



WORKSHOP MINUTES

Tuesday, 29 September 2026

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Waikato Regional Council

OPEN WORKSHOP MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 29 September 2026, 11.09am

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 (until 11.04am, back at 11.26am)
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith (until 11.24am, back at 11.29am)
Cr Kataraina Hodge
Cr Keith Holmes
Cr Chris Hughes (until 11.05am, back at 11.24am. Until 11.50am)
Cr Gary McGuire (virtually via Teams from 10.52am)
Cr Garry Reymer
Cr Noel Smith
Cr Angela Strange (until 11.59am, back at 12.10pm. Until 12.18pm)

Staff Present: Karen Bennett – Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor

Apologies Received: Cr Jennifer Nickel
Cr Liz Stolwyk

The contents of these workshop minutes meet all legal requirements. Workshops are not official meetings and do not contain any decisions. They are for discussion purposes only.

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

Recording	Document ID #	YouTube Link
Workshop Recording 1	39071811	https://youtu.be/5gmGOFOQBxc
Workshop Recording 2	39071239	https://youtu.be/g7ODV9HKTEI

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

A karakia was delivered at the opening of the extraordinary meeting held immediately prior to the workshop.

2 WORKSHOP PAPER(S)

2.1 AI DATA CENTRES AND THE WAIKATO REGION: DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT

Item commenced in workshop recording 1 at start.

Presented by the Executive Manager, Chief Executive's Office (Karen Bennett), the Regional Economic Development Lead (Tariq Ashraf) and Sustainability and Climate Change Senior Advisor (Joy Moir). Refer Document # 39040844 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

The workshop sought Councillor feedback on the draft position statement and its proposed principles for guiding the Council's response to potential AI data centre developments in the Waikato

10.52am – Cr Gary McGuire joined the workshop virtually.

11.04am – Cr Robert Cookson left the workshop.

11.05am – Cr Chris Hughes left the workshop.

Action: Councillors requested that the revised position statement be referred back to the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee for further consideration and direction before any decision is made on progressing it to Council for adoption or consultation.

11.07am – The workshop adjourned. During the adjournment, Cr Chris Hughes returned and Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith left the workshop.

11.24am – The workshop reconvened.

2.2 INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Item commenced in workshop recording 2 at start.

Presented by the Land Drainage Manager (Reuben Mills) and the Asset Manager (Lisa Drysdale). Refer Document # 38970399 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

The workshop provided Councillors with an opportunity to identify key priorities and concerns to guide the development of the Council's 50-year Infrastructure Strategy for flood protection, drainage and river assets.

11.26am – Cr Robert Cookson returned to the workshop.

11.29am – Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith returned to the workshop.

11.50am – Cr Chris Hughes left the workshop.

11.59am – Cr Angela Strange left the workshop and returned at 12.10pm.

12.18pm – Cr Angela Strange left the workshop.

Actions:

- Councillors requested that staff circulate the existing Infrastructure Strategy and provide the draft strategy ahead of the December workshop.
- Councillors requested that a further workshop be held to consider drainage and river-work cost structures, including management overheads, process efficiencies, standardisation and potential savings.

3 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in workshop recording 2, at 1 hour 1 minute 15 seconds.

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

12.26pm – The workshop concluded.