assist LGNZ to progress the remit

100 – 300 words

Zone 2 councils are willing to trial this proposed bulk-funding approach for the 2027 to 2030 funding round, including development of appropriate accountabilities and performance frameworks.

Supporting information and research

Please attach to your email:

- > A copy of this application form.
- > Evidence of support from an LGNZ Zone or Sector Group or five councils. This could be in the form of emails, letters or Zone/Sector Group meeting minutes or resolutions.
- > Any further contextual/background information you'd like to share, combined in a single word or PDF file.

Attachment One: Further Information

SWOT Analysis – Bulk Funding compared with Project-based Funding

Definition and focus

Bulk funding

- Funding is provided as a programme-level envelope (often multi-year).
- The funder agrees *what outcomes and activity types* the money is for, but not every individual project.
- The recipient has delegated authority to prioritise and deliver works within agreed rules.

Project-based funding

- Funding is approved project by project.
- Each project must meet defined appraisal, business-case, and approval requirements before funding is committed.
- Control is retained centrally by the funder at each decision point.

Decision-making and flexibility

Aspect	Bulk funding	Project-based funding
Decision locus	Decentralised (recipient decides within limits)	Centralised (funder approves each project)
Ability to re-prioritise	High – funding can shift within the programme	Low – changes often require re-approval
Response to changing conditions	Fast (e.g. weather damage, demand shift)	Slower, constrained by approval cycles

Implication: Bulk funding suits environments where needs change frequently and trade-offs must be made continuously. Project funding suits situations where scope is fixed and certainty is required.

Transaction and administrative cost

Bulk funding

- Fewer funding applications and approvals.
- Lower appraisal cost per dollar spent.
- More emphasis on ex-post performance monitoring.

Project-based funding

- High upfront transaction costs (business cases, reviews, approvals).
- Repeated effort for similar or small projects.
- Strong ex-ante assurance but higher overhead.

Implication: Bulk funding is more efficient for many small or routine activities; project funding is defensible for large, discrete investments.

Risk allocation

Risk type	Bulk funding	Project-based funding
Delivery risk	Largely sits with recipient	Shared or retained by funder
Cost overrun risk	Managed within programme envelope	Often escalated back to funder
Portfolio risk	Actively managed by recipient	Managed implicitly via approvals

Implication: Bulk funding assumes the recipient is capable of portfolio and asset-management discipline. Project funding reduces funder exposure to poorly governed organisations but can shift risk management into bureaucratic processes.

Accountability and performance

Bulk funding

- Accountability is outcomes- and performance-based.
- Requires strong monitoring frameworks (KPIs, benchmarking, audits).
- Less visibility of individual project decisions, more focus on results.

Project-based funding

- Accountability is project- and compliance-based.
- Easier to trace decisions and costs to specific assets.
- Can encourage compliance behaviour rather than outcome optimisation.

Implication: Bulk funding works best where there is high trust and mature capability. Project funding suits lower-trust or high-scrutiny environments.

Suitability by activity type

Activity type	Better suited model	Why?
Routine maintenance & renewals	Bulk funding	Predictable, ongoing, portfolio-based

Public transport operations	Bulk funding	Requires service optimisation over time
Low-cost safety improvements	Bulk funding	Many small, standardised interventions
Major new infrastructure	Project-based funding	High cost, unique, high political and fiscal risk
Complex, novel investments	Project-based funding	Uncertainty requires detailed appraisal

Behavioural effects

Bulk funding encourages

- Long-term planning and asset stewardship.
- Trade-offs across a network.
- Innovation and adaptive management.

Project-based funding encourages

- Project promotion and “salami slicing”.
- Optimisation of individual projects rather than systems.
- Risk-averse design to satisfy approval gates.

Strengths and weaknesses summary

Bulk funding

Strengths

- Efficient delivery at scale
- High flexibility and responsiveness
- Strongly aligned with asset-management principles

Weaknesses

- Requires mature governance and capability
- Harder for outsiders to see “what was funded”
- Risk of under-investment in politically visible projects

Project-based funding

Strengths

- High transparency at project level
- Strong control of large or novel investments
- Clear political and fiscal accountability

Weaknesses

- High transaction costs
- Slow to respond to change
- Can undermine network-level optimisation

Conclusion

- Bulk funding is best for *ongoing, repeatable, network-wide activities* where flexibility and value-for-money over time matter most.
- Project-based funding is best for *large, discrete, high-risk investments* where certainty, scrutiny, and one-off decisions dominate.

In practice (including in New Zealand), effective transport systems use both models together, allocating each to the activity types they are best suited for rather than treating them as competing alternatives.

International examples – Delivery of Public Transport Services

Internationally, bulk funding models for public transport are widely used to give transport authorities predictable, flexible, multi-year funding while shifting the focus from approving individual routes or projects to outcomes, performance, and network stewardship. Below is a structured overview of the main models in use globally, with concrete country examples.

Block grants to sub-national governments or transport authorities

How the model works

Central government provides a multi-year block grant for public transport. Money is not tied to specific projects or routes; instead, the recipient authority decides how to allocate funding across operations, service improvements, fleet renewal, or minor infrastructure within an agreed framework.

Countries using this model

- United Kingdom (England, outside London)
 - Local authorities receive consolidated Local Transport Grants, replacing older fragmented funding streams. These grants can be used for buses, public transport priority, accessibility, and service support, with local discretion over spending priorities.
- Germany
 - Federal “Regionalisation funds” are provided to Länder as block transfers to finance regional and local public transport services, especially rail, with states responsible for detailed allocation (documented by OECD trends).

- Canada
 - Cities and provinces receive long-term federal transfers (e.g. public transit streams under infrastructure programmes) that are broadly scoped rather than project-specific, supporting operational and capital needs.

Strengths: predictability, local optimisation, lower administrative burden.

Trade-off: relies on strong oversight and capable local institutions.

Formula-based operating subsidies (network or service level)

How the model works

Funding is allocated using objective formulas (population, service km, ridership, social need).

The operator or authority manages services within the resulting financial envelope.

Countries using this model

- Sweden & Nordic countries
 - Regional Public Transport Authorities receive predictable operating funding largely detached from individual line approvals, enabling network-wide planning.
- Japan (urban public transport)
 - Local and national governments provide formula-driven operating support combined with fare revenue, with strong emphasis on efficiency and service quality benchmarks.

Strengths: stability for operators, incentives for efficiency at network scale.

Trade-off: formulas must be kept current to reflect demand and cost changes.

Earmarked payroll or local tax funding (hypothecated bulk revenue)

How the model works

A dedicated tax or levy is assigned directly to public transport authorities. Revenues flow automatically and can be used flexibly for both operations and investment.

Countries using this model

- France – Versement mobilité
 - A mandatory payroll levy on employers (≥ 11 employees) within transport authority areas. It is the single largest funding source for urban public transport and can be used as a bulk operating and capital funding pool.
- United States (selected metro areas)
 - Local sales taxes (e.g. Los Angeles, Seattle) fund transit agencies through dedicated, voter-approved taxes allocated as multi-year funding envelopes (OECD comparative analysis).

Strengths: stable, locally controlled, strongly aligned with beneficiaries.

Trade-off: revenue growth tied to economic cycles.

Service contracts with global budgets (gross-cost or net-cost)

How the model works

Public authorities enter multi-year contracts with operators. Instead of funding individual routes, a global operating budget is set, with performance incentives and penalties.

Countries using this model

- Europe (widely used): Germany, Netherlands, France
 - Authorities specify service outputs and quality standards while paying operators via bulk payments, often linked to punctuality, reliability, or customer satisfaction.
- Australia (bus networks)
 - State governments fund metropolitan bus networks through long-term contracts with operators, using bulk payments rather than route-by-route approval (OECD evidence).

Strengths: cost control, clear accountability, flexibility to redesign networks.
Trade-off: requires sophisticated contract management.

City-region multi-year settlements (outcome-based bulk funding)

How the model works

Large metropolitan regions receive bespoke, multi-year funding settlements covering all local transport, including public transport operations, sometimes linked to agreed performance outcomes.

Countries using this model

- United Kingdom (mayoral city-regions and London)
 - City-region transport authorities receive long-term settlements enabling integrated planning across buses, metro, rail, and active transport.
- France (Île-de-France Mobilités)
 - Combines national funding, payroll levy revenue, and regional contributions into a large, flexible funding pool for the Paris region’s transport system.

Strengths: supports system integration and long-term planning.
Trade-off: complex negotiation and governance arrangements.

Summary

Bulk funding model	Typical users	Key feature
Block grants	UK, Germany, Canada	Local discretion within national envelope
Formula-based subsidies	Nordics, Japan	Predictable, objective allocation
Hypothecated taxes	France, US metros	Dedicated, stable revenue source

Global service contracts	EU, Australia	Budget + performance incentives
City-region settlements	UK metros, Paris	Integrated, outcome-focused funding

Conclusion

Across countries, bulk funding for public transport is used to stabilise finances, enable network-level optimisation, and reduce transaction costs. While design details vary, successful models share three features:

1. Multi-year certainty,
2. Local discretion paired with accountability, and
3. Performance or outcome-based oversight rather than project approval.

8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

HE TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION:

That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* (Act) and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

Meeting item no. and subject	Grounds for excluding the public	Reason for excluding the public
<p>8.1 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 21 April 2026</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities</p> <p>s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>
<p>8.2 - Public Excluded Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026</p>	<p>s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>
<p>8.3 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 May 2026</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities</p> <p>s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>

	commercial and industrial negotiations)	
8.4 - Annual Plan 2026/27	<p>s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information</p> <p>s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege</p>	<p>section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7</p>

9 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Unuhia, unuhia

Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui

kia wātea, kia māmā,

te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,

i te ara takatū

Koia rā e Rongo

e whakairia ake ki runga

kia tina! TINA!

Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!

Draw on, draw on,

Draw on to the supreme sacredness

To clear, to free

our heart, body and soul

Our pathway prepared

Lo, there is peace

suspended high above

manifest!

draw together!

Affirm!