

I hereby give notice that a meeting of Horizons Regional Council will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, 7 October 2026
Time: 1:00 pm
Venue: Tararua Room Horizons Regional Council
11-15 Victoria Avenue
Palmerston North

REGIONAL COUNCIL

AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP

Chair	Cr NM Riley
Deputy Chair	Cr FJT Gordon
Councillors	Cr SL Dryland
	Cr HC Easton
	Cr BG Fraser
	Cr EB Gordon
	Cr LL Jansen
	Cr GM McKellar
	Cr JM Naylor
	Cr ETJ Pue
	Cr AR Taylor
	Cr WK Te Awe Awe
	Cr T Teira
	Cr PF Wells

Michael McCartney
Chief Executive

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Palmerston North 4442

Full Agendas are available on Horizons Regional Council website
www.horizons.govt.nz

for further information regarding this agenda, please contact:
Julie Kennedy, 06 9522 800

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REGIONAL HOUSES	Palmerston North 11-15 Victoria Avenue	Whanganui 181 Guyton Street		
DEPOTS	Levin 120-122 Hokio Beach Rd	Taihape 243 Wairanu Rd		
POSTAL ADDRESS	Horizons Regional Council, Private Bag 11025, Manawatū Mail Centre, Palmerston North 4442			

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AGENDA

1 WELCOME / KARAKIA

2 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At the close of the Agenda no apologies had been received.

3 PUBLIC FORUMS: Are designed to enable members of the public to bring matters, not on that meeting's agenda, to the attention of the local authority.

DEPUTATIONS: Are designed to enable a person, group or organisation to speak to an item on the agenda of a particular meeting.

Requests for Public Forums / Deputations must be made to the meeting secretary by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. The person applying for a Public Forum or a Deputation must provide a clear explanation for the request which is subsequently approved by the Chairperson.

PETITIONS: Can be presented to the local authority or any of its committees, so long as the subject matter falls within the terms of reference of the council or committee meeting being presented to.

Written notice to the Chief Executive is required at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting. Petitions must contain at least 20 signatures and consist of fewer than 150 words (not including signatories).

Further information is available by phoning 0508 800 800.

4 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass a resolution to permit the Committee/Council to consider any further items relating to items following below which do not appear on the Order Paper of this meeting and/or the meeting to be held with the public excluded.

Such resolution is required to be made pursuant to Section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (as amended), and the Chairperson must advise:

- (i) The reason why the item was not on the Order Paper, and
- (ii) The reason why the discussion of this item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

5 MEMBER'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any conflicts of interest they might have in respect of the items on this Agenda.

Minutes of the twelfth meeting of the thirteenth triennium of Horizons Regional Council held at 9.30am on Tuesday 22 September 2026, in the Tararua Room Horizons Regional Council, 11-15 Victoria Avenue, Palmerston North.

PRESENT Crs NM Riley (Chair to 3.59pm, in attendance to 3.59pm and from 4.50pm), SL Dryland (via Zoom from 9.51am), HC Easton (via Zoom), BG Fraser, EB Gordon, FJT Gordon (Chair from 3.59pm), LL Jansen, GM McKellar (via Zoom to 9.38am then in person), JM Naylor, ETJ Pue, AR Taylor, WK Te Awe Awe, T Teira and PF Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive	Mr MJ McCartney
Group Manager	
Governance, Engagement & Transformation	Mrs C Hesselin
Committee Secretary	Mrs JA Kennedy
Governance Team Leader	Mrs T Bishop

ALSO PRESENT At various times during the meeting:

Dr E Daly (Group Manager Strategy, Regulation & Science), Mr G Shirley (Group Manager Regional Services & Information), Mr C Grant (Group Manager Corporate Services), Dr J Roygard (Group Manager Catchment Operations), Mr A Smith (Chief Financial Officer), Ms L Shirley (Manager Strategy & Policy), Mr J Galuszka (Manager Media & Communications), Mr C Hook (Manawatū-Whanganui Emergency Management Regional Manager), Mr M Putt (Manawatū-Whanganui Emergency Management Senior Advisor), Mrs P Tan, Mr M Baylis, Mrs N Dodd (Finance Business Partners), Mr M Patterson (Science Manager), Mr G Bevin (Regulatory Manager), Mr B Watson (Manager Environmental Data), Mr C Morris (People & Capability Manager), Ms R Bell (LTP Project Manager), Mr M Read (Manager Transport Services), Mrs K Cruywagen (Chief Information Officer), and Mrs T Te Awe Awe.

Public Forum Speakers:

Tomairangi Maerikura (Chair, Ngāti Rangi), Helen Leahy (Chief Executive, Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust), and Nancy Tuaine.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Cr Te Awe Awe to open with a Karakia.

APOLOGIES

26-167 Moved Taylor/F Gordon

That the Council receives an apology from Cr Dryland for lateness.

CARRIED

PUBLIC FORUMS / DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS

Public Forum: Report No. 26-143 Conflict of Interest, 25 August Council Meeting.

Tomairangi Maerikura, Chair, Ngāti Rangi expressed disappointment at the process undertaken for Cr Pue's potential Conflict of Interest. It was noted that several iwi had been referenced throughout the Conflict of Interest item and disappointment was expressed that those iwi had not

been consulted, with concern voiced that the process had cast a shadow over an emerging leader of their tribe.

Helen Leahy, Chief Executive, Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust expressed concern that the commissioning of an independent inquiry into Cr Pue's potential conflict of interest was not considered an appropriate course of action and noted the potential impact on the reputation and integrity of the iwi. Concern was also raised about how the matter had been initiated and managed, including a perceived lack of transparency, and failure to provide the iwi with an opportunity to respond.

Cr Dryland joined the meeting via Zoom at 9.51am.

Nancy Tuaine, noted that although she was the Chief Executive Officer of Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, she was speaking as an individual. Nancy questioned whether fairness had been applied in the matter, believed that the complaints process had not been handled fairly and that Cr Pue's Mana had not been protected. She asked that the recommendations be strengthened to accept the finding that Cr Pue did not have, and was not in breach of, a conflict of interest.

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

26-168 **Moved** **Teira/Wells**

That the Council accepts Annex A to Report No. 26-159, Draft Annual Report for 2025-26, as a supplementary item.

CARRIED

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive presented his report and, together with relevant staff, responded to questions raised.

26-169 **Moved** **Te Awe Awe/Wells**

That the Chief Executive's report be received.

CARRIED

MEMBERS' CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

26-170 **Moved** **F Gordon/Pue**

That the minutes of the Regional Council meeting held on 25 August 2026 as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record, noting that recommendation 26-150 d. is redundant, given the introduction of resolution 26-147.

Against: Crs McKellar, Dryland, Easton, Jansen.

CARRIED

LONG-TERM PLAN 2027-37 BUDGET PROPOSALS - EARLY SHORTLIST AND TARGET RATES FIGURE PART 1

Report No 26-160

Mrs Hesselin (Group Manager Governance, Engagement & Transformation) introduced the report which sought Council's direction on which budget proposals should be included in the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget. Council was also asked to provide an indicative target for the Year 1 rates increase to guide preparation of that budget. Consideration was given to the Emergency Management proposal of \$340,000 with a breakdown of costs provided by Mr Hook (Manawatū-Whanganui Emergency Management Regional Manager).

The meeting adjourned at 11.00am.

The meeting reconvened at 12.30pm.

Following consideration of the Emergency Management proposal, Members' debated the best approach to take for each of the proposals attached as Annexes A to Q, and decided to consider each one separately, followed by a vote. During debate, consideration was given to the Local Government (Rates Capping) Amendment Bill proposal, and the current Year 1 forecast of approximately 5.3%.

Recommendations a., b., c., and d. were put by the Chair.

26-171

Moved

Naylor/Pue

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-160 and Annexes;*
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the decisions in this report are of low significance because they provide preliminary budget direction and do not commit Council to final expenditure, funding or service-level decisions, and no engagement is required at this stage in the Long-term planning process;*
- c. notes that the decisions sought through this report provide preliminary direction for preparing the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget and do not constitute final decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of any proposal;*
- d. notes that the proposed Local Government (Rates Capping) Amendment Bill would require Council to have regard to an initial target range of 2–4% when setting rates for 2027/28 (Year 1) and 2028/29 (Year 2), with compliance proposed from 2029/30 (Year 3).*

CARRIED

An additional recommendation d.i. was debated.

Moved

Jansen/B Gordon

d.i. aims to comply with the Local Government (Rates Capping) Amendment Bill of 2-4% for Year 1 and 2 of the Long-term Plan.

LOST

Recommendation e. was debated with numbering starting from i. through to xv. given to each activity and voted on separately. Activity e.x. was debated later in the meeting.

26-172

Moved

Naylor/Wells

e. *agrees that the following budget proposals from management be included in the first iteration (Year 1) of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget for further consideration:*

i. *Passenger Services (Annex A) Regional Public Transport Network
\$105,000.*

Lost

ii. *Passenger Services (Annex B) Total Mobility Budget Alignment
\$100,000.*

Carried

iii. *Emergency Management (Annex C) EM Capability uplift \$340,000.*

Carried

iv. *Information Services (Annex D) Operational Software Cost and Security
\$82,000.*

Carried

v. *Science and Environmental Reporting (Annex E) Groundwater Monitoring
Programme - Santoft \$66,500.*

Carried

vi. *Science and Environmental Reporting (Annex F) Air Quality Monitoring -
Assessment of Urban Centres \$100,000 (funded by reprioritisation of
existing budgets).*

Lost

vii. *Regulatory (Annex G) Principal Advisors - Regulatory Team \$140,000.*

Lost

viii. *Regulatory (Annex H) Regulatory Compliance Monitoring and
Enforcement Capacity \$240,000.*

Lost

ix. *Regulatory (Annex I) Regulatory Team - Resource Consent Processing
Capacity \$240,000.*

Lost

xi. *Policy (Annex J) Resource Management Reform \$455,000 (funded by
reprioritisation of existing budgets).*

Carried

xii. *Iwi/hapū (Annex K) Treaty Settlement Implementation \$375,000.*

Carried

xiii. *River Management (Annex L) Dam monitoring and compliance \$107,000.*

Carried

xiv. *Biosecurity - Animals (Annex M) RPMP Programme Delivery (Animals)
\$115,000.*

Carried

- xv. *Biosecurity – Plants (Annex N) RPMP Programme Delivery (Plants)*
\$393,000.

Carried

CARRIED

Recommendation f. was deleted.

Recommendation g. was debated.

Moved

F Gordon/Teira

It is recommended that the Council:

- g. *agrees that, in relation to the Elected Member proposal to augment the Priority Habitats Programme, Council's preferred option for the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget is:*

- i. *Option A: Augment the existing Priority Habitats programme.*

LOST

Recommendation h. was debated.

26-173

Moved

F Gordon/Easton

- h. *agrees that, in relation to the Elected Member proposal for a Tōtara Reserve Climate Adaptation Project, Council's preferred option for the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget is:*

- i. *Option A: Status quo - Retain Kereru Campground and the staged disestablishment of Kahikatea Campground.*

CARRIED

Recommendation i. was debated.

26-174

Moved

B Gordon/Pue

- i. *agrees that in relation to the Elected Member proposal for ringfenced wetlands grant funding, Council's preferred option for the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget is:*

- i. *Option A: Status quo – No new wetlands programme.*

CARRIED

Recommendation j. was debated and put with a division.

Moved

Riley/Pue

- j. *agrees a further \$70,000 for increased Governance activity costs be included in the first iteration of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan budget further consideration.*

For: Crs Te Awe Awe, Teira, Riley.

Against: Crs Wells, B Gordon, McKellar, Fraser, Jansen, Naylor, Pue, Easton.

Abstain: Crs Dryland, F Gordon, Taylor.

LOST

Recommendation k. was debated.

26-175 **Moved** **F Gordon/Wells**

- k. agrees to revisit the total rates requirement for the initial baseline/committed budget for Year 1 of approximately 5.3% (as per 11 August 2026 Workshop) and will be discussed further at future workshops.*

CARRIED

Recommendation l. was debated with a foreshadowed motion to follow if the original was Lost.

Moved **McKellar/Jansen**

- l. provides an indicative target for the average rates increase in 2027/28, to guide preparation of the first budget iteration, of:*

- i. 2-4%*

For: Crs Easton, Jansen, Te Awe Awe, McKellar, Dryland, Fraser.

Against: Crs Riley, F Gordon, Wells, Teira, Naylor, Pue, Taylor, B Gordon.

LOST

The foreshadowed motion was put with a division.

26-176 **Moved** **B Gordon/Pue**

- l. provides an indicative target for the average rates increase in 2027/28, to guide preparation of the first budget iteration, of:*

- iii. 5-6%*

For: Crs Riley, F Gordon, Wells, Te Awe Awe, Teira, B Gordon, Naylor, Pue.

Against: Crs Fraser, McKellar, Jansen, Taylor, Easton, Dryland.

CARRIED

Recommendation m. was debated and put with a division.

26-177 **Moved** **Pue/Naylor**

- m. directs the Chief Executive to provide options at the next budget workshop (scheduled for 6 October) to achieve the indicative rates target.*

For: Crs Riley, Pue, Naylor, Teira, Fraser, Te Awe Awe, F Gordon, B Gordon, Wells.

Against: Crs McKellar, Jansen, Taylor, Easton, Dryland.

CARRIED

Recommendation n. was debated.

26-178 **Moved** **Pue/Naylor**

- n. notes that further budget workshops will consider the affordability, service-level, strategic, financial and risk implications of achieving the indicative target before Council approves the proposed budget for audit and consultation.*

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2.36pm.

The meeting reconvened at 2.51pm.

Following the adjournment, Recommendation e.x. was debated.

26-179 Moved Pue/Riley

e.

- x. notes that the Chief Executive will report back with options to address the regulatory funding under-recovery, including potential approaches to improve cost recovery and financial sustainability.*

CARRIED

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR

Report No 26-159

This report provided an update to elected members on the progress of the draft Annual Report (AR) for the 2025-26 financial year ahead of the annual audit. Members' considered the contents of the AR, offered suggestions to enhance the messaging, and sought clarification on the various activities.

26-180 Moved Pue/Riley

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-159 and Annex.*
b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the information in this report does not trigger significance.

CARRIED

MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI SPATIAL PLANNING UPDATE

Report No 26-161

This paper updated Council on the work underway to position the region for the development of its Spatial Plan. In anticipation of the level of work required to prepare a Regional Spatial Plan, officers from the region's local authorities had jointly commenced initial project establishment and planning. The Chief Executive commented on the uncertainty surrounding the size of the work, the potential costs, and the management of the process through a Spatial Planning Committee.

26-181 Moved Riley/Naylor

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-161 and Annex.*
b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the matters in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is: inform.
c. notes that the Planning Act requires local authorities in the Manawātū-Whanganui region to prepare a Regional Spatial Plan within 21 months of enactment;

- d. notes that councils in the region have established a collaborative project to prepare the region for spatial planning;
- e. notes that Governance oversight in the preparatory establishment phase of spatial planning is being provided by the Manawatū-Whanganui Mayoral Forum with Chief Executives acting as project sponsors;
- f. notes that during the establishment phase no substantive decisions are being made about plan content;
- g. notes that once the establishment phase is complete formal governance of spatial planning will lie with a Spatial Planning Committee (SPC) supported by a secretariat;
- h. notes that local authorities in the region will need to make decisions (ideally by 30th November 2026) to adopt and publish a process agreement, a term of reference and membership for the Spatial Planning Committee and how to resource the production of the spatial plan.

CARRIED

SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT AS AT 31 AUGUST 2026

Report No 26-162

Mr Grant (Group Manager Corporate & Governance) introduced the report which provided a summary of safety and wellbeing activities and performance for the financial year to date. He commented on the challenge to fill the vacant Health and Safety Officer position.

Cr Riley vacated the position of Chair at 3.59pm and left the meeting.

Cr F Gordon assumed the role of Chair at 3.59pm.

Mr Morris (People & Capability Manager) summarised the update and clarified questions.

26-182 Moved Pue/Fraser

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-162 and Annex.

CARRIED

COUNCILLORS' WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE - 19 AUGUST 2026 TO 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Report No 26-163

This item noted the Councillors' Workshop attendance from 19 August 2026 to 14 September 2026.

26-183 Moved B Gordon/McKellar

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-163 and Annex.

CARRIED

AFFIXING OF THE COMMON SEAL

Report No 26-164

This paper reported on documents to which Horizons Regional Council's Common Seal had been affixed.

26-184

Moved

B Gordon/McKellar

That the Council:

a. *acknowledges the affixing of the Common Seal to the below mentioned documents.*

- *Warrant Card: Enforcement Officer
New Staff Member
Name: Laila Balzer
Position: Consent Monitoring Officer*
- *Warrant Card: Enforcement Officer
New Staff Member
Name: Maggie Lane
Position: Consent Monitoring Officer*
- *Warrant Card: Enforcement Officer
New Staff Member
Name: Lisa Avery
Position: Consent Monitoring Officer*

Against: Cr Dryland

CARRIED

RECEIPT AND ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT OF AUDIT, RISK & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - RECEIVE AND ADOPT RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - 26 AUGUST 2026

26-185

Moved

Pue/Teira

That the Council receives and adopts the resolutions and recommendations of the Audit, Risk and Investment Committee meeting held on 26 August 2026.

CARRIED

REPORT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING - RECEIVE AND ADOPT RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - 1 SEPTEMBER 2026

26-186

Moved

Naylor/Pue

That the Council receives and adopts the resolutions and recommendations of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 01 September 2026.

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

26-187 Moved Taylor/Pue

THAT the public be excluded from the following part(s) of the proceedings of this meeting. The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution follows.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 and section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public, as follows:

CARRIED

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
PX1 Confirmation of Public Excluded Meeting held on 25 August 2026	s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.
PX2 Report of Audit, Risk & Investment Committee Meeting - Receive and Adopt Resolutions and Recommendations - 26 August 2026	s7(2)(h) - the withholding of the information is necessary to enable the local authority to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities. s7(2)(b)(ii) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. s7(2)(j) - the withholding of the information is necessary to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.
PX3 Long-term Plan 2027-37 Budget Proposals - Early Shortlist and Target Rates Figure Part 2	s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. This report discusses one budget proposal for the 2027-37 LTP that may have possible implications for staff retention.	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.

PX4

Council / Committee to consider whether any item in the Public Excluded minutes can be moved into the public domain and define the extent of the release

The meeting adjourned to the Public Excluded part of the meeting at 4.13pm and resumed at 4.51pm.

The meeting closed at 4.52pm with a karakia from Cr Teira.

Confirmed

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CHAIR

Report No.	26-166
Decision Required	

TE ĀPITI - STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this paper is:

- To inform Council about the Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge project and the purpose of the proposed Te Āpiti Statement of Commitment.
- To update Council on the review of the Te Āpiti Masterplan and the member and stakeholder workshop held in June 2026.
- To seek Council support for Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) to sign the Statement of Commitment as a member of Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge Governance Group.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Te Āpiti Manawatū is a highly valued regional landscape with significant cultural, ecological and recreational values. A range of organisations, iwi, landowners and other partners have responsibilities and interests across Te Āpiti. The partnership has been in place since 2006, initially through the Manawatū Gorge Biodiversity Group, and has evolved into **Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge Governance Group (TAMGGG)**, established in 2016 to provide an overarching partnership for Te Āpiti.
- 2.2. Horizons is a member of TAMGGG and provides facilitation, reporting and advisory support, as well as financial support to the project. Horizons also has operational responsibilities within Te Āpiti, including biodiversity protection, pest control and website and social media management, working alongside partner agencies and iwi.
- 2.3. The 2022 Te Āpiti Masterplan provides the partnership's shared vision and long-term strategic framework. Almost five years on, some of the projects identified in the Masterplan have been completed or progressed, some have not progressed, and new opportunities and challenges have emerged. The governance group agreed that a light-touch review was appropriate to identify what remains relevant and provide a practical basis for prioritising future actions.
- 2.4. A member and stakeholder workshop was held in June 2026 as part of the Masterplan review process and to consider what Te Āpiti needs over the next ten years. Feedback reinforced the value of Te Āpiti and the existing partnership, while identifying the need to strengthen long-term commitment, funding and governance resilience, protect core biodiversity and recreation outcomes, and improve promotion, visitor experience, education and coordination.
- 2.5. A key action from the workshop was to develop a concise Statement of Commitment for governance group members and partners. The statement is intended to reaffirm the members shared commitment to Te Āpiti, its vision and long-term stewardship, while recognising that each organisation remains subject to its own statutory responsibilities, mandates, budgets and decision-making processes.
- 2.6. At its meeting on 21 August 2026, TAMGGG supported the Statement of Commitment (Annex A) and is seeking commitment from its member organisations. Council support is therefore sought for Horizons to sign the Statement of Commitment.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-166 and Annex.
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the decisions in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is: inform
- c. supports Horizons Regional Council Chair signing the Te Āpiti Statement of Commitment on behalf of Horizons Regional Council as a member of the Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge Governance Group.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

4.1. Council Strategic Priorities

- A holistic approach, from the mountains to the sea (integrated catchment management)
- Strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua

4.1.1. The Statement of Commitment supports a collaborative, long-term approach to protecting and enhancing the ecological, cultural and recreational values of Te Āpiti. It also reinforces the importance of partnership with iwi and working collectively across organisational boundaries.

4.2. Council's Community Outcomes



Our region's ecosystems are healthy



Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered



Our region's economy is thriving and environmentally sustainable



Our region's relationship with iwi and hapū are respectful and mana-enhancing

4.2.1. The benefit to the community of this work is the continued protection and enhancement of Te Āpiti's natural and cultural values, while supporting recreation, visitor experiences, community connection and the region's identity.

4.3. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Nil

4.3.1. The work does align with the Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge Masterplan (2022).

5. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Significance Assessment

5.1.1. Council's Significance and Engagement Policy is not triggered by matters discussed in this report. The decision sought is to support Horizons signing a partnership Statement of Commitment and does not commit Council to new funding, projects or statutory decisions.

5.2. Engagement section

5.2.1. Engagement/consultation has already taken place through the member and stakeholder workshop held on 4 June 2026 and subsequent consideration by the TAMGGG on 21 August 2026.

5.2.2. The workshop included governance group members and proxies, together with stakeholders, Te Āpiti Project Group and Te Āpiti Forum representatives. Participants identified renewed partner commitment as an important priority for the future of Te Āpiti.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

6.1. Te Āpiti project is supported through contributions from Horizons and member organisations. Horizons contributes approximately \$343,000 per year from general and targeted rates, in addition to staff time, with a further \$81,000 contributed by other members, including one iwi group, to the programme overseen by TAMGGG. Funding supports biodiversity protection in and around the Scenic Reserves, as well as contributions to signage, a track counter system and promotion.

6.2. Member organisations and partners also make direct financial and staff time contributions to Te Āpiti initiatives outside this budget. This supports additional pest control plus promotion, walking track, asset and facilities repairs and maintenance. Taken together, these contributions are estimated to be more than \$800,000 per year.

6.3. Signing the Statement of Commitment does not commit Council to additional expenditure or funding. Any future financial commitments arising from Te Āpiti initiatives would remain subject to the normal Council planning, budgeting and decision-making processes.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT

7.1. Climate Impact Statements

7.1.1. Signing the Statement of Commitment does not directly result in a material change to greenhouse gas emissions.

7.1.2. The Statement of Commitment supports the long-term protection and enhancement of Te Āpiti's natural environment and ecological resilience.

7.1.3. The decision is not expected to limit future adaptation options or Council's capacity to adapt to climate change.

7.1.4. The decision is not directly a response to a changing climate.

7.1.5. The decision supports the intent of the Climate Action Strategy through its support for environmental protection and long-term resilience.

7.1.6. The decision is primarily a partnership and commitment decision. Any specific future actions arising from the Statement of Commitment would be assessed for climate impacts as they are developed.

7.2. The decision is primarily a partnership and commitment decision. Any specific future actions arising from the Statement of Commitment would be assessed for climate impacts as they are developed.

8. RISK

8.1. The following risks have been identified in relation to the matters raised in this report;

- 8.1.1. **Strategic:** There is a risk that without renewed commitment from partners, the collective approach to Te Āpiti could weaken over time, particularly through organisational and local government change.
- Mitigation:** The Statement of Commitment provides a clear shared basis for continued partnership and long-term stewardship.
- 8.1.2. **Environmental:** No direct environmental risk arises from signing the Statement of Commitment.
- 8.1.3. **Financial:** Signing the Statement of Commitment does not create a financial commitment beyond existing Council decisions and budgets.
- 8.1.4. **Compliance:** The Statement recognises that each member remains subject to its statutory responsibilities, mandates, budgets, delegations and approval processes.
- 8.1.5. **Operational:** No significant operational risk arises from the decision.
- 8.1.6. **Reputational:** There is a potential reputational risk if Horizons is perceived to withdraw from a long-standing partnership that has strong regional support.
- 8.1.7. **Mitigation:** Signing the Statement provides a clear public indication of Horizons' continued commitment while retaining appropriate boundaries around future decisions and investment.
- 8.1.8. **Other:** No other significant risks have been identified.

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. Te Āpiti Manawatū is a significant regional landscape with strong cultural, ecological and recreational values. It is managed across multiple landholdings and jurisdictions, with iwi, central and local government agencies, landowners and other partners having different responsibilities and interests.
- 9.2. Horizons has been involved in the Te Āpiti project since 2006, when the Manawatū Gorge Biodiversity Group was established as a multi-agency partnership to provide a more coordinated approach to biodiversity enhancement in the Gorge. The 10-year programme gained momentum and achieved significant biodiversity gains. As the project developed and its focus broadened beyond biodiversity TAMGGG was established in 2016 as the next stage of the partnership.
- 9.3. The governance group provides an overarching partnership for Te Āpiti, including strategic direction, oversight of project budgets and work programmes, and support for funding and delivery. The current members are:
- Horizons Regional Council
 - Department of Conservation
 - Palmerston North City Council
 - Manawatū District Council
 - Tararua District Council
 - Rangitāne o Manawatū
 - Rangitāne o Tamaki nui a Rua
 - Kahungunu Tamaki nui a Rua
 - Ngāti Raukawa
 - Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata

- Woodville Domain Board; and
- Tom Shannon, landowner/stakeholder representative.

Horizons staff provide facilitation, reporting and advisory support to this group, and along with the Department of Conservation make up the Secretariat.

- 9.4. Horizons also provides financial, advisory and facilitation support to the project. Its operational responsibilities within Te Āpiti include biodiversity protection, pest control and website and social media management. These activities are managed in collaboration with member organisations involved in the project.
- 9.5. Te Āpiti Masterplan, *Whakatakotoranga Matua Ki Te Āpiti*, was developed in 2022 to establish a shared vision and strategic framework and bring together the aspirations, plans and initiatives of the partner organisations. It built on the partnership and collaborative work undertaken since 2006 and was intended to help the various parties working across Te Āpiti move in the same direction.
- 9.6. Almost five years after the Masterplan was developed, the governance group agreed that it was timely to review how it is being used. The intention is not to undertake a wholesale rewrite. Instead, the review will identify what remains relevant, what has changed, what has been achieved and what needs to be reconsidered, and will provide a practical basis for prioritising future actions.

10. DISCUSSION

Partner and Stakeholder workshop

- 10.1. A member and stakeholder workshop was held in June 2026 to consider what has worked well, what could be improved, what Te Āpiti could become in the future and what is needed over the next ten years.
- 10.2. The workshop confirmed strong support for Te Āpiti and the partnership approach. Participants identified the partnership, shared vision, biodiversity protection, recreation and improved access as significant successes.
- 10.3. The workshop identified several areas requiring greater attention, particularly long-term funding, governance resilience, continued partner commitment, coordination, visitor experience and promotion, education and community involvement, and planning for local government reform.

Statement of Commitment

- 10.4. One of the highest-priority actions identified through the workshop was to renew the commitment of the organisations involved in Te Āpiti. A Statement of Commitment has subsequently been developed for governance group partners to sign.
- 10.5. The Statement confirms the members to working together to uphold the shared vision for Te Āpiti and provide for its long-term protection, enhancement and stewardship. It recognises the importance of iwi partnership, biodiversity, recreation and visitor experiences, public understanding, resilient long-term governance and funding.
- 10.6. The Statement is intended to reinforce the partnership rather than create new statutory obligations or financial commitments. It specifically recognises that each member remains subject to its own statutory responsibilities, mandates, budgets, delegations and approval processes.
- 10.7. The Statement therefore provides a useful foundation for the next stage of the Masterplan review and for considering how the Te Āpiti partnership can remain effective through future organisational and local government change.

11. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 11.1. Subject to Council's support, Horizons will sign the Te Āpiti Statement of Commitment alongside other governance group partners. This will eventually be placed on the Te Apiti website: [Te Āpiti Home](#).
- 11.2. The Te Āpiti Project Group are undertaking the Masterplan review and will draft a Masterplan Action Plan to be considered by the Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge Governance Group in early 2027.

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 Chief Executive

 Nikki Riley
 Chair

ANNEXES

A Statement of Commitment



Statement of commitment to Te Āpiti

The members of the Te Āpiti Manawatu Gorge Governance Group confirm their commitment to working with Te Āpiti partners to uphold the shared vision for Te Āpiti and provide for its long-term protection, enhancement and stewardship.

Matawhanui – Vision

Hāpaitia e tātou te rongomaiwhiti o Te Āpiti o Manawatū, tōna mana, tōna ihi, tōna mauri, āna kōrero, tōna rerehua e!

Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge is a taonga of our region, a dramatic place with unique spiritual and physical features. These create enduring experiences for all, ensuring that it is valued and protected for generations to come.

We commit to upholding this vision and working within the enduring strategic framework established through the Te Āpiti Masterplan. We recognise that achieving this vision requires an ongoing partnership approach that respects iwi leadership and relationships, protects and enhances biodiversity, supports safe and appropriate recreation and visitor experiences, strengthens understanding of Te Āpiti, and enables long-term stewardship.

This commitment recognises Te Āpiti as a place of cultural, ecological, recreational, educational and regional significance, and as more than the sum of the individual lands, activities, projects and organisations that contribute to it.

Shared commitments

We commit to:

- Work collaboratively through the Te Āpiti governance and operational arrangements, including open communication, good faith decision-making and early discussion of risks, opportunities and constraints.
- Uphold the shared vision and enduring strategic framework for Te Āpiti, while supporting the ongoing review and prioritisation of actions needed to advance that vision.
- Support the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity, including sustained attention to pest management, forest health, taonga species and ecological resilience.
- Recognise and support the cultural significance of Te Āpiti, including the role of iwi partners, tikanga, mātauranga and appropriate cultural narratives.
- Contribute to safe, appropriate and sustainable recreation and visitor experiences that are consistent with protection objectives, statutory responsibilities and partner mandates.
- Help strengthen public understanding of Te Āpiti's value, significance and long-term needs.
- Participate in planning for long-term funding, governance resilience and continuity through organisational and local government change.

Duration and review

This statement confirms an enduring commitment to the long-term vision for Te Āpiti, while recognising that individual partners remain subject to their respective statutory responsibilities, mandates, budget decisions, delegations and formal approval processes. The statement will be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier if there are material changes to governance, funding, legislation, partner mandates, the strategic framework or the scope of the Te Āpiti partnership.

Endorsement

Authorised Signatory	Details	
Name	[Name]	Date
Signature	[Signature]	/ /
Position/title	[Position]	
Project involvement	[Governance partner, Stakeholder, Community etc]	

Authorised Signatory	Details	
Name		Date
Signature		/ /
Position/title		
Project involvement		

Report No.	26-167
Decision Required	

HORIZONS TE AWA TUPUA (TE HEKE NGAHURU) ACTION PLAN: PROPOSED APPROACH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report seeks Council endorsement of a proposed approach to develop the Horizons' Action Plan in accordance with Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 and the strategy 'Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua' 2023.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua calls for organisations with statutory functions and responsibilities affecting Te Awa Tupua to develop action plans setting out how they will contribute to its implementation. This report seeks Council endorsement of the proposed approach and development programme for Horizons' Action Plan.
- 2.2. The Action Plan is proposed as an organisation-wide implementation programme, informed by a stocktake of Horizons' functions and developed collaboratively with Te Kōpuka, River iwi and hapū, relevant agencies and communities. Elected members will have opportunities for input throughout its development, with the final Action Plan to be presented to Council for adoption.
- 2.3. The proposed approach and programme were considered at a Council workshop on 15 September 2026. The workshop material is attached as **Annex A** and an updated development timeline as **Annex B**. The Action Plan is expected to be substantially complete by the end of 2026.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. **receives** the information contained in Report No. 26-167.
- b. **agrees** that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the decisions in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is: Inform.
- c. **endorses** the proposed approach for the Horizons' Te Awa Tupua Action Plan outlined in Section 10 of this report.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- 4.1. Council Strategic Priorities
 - Strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua
 - A holistic approach, from the mountains to the sea (integrated catchment management)
- 4.1.1. The action plan will implement requirements arising out of the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Treaty Claims) Settlement 2017 and Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua strategy 2023.

- 4.1.2. The action plan will implement Te Heke Ngahuru, a strategy developed by Te Kōpuka strategy group (including local iwi and hapū representation through Te Ripo). In this sense the development of the action plan supports strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua of the Whanganui River catchment.
- 4.1.3. Te Heke Ngahuru builds on four intrinsic values (Tupua te Kawa) set out in the legislation. The Kawa collectively demand a holistic approach to work within the catchment. Kawa Tuarua (the second kawa) translates as “the great river flows from the mountains to the sea”. By implementing Te Heke Ngahuru and embedding kawa-based actions into the action plan, this work directly supports Council’s strategic priorities listed above.

4.2. Council’s Community Outcomes



Our region’s relationship with iwi and hapū are respectful and mana-enhancing



Our region’s communities are vibrant and empowered



Our region’s ecosystems are healthy

- 4.2.1. The benefit to the community of this work is that the plan will outline actions that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Horizons delivery of services and functions within the Whanganui Catchment, improving the overall wellbeing of the River and its communities. Implementing Council’s Treaty settlement requirements through Te Heke Ngahuru to develop action plans will enhance relationships with Whanganui and Te Awa Tupua communities and will promote collaboration with other parties developing action plans.

- 4.3. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Nil

- 4.3.1. The development of the action plan derives from Treaty settlement legislation. The final approved document will align with a number of policies, but the development of the action plan itself does not.

5. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Significance Assessment

- 5.1.1. Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy are not triggered by matters discussed in this report (that is, the approach and programme for developing an action plan required through Treaty settlement legislation).

5.2. Engagement section:

- 5.2.1. No stakeholder engagement is required. The decision (to endorse the approach and programme for developing an action plan required through Treaty settlement legislation) does not trigger Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy.
- 5.2.2. Note that collaboration with Strategy group Te Kōpuka and the Post Settlement Governance Entity Ngā Tangata Tiaki is already underway and will be on-going throughout

the process. The Te Awa Tupua community will be engaged with as part of the process of developing the action plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 6.1. The decision does not impact on existing budgets. Development of the action plan will be funded through existing budgets.
- 6.2. The approved action plan may include actions for Council which could have resourcing or funding implications in future years.
- 6.3. In anticipation of this, a provisional amount of \$200,000 (\$100,000 per year for two years) has been sought in the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan to implement early actions yet to be determined and approved by Council as part of the action plan approval process. The \$200,000 along with any future resourcing will be subject to Council's Long Term and Annual Plan processes as usual.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT

- 7.1. Climate Impact Statements
 - This decision will not impact greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The decision supports (is neutral to) the Climate Action Strategy.
- 7.1.1 The decision to endorse the approach and programme for developing Horizons' Te Heke Ngahuru Action Plan does not affect emissions or have climate change impacts. The longer-term implications of the action plan once approved are likely to be positive. The action plan implements Te Heke Ngahuru and the Te Awa Tupua settlement legislation. These contain objectives and priorities that serve to improve the health and wellbeing of the Whanganui River and its communities. Resilience of communities and the environment to climate change impacts is likely to increase as a result.

8. RISK

- 8.1. The following risks have been identified in relation to the matters raised in this report:
 - 8.1.1. **Compliance (high):** The Treaty settlement legislation requires Horizons to have particular regard to Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua strategy, and to make statements about how we have complied, in any report or decision document. Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua strategy requires Horizons to prepare an action plan to give effect to the Strategy. Failure to endorse this specific approach and project plan does pose a risk of compliance failure per se, but the requirement for an action plan date from 2023. Failure to comply in a timely manner presents a risk of judicial review

Mitigation: detail on the approach, approval process and timeframes has been supplied in this report to facilitate a decision. Staff time has been allocated to this work with an aim of completion this year.
 - 8.1.2. **Operational (moderate):** Failure to endorse this specific approach and project plan does not pose an operational risk, but without an alternative proposal for timely delivery, there is a risk of effects on our ability to operate in the Whanganui catchment.

Mitigation: detail on the approach, approval process and timeframes has been supplied in this report to facilitate a decision. Operational staff have built some genuine, on-going relationships with key communities and agencies that may mitigate operational risk.
 - 8.1.3. **Reputational (high):** Failure to endorse this specific approach and project plan does not pose a reputational risk but without a credible alternative there is a risk of damage to

community trust and partner relationships with Te Awa Tupua iwi and hapū, along with settlement agencies such as Te Pou Tupua, Te Kōpuka and Ngā Tangata Tiaki. Council's credibility and standing would also be at risk, with possible knock-on effects on our ability to operate in the Whanganui catchment.

Mitigation: Detail on the approach, approval process and timeframes has been supplied in this report to facilitate a decision.

9. BACKGROUND

9.1. The settlement legislation

9.1.1. Horizons have several far-reaching statutory obligations in respect of Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 (The Act).

9.1.2. The Act establishes 'Te Pa Auroa', a comprehensive legal framework which reforms the way Horizons is to plan and execute our functions, duties and responsibilities specific to the Whanganui River and catchment.

9.1.3. Te Pa Auroa intends to improve outcomes for the benefit of Te Awa Tupua | the Whanganui River and its communities, and includes (among other matters):

- legal recognition and effect of *Te Awa Tupua*¹ as a legal person (often referred to as 'Te Awa Tupua status'), represented by the office of *Te Pou Tupua*.
- legal effect of four kawa (intrinsic values) '*Tupua te Kawa*²' to guide decision-making.
- establishment of a strategy group; *Te Kōpuka nā Te Awa Tupua*³ (Te Kōpuka), charged with developing the strategy document *Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua*⁴ (Te Heke Ngahuru).

9.1.4. Horizons are represented on Te Kōpuka and provide secretariat support for the strategy group.

9.2. The legal effect of Te Awa Tupua status, Tupua te Kawa and Te Heke Ngahuru

9.2.1. Among other provisions, Te Pa Auroa is a legally relevant consideration when exercising *all* statutory functions, powers and duties in relation to the Whanganui River, or to activities in the catchment that affect the River.

9.2.2. The statutory framework applies to a wide range of Horizons' functions in the Whanganui River catchment. Depending on the function, Horizons must recognise and provide for, or have particular regard to, Te Awa Tupua status and Tupua te Kawa, and have particular regard to Te Heke Ngahuru.

9.2.3. These obligations affect how Horizons plans, makes decisions and delivers its functions in the catchment. Relevant decision documents must also record how the applicable statutory requirements have been complied with

9.3. Horizons Te Awa Tupua (Te Heke Ngahuru) Action Plan

9.3.1. Te Kōpuka launched *Te Heke Ngahuru ki Te Awa Tupua* in 2023. The strategy calls for organisations with statutory functions and responsibilities to develop action plans alongside the community, setting out how they will contribute to its implementation

¹ Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017. Subpart 2, ss.12, 14, 15 refer.

² *ibid.* Subpart 2, sections 13, 15 refer.

³ *ibid.* Subpart 4, sections 29 - 34 refer.

⁴ *ibid.* Subpart 4, sections 35 - 38 refer.

- 9.3.2. Te Kōpuka has emphasised the importance of local government action plans being integrated. Progress in implementing the Action Plans will also inform the review of Te Heke Ngahuru in 2028
- 9.3.3. Council considered the proposed approach to development of Horizon's action plan at a workshop on 15 September 2026. The workshop material is attached as **Annex A**.

10. DISCUSSION

10.1. Proposed Approach

10.1.1. The proposed approach is to develop the Horizons Action Plan as an organisation-wide implementation programme for Te Heke Ngahuru. A stocktake of Horizons' functions and current activities, supported by engagement with operational staff and Whanganui River iwi and hapū where required, will provide the basis for identifying and prioritising the organisational changes and operational actions to be included in the Action Plan. The Action Plan will also provide a clear record of Horizons' Te Awa Tupua responsibilities, commitments and priorities, capable of informing any transition to future local government arrangements.

10.1.2. The Horizons Action Plan will distinguish between:

- enabling actions – the organisational changes needed to support implementation, including governance, capability, systems, relationships and alignment of planning and regulatory processes; and
- operational actions – changes to activities and programmes through which Horizons can contribute directly to the health and wellbeing of Te Awa Tupua.

10.1.3. This approach recognises that the actions and their resource implications cannot all be determined in advance. They will emerge through the stocktake, engagement and prioritisation process.

10.2. Alignment with other Action Plans

10.2.1. Whanganui and Ruapehu District Councils have adopted a joint *Te Heke Ngahuru Action Plan 2025–2028*. Its initial focus is on foundational and enabling actions, with further operational actions to be developed over time.

10.2.2. Horizons have different statutory functions and responsibilities as a regional council. However, where matters are common, the proposed approach is to use a broadly consistent structure so that Horizons' Action Plan can align with other organisations' action plans and contribute to an integrated approach to implementation of Te Heke Ngahuru.

10.2.3. The Chair of Te Kōpuka has indicated an expectation that local government will work together to implement distinct action plans through a collective, cohesive project to achieve improvement in servicing our communities. This will be acknowledged in the practical actions developed in the Horizons Action plan, noting local government partners have not fixed on a specific project yet. Slide 21 of **Annex A** offers some suggestions.

10.3. Development Programme

10.3.1. Slide 23 of the workshop material at **Annex A** outlined three phases; establishing the mandate and foundations, developing the Action Plan; and adoption for implementation.

10.3.2. Initial partner and internal discussions and outline drafting have already occurred. Council endorsement and LTP consideration will establish the mandate and resourcing for the next phase. Following endorsement, development will proceed through a stock take of Horizons' functions, drafting and operational review, alongside collaboration with Te Kōpuka, River iwi and hapū, and relevant agencies.

- 10.3.3. Elected members indicated a preference for regular opportunities for input as the Action Plan develops. Drafting will therefore be iterative, with input and review from elected members, Horizons leadership and Te Kōpuka throughout development. The final draft will be brought to Te Kōpuka for consideration before being presented to Council for adoption.
- 10.3.4. The timeline attached as **Annex B** updates the workshop material to provide for further engagement as required, including with River communities, and the elected member preferences expressed at the workshop. The Action Plan is expected to be substantially complete by the end of 2026.
- 10.3.5. Officers aim to present a complete draft of the Action Plan for Council endorsement at their December Council meeting. To achieve this, at least 1-2 workshops are expected to be required with elected members to inform them of progress and provide opportunities for input. Officers will work with the governance team to identify workshop opportunities between now and December.

11. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 11.1. Detail on proposed steps is provided at slides 20 and 21 of the workshop material at **Annex A**.
- 11.2. If Council agrees to the recommendations in this report, the immediate next steps are to;
- present the Whanganui-Ruapehu Action plan to executive leadership for consideration of common content,
 - begin an analysis by Horizons function (the 'stocktake') for points of connection, current barriers and enablers, future opportunities and implications for implementation, including case study interviews,
 - Confirm opportunities for elected member check-in and input, and
 - Continue Action plan drafting.
- And in related work, to support;
- an analysis of Te Awa Tupua obligations across LTP activities, and
 - a collective Te Awa Tupua project across local government.

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ANNEXES

- A 2026 0915 Council Workshop on Horizons Te Awa Tupua Action plan
- B Te Awa Tupua - Horizons Action Plan project tasks timeframe

Te Awa Tupua - Action Plan

workshop with Horizons elected members, 15 September 2026, Regional House

Slide 1 - workshop



Slide 2 – QR code

Slide 3 – pulse check #1

A quick pulse-check

How much do you understand about the effect of Te Awa Tupua on Horizons as an organisation?

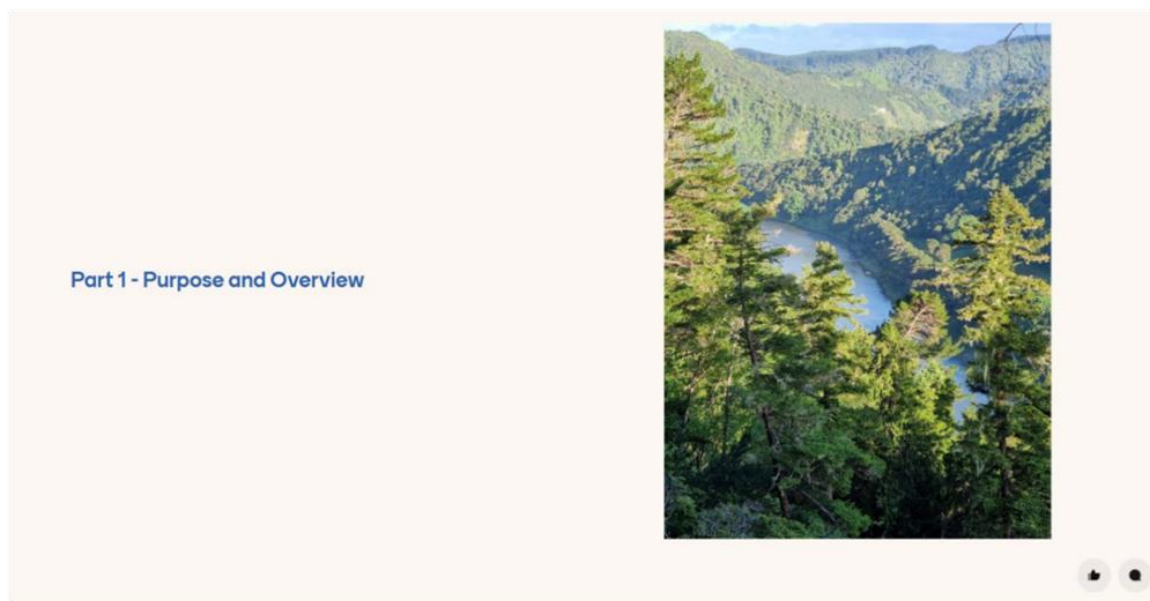
How much do you understand about Tupua te Kawa (the values) and how to implement them?

How much change is needed for Horizons to implement the Te Awa Tupua settlement legislation?

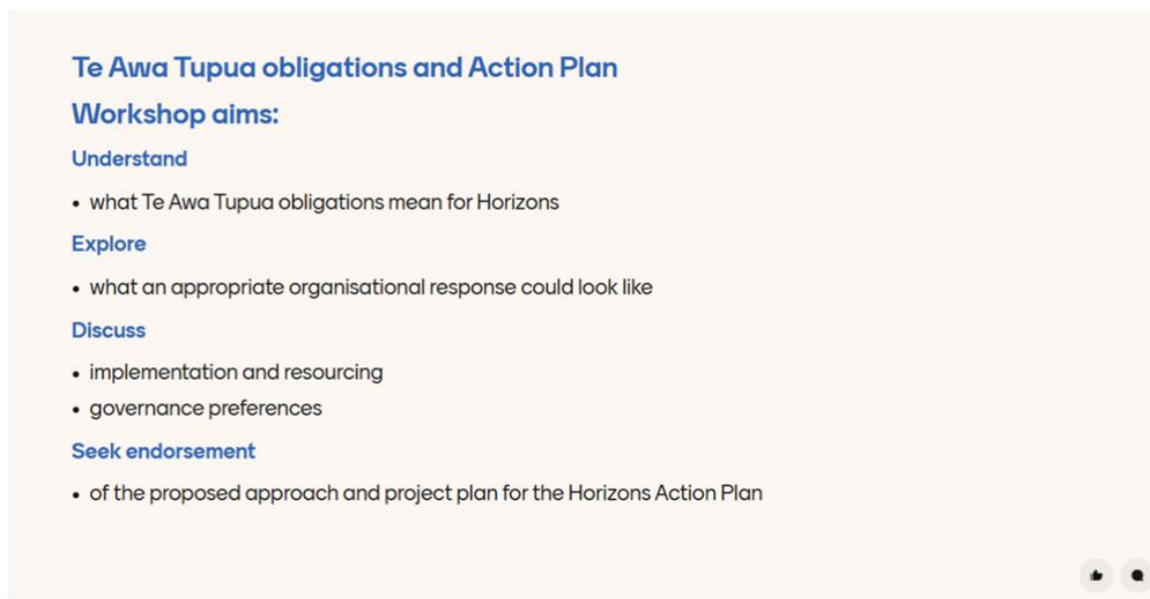
How effective can a regional council Action Plan be in the face of LGA and RMA reforms?

not a lot a great deal

Slide 4 – workshop purpose



Slide 5 – workshop aims



Slide 6 – Settlement legislation

Overview of Te Awa Tupua settlement legislation

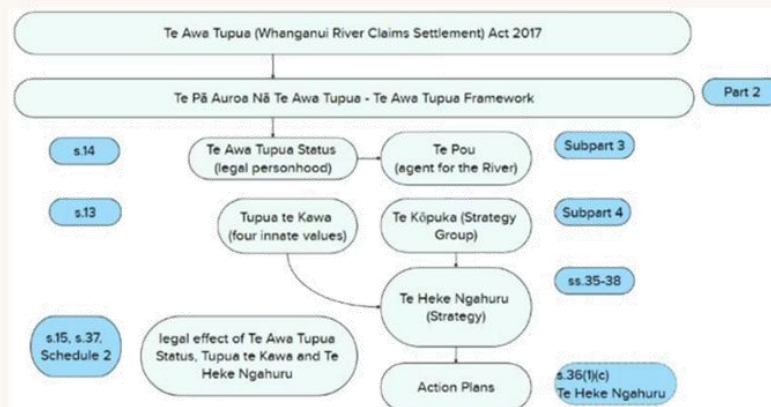
Treaty Settlements are part of Horizons' statutory environment:

15 settlement claims enacted, one Deed of Settlement signed, one agreement in principle, and four in various stages of the settlement process.

Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 establishes a framework 'Te Pa Auroa' which reforms the way we view, work, plan and execute our functions specific to the Whanganui catchment. It intends to improve outcomes for the benefit of the river and its communities as a whole, and includes:

- 'legal person' status for the Whanganui River
- four kawa (intrinsic values)
- a strategy group - Te Kōpuka
- a strategy document - Te Heke Ngahuru
- action plans

Slide 7 – framework



Key provisions (in relation to this workshop)

Slide 8 – Te Awa Tupua status



Te Awa Tupua Status (legal personhood):

- is recognised as an indivisible and living whole, comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, incorporating all its physical and metaphysical elements,
- with rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person.
- represented by Te Pou Tupua

Slide 9 – Tupua te Kawa

Tupua te Kawa

(the intrinsic value set that guides interactions).

1. Ko te Awa te mātāpuna o te ora: **the River is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance:**
2. E rere kau mai i te Awa nui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa: **the great River flows from the mountains to the sea:**
3. Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au: **I am the River and the River is me:**
4. Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei Awa Tupua: **the small and large streams that flow into one another form one River:**

Tupua te Kawa are to be considered as a whole, and not allocated or compartmentalised.

[Te Heke Ngahuru](#) strategy explains the Kawa in more detail (pp. 12-17)

Slide 10 – strategic framework

Te Kōpuka, Te Heke Ngahuru Strategy and Action Plans

- Te Kōpuka = strategy group.
- Horizons = member of Te Kōpuka.
- Te Kōpuka = permanent Joint Committee of Horizons, and
- = appointed body for any collaborative freshwater planning relating to Whanganui River catchment
- Te Kōpuka produced Te Heke Ngahuru strategy (2023).
- Te Heke Ngahuru requires Action Plans

Slide 11 – part 2

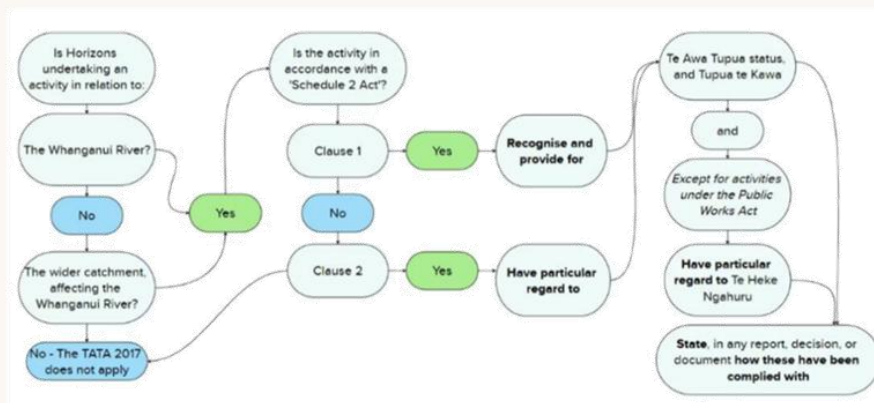
Part 2 - Legal Obligations



Slide 12 – legal obligations

- **Recognise and provide for** Te Awa Tupua status and Tupua te Kawa
 - when exercising most functions affecting the River, including:
Long Term Plans, biosecurity, RMA plan-making, river management, science, asset management
 - **Have particular regard to** Te Awa Tupua status and Tupua te Kawa
 - when exercising other specified functions affecting Te Awa Tupua; *ie. heritage management, public works, and all other RMA functions including consents.*
 - **Have particular regard to** Te Heke Ngahuru
 - when carrying out activities under the listed Acts (apart from public works)
 - including the Te Heke Ngahuru requirement to develop Action Plans
 - **and state how we did it** in all reports and decisions
- (there are other obligations, the above are most relevant to today's workshop)*

Slide 13 – legal process



Giving effect to Te Awa Tupua - process

Slide 14 – part 3 - implications



Part 3 - What does this all mean for Horizons?

Slide 15 – organisational change

This isn't another strategy - **Te Heke Ngahuru is the strategy.**

The Action Plan is about **what Horizons needs to do to implement it**, in a 'Te Awa Tupua' way

- ✗ another policy document
- ✗ a compliance checklist
- ✗ a Strategy & Policy project
- ✓ organisation-wide implementation
- ✓ changing BAU where needed
- ✓ identifying actions, ownership and resource implications
- ✓ creating something that can survive organisational reform

Slide 16 – Whanganui-Ruapehu Action Plan

What our neighbours are doing

As part of Local Water Done Well, Whanganui and Ruapehu District Councils produced a joint action plan.

- short timeframe - to align with Te Heke Ngahuru review (2028)
- focuses on organisational and governance culture change
- major council change projects still to be identified

Te Kōpuka Chair Gerrard Albert has invited Horizons to adopt it.

Horizons staff view - the Action Plan will be more useful if it

- *reflects regional functions, adds catchment-based activities, has a longer lifespan, and acts as handover document for LG reform.*

Ultimately, Horizons' Action Plan needs to be brought to Te Kōpuka and integrated with other council plans



Slide 17 – Action plan outline

Proposed outline

Part 1 - Introduction (the 'why');

- legal context, Te Awa Tupua status, Tupua te Kawa
- core commitments, themes for action and core objectives

Part 2 - Enabling the Shift (the implementation framework);

- governance and leadership, relationships, capability, planning and regulatory alignment, monitoring and review

Part 3 - Operational contribution (from framework to action), including

- current implementation priorities for improving the River/catchment;
- e.g., reducing sediment, restoring function and habitats, strengthening resilience, science, monitoring, knowledge development, targeted delivery.



Slide 18 - implications

Resource Implications

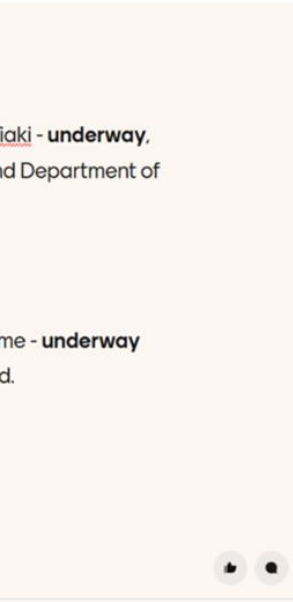
- Actions not decided - so cost is unknown.
- We already do some things well within current programmes.
- First action plan is likely to focus on organisational / culture change.
- Many actions = low or no cost:
 - adjustments to the way we work; - standing items on Executive Leadership and Council Committee agendas
 - proactive/regular engagement with river iwi and hapū
 - in-house training.
 - Reprioritising something to occur earlier than currently scheduled.
- \$100,000 per year is proposed in LTP budget bids to allow implementation of (as yet unidentified) approved actions over the first two years.



Slide 19 – status report

Action Plan status

- discussions / collaborative relationship building with Te Kōpuka and Ngā Tangata Tiaki - **underway**.
- discussions with other agencies (e.g., Whanganui and Ruapehu District Councils, and Department of Conservation) to integrate plans and actions - **underway**.
- context sections in draft - **completed**
- draft project planning - **completed**
- drafting - **underway**
- Executive Leadership endorsement of organisation-wide implementation programme - **underway**
- \$200,000 in LTP budget bids, for implementation of Y1 and 2 actions once approved.
- stocktake of functions designed, and sample interviews - **underway**.



Slide 20 – next steps

Next steps for Action Plan development

- **Workshop** Action Plan project and approval process with Elected Members, Council endorsement.
- **Socialise** the process with Leaders Forum
- **Commence** Action Plan development
 - Undertake **stocktake of Horizons functions** through interviews with relevant operational staff - looking at current points of connection, current barriers / enablers, future opportunities and implementation implications.
 - where information is not already held, **engagement with River iwi / hapū** to explore priority Horizons actions.
 - **Complete draft Action Plan** - for review and feedback from Horizons Groups.
- **Present** governance and leadership proposals, along with significant actions, to Executive Leadership and Council by year-end 2026.
- **Finalise**, and present to Council for **adoption**

Slide 21 – related work

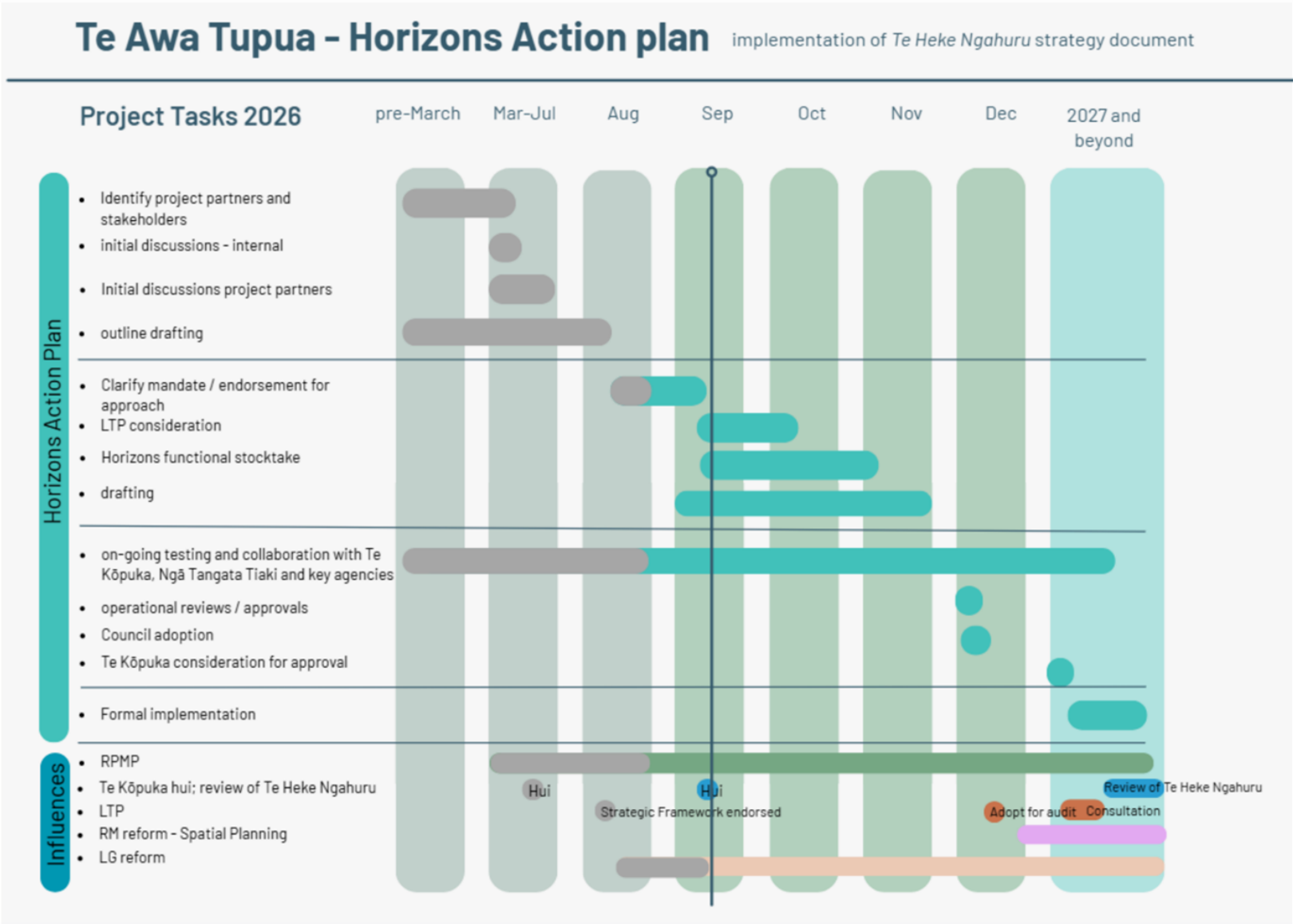
Connected (but separate) programmes

- **LTP review** of proposals through 'settlement obligations' lens by all business units
- Executive leadership and Chair to **consider projects to give tangible effect to Te Awa Tupua obligations**, prior to September 18 Te Kōpuka hui (this is a request of Te Kōpuka members).
Potential projects might include:
 - supporting a project to develop the Regional Spatial Plan 'in a Te Awa Tupua way' across local government agencies, where it relates to the Whanganui River catchment.
 - collaborative freshwater planning for the Whanganui Catchment through the Natural Environment Plan development process
 - facilitating / supporting an integrated (sub)catchment planning likely to be led 'at place', with potential for a pilot/test case within the ICM programme

Slide 22 – Councillor approval preference



Slide 23 – timeframes – next page



Slide 24 – Part 4

Part 4 - Exploring what Te Awa Tupua status and Tupua te Kawa could mean for Horizons



Slide 25 – a Te Awa Tupua way

Doing things in a Te Awa Tupua way could mean:

- assessing what activities mean for **the wellbeing** of the River and if/how they contribute to that wellbeing
- assessing **impacts beyond the immediate site/environment**, where effects connect to the wider River
- considering **catchment connectivity**, tributaries, **cumulative effects** and **upstream/downstream consequences**
- assessing **physical and spiritual dimensions** of effects on Te Awa Tupua (eg. impacts on access)
- shifting from current planning and decision-making values, to those derived from **Kawa**. NB. Kawa is decided at place... hapū have an active voice..
- seeking greater local voice in process design and decision-making
- considering **reciprocity** – what is being returned/contributed to the River rather than just acceptable levels of extraction/effect.

Slide 26 – workshop ideas (not completed. Feedback welcome to Elizabeth.Daly@horizons.govt.nz)

What do you think giving effect to Te Awa Tupua status and Tupua te Kawa might involve? (200 char. limit each response)

Responses can be up to 200 characters and will appear here.

You can group responses if you get more than 10.

Turn on voting so people can flag their favorite responses.

Slide 27 – Discussion / Endorsement

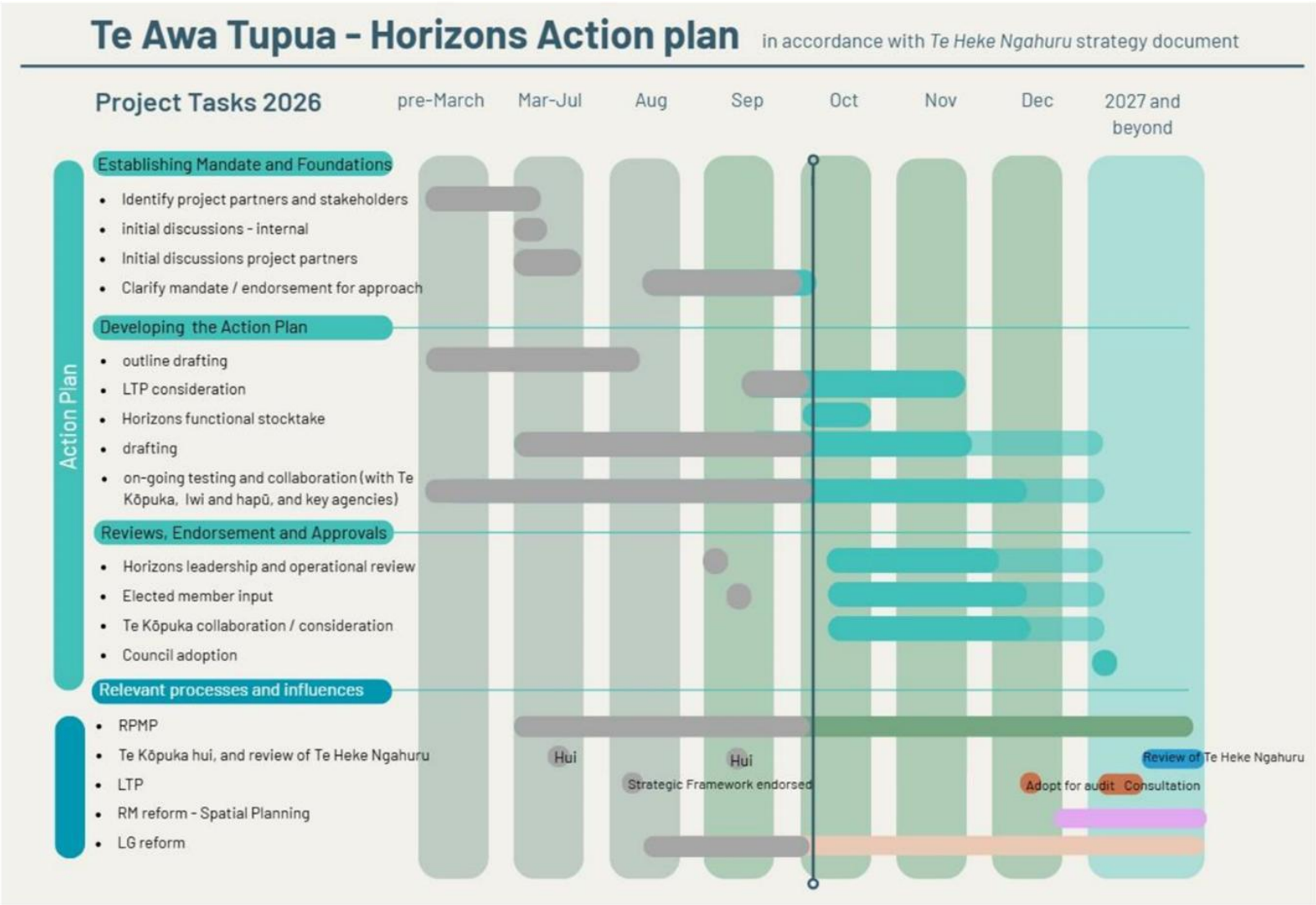
Discussion

- No decisions can be made in this workshop
- Do you endorse the proposed approach and project plan for Horizons' Te Awa Tupua Action plan in principle?

Slide 28 – pulse check #2 not completed.

Slide 29 – end.





Report No.	26-168
Decision Required	

EARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH IWI AND HAPŪ ON THE 2027-37 LONG-TERM PLAN

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report seeks Council direction on early engagement with iwi and hapū during development of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan, including:
 - a. the purpose and scope of the engagement;
 - b. the matters to be included in the initial communication to iwi and hapū authorities;
 - c. the respective roles of elected members and officers;
 - d. possible topics for discussion; and
 - e. how the outcomes of engagement will be reported to Council.
- 1.2. The report also seeks direction on the preparation of the Long-term Plan content relating to Māori participation in Council decision-making processes.
- 1.3. A councillor workshop on 16 September 2026 provided an initial indication of elected-member views. A proposed further workshop to consider the engagement invitation, possible discussion topics and engagement arrangements did not proceed. These matters are therefore presented in this report for Council direction.
- 1.4. Direction is sought at this stage because engagement with iwi and hapū authorities will need to commence shortly if it is to inform development of the draft 2027-37 Long-term Plan prior to its submission for audit in December 2026. This report also records workshop feedback received on 16 September 2026 and seeks Council's endorsement of an engagement approach and LTP drafting direction informed by that feedback.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Council must satisfy itself that the 2027-37 Long-term Plan gives appropriate effect to its Māori participation obligations under the Local Government Act 2002, while also aligning with Council's strategic priority of strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua, its local governance statement, and its relationship agreements with iwi and hapū authorities.
- 2.2. The Local Government Act distinguishes between general public consultation and processes specifically designed to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision-making before positions are formed. While Māori are able to participate through the special consultative procedure, Council must determine what engagement approach it considers appropriate to give effect to sections 81 and 82, having regard to its statutory obligations, strategic priorities, relationship agreements and the available timeframe.
- 2.3. Council approved an early engagement approach for the 2027-37 Long-term Plan in April 2026. Engagement with Māori was not explicitly considered as part of that discussion and the approach approved did not establish a clear pathway for early Māori participation in development of the plan.
- 2.4. Two workshops have been held (7 April and 16 September 2026) to outline Council's statutory obligations, strategic commitments and existing agreements with iwi and hapū authorities, and to seek councillor feedback on how those obligations should be reflected in both the preparation and content of the Long-term Plan.
- 2.5. Workshop feedback indicated general support for:

- a. engagement that occurs before the draft plan is finalised;
 - b. direct engagement with iwi and hapū authorities;
 - c. engagement focused on topics identified by Council and matters identified by iwi and hapū;
 - d. documenting engagement outcomes and their influence on the draft plan; and
 - e. strengthening LTP content relating to Māori participation, including legislative context, engagement undertaken and planned actions to support participation in decision-making.
- 2.6. This report proposes an engagement approach reflecting that feedback, comprising direct contact with iwi and hapū authorities within two weeks, engagement in the format preferred by each authority, and engagement focused on both matters identified by iwi and hapū and a Council-defined list of topics where Council has not yet reached a settled position. Engagement would be led by elected members, supported by officers who would coordinate engagement, provide information, document feedback and report outcomes to Council.
- 2.7. A further workshop was proposed to consider the content of the initial communication, possible discussion topics and the practical arrangements for engagement. As that workshop did not proceed, Council direction on these matters is sought through this report.
- 2.8. The report also seeks direction to prepare LTP content that:
- explains the legislative framework informing Council's approach to Māori participation;
 - sets out the steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute to decision-making over the life of the plan; and
 - records the engagement undertaken and its influence on development of the draft plan.
- 2.9. The December 2026 audit deadline is a fixed parameter. The engagement approach proposed seeks to improve alignment with Council's statutory obligations and existing commitments within that timeframe.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-168 and Annex;
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the matters considered in this report are of low significance under Councils Significance and Engagement Policy, and that no additional public engagement is required beyond the targeted engagement approach outlined in this report;
- c. notes the feedback provided by councillors at the workshop of 16 September 2026, summarised in section 10;
- d. endorses an engagement approach for the 2027-37 LTP comprising:
 - i. direct contact with all iwi and hapū authorities within two weeks of this decision, including information on the purpose, scope and timeframe of engagement;
 - ii. engagement led by elected members, supported by officers who will coordinate engagement, prepare briefing materials, maintain records, analyse feedback and report outcomes to Council;
 - iii. an offer to each iwi and hapū authority to engage in its preferred format, including individual hui, hui-ā-iwi, joint wānanga, written feedback, or other agreed approaches;

- iv. engagement focused on matters identified by iwi and hapū authorities together with a Council-defined list of topics where Council has not yet reached a settled position;
- v. engagement being undertaken during October and November 2026 where practicable;
- e. authorises the Chair supported by officers, to write to iwi and hapū authorities inviting engagement consistent with the approach outlined by Council;
- f. directs the Chief Executive to ensure records are maintained of engagement undertaken, including authorities approached, matters raised, themes identified, and any resulting changes to the draft LTP, and that this information is reported back to Council alongside the draft LTP;
- g. endorses preparation of draft 2027-37 LTP content that includes:
 - i. reference to the legislative framework relating to Māori participation;
 - ii. a forward-looking statement of the steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute to decision-making processes over the period covered by the plan; and
 - iii. a summary of the engagement undertaken during preparation of the plan and how that engagement informed development of the draft Plan;
- h. notes that engagement feedback will inform, but not bind, council decision-making during preparation of the draft and final 2027-37 Long-term Plan;
- i. notes that the December 2026 audit deadline is a fixed parameter and that the engagement approach endorsed in recommendation (d) reflects that constraint; and
- j. notes the residual risks identified in section 8.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

4.1. Council Strategic Priorities

- Strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua

4.1.1. The draft 2027-37 strategic framework similarly identifies Partnerships as a strategic priority and states that Council's processes should be participatory, pragmatic and include meaningful engagement with Māori.

4.2. Council's Community Outcomes



Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered



Our region's relationship with iwi and hapū are respectful and mana-enhancing

4.2.1. The benefit to the community of this work is a clearer and more transparent process for Māori participation in the development of the Long-term Plan, supporting informed decision-making and stronger relationships with iwi and hapū authorities.

4.3. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Long-term Plan

- 4.3.1. The report aligns with: Horizons Local Governance Statement (2026); Relationship Agreements.

5. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Significance Assessment

- 5.1.1. The decision relates to Council's approach to engagement during development of the Long-term Plan and does not itself amend service levels, funding, or strategic assets.
- 5.1.2. While the Significance and Engagement Policy is not formally triggered, targeted engagement with iwi and hapū authorities is recommended to assist Council in meeting its statutory obligations and existing commitments relating to Māori participation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 6.1. Any costs associated with engagement are expected to be met from existing Long-term Plan development budgets. No additional budget, borrowing or rating impact is anticipated as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT

- 7.1. Climate Impact Statements
- 7.2. This report is administrative in nature and does not result in a climate impact.

8. RISK

- 8.1. The following risks have been identified in relation to the matters raised in this report:
- 8.1.1. **Strategic:** Council's approach may not meet stakeholder expectations.
Mitigation: Communication regarding scope, timing and decision-making constraints, together with transparent reporting of engagement outcomes.
- 8.1.2. **Operational:** The principal constraint is timing rather than willingness to engage. The December 2026 audit deadline limits the extent of engagement that can occur before preparation of the draft LTP. As a result, Council is balancing the benefits of more extensive engagement against the practical consequences of altering the LTP timetable.
Mitigation: A clear engagement plan, prioritisation of available engagement opportunities, and ongoing monitoring of milestones will assist in managing timeline risks.
- 8.1.3. **Compliance:** Section 93(9) requires Council to have regard to sections 77, 81 and 82 in preparing the LTP, and section 94 requires an Auditor-General report on whether the plan gives effect to the section 93(6) purpose. A documented, reasoned approach materially reduces this exposure but does not remove it.
Mitigation: Maintain clear documentation of engagement undertaken, matters considered, and reasons for decisions reached during development of the draft LTP.
- 8.1.4. **Relational:** Six of Council's relationship agreements contain written commitments that can be cited in submissions and public commentary, and if Council's process is later examined.
Mitigation: Engagement will be undertaken directly with iwi and hapū authorities and feedback will be documented and reported back to Council.
- 8.1.5. **Reputational:** Council's draft strategic framework for 2027-37 commits to "meaningful engagement with Māori" and to "involving people early enough to influence outcomes". The proposed process goes some way to achieving this commitment, however, is limited by time constraints which could be viewed as not achieving stated commitment.

Mitigation: Communicate clearly regarding the purpose, scope and constraints of engagement, including any matters that cannot reasonably be incorporated into the draft LTP due to timing or statutory requirements.

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. Council approved an early engagement approach for the 2027-37 LTP in April 2026. Engagement with Māori was not explicitly considered as part of that discussion and the agreed approach did not establish a clear mechanism for early Māori participation.
- 9.2. Briefing papers circulated to support the 2 April and 9 September workshops set out Council's statutory obligations under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), its strategic commitments, and its relationship agreements with iwi and hapū authorities.
- 9.3. Council's Māori participation obligations in relation to the Long-term Plan arise in two distinct but related areas:
 - a. Process: the opportunities provided to Māori to contribute during preparation of the plan, including Council's obligations under sections 81 and 82 of the LGA to maintain processes for Māori participation in decision-making processes and consultation; and
 - b. Content: information that must be included within the Long-term Plan itself, including any steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute to decision-making processes over the life of the plan.
- 9.4. While the special consultative process provides an opportunity for Māori to participate alongside the wider community, sections 81 and 82 contemplate additional processes that provide opportunities for Māori contribution before Council's positions are finalised. The matters considered in this report therefore extend beyond public consultation alone.
- 9.5. The statutory framework outlined engages both the process used to prepare the LTP and the content included within it. In broad terms:
 - **section 81(1)** Council must establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes, consider ways it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute, and provide relevant information for both purposes;
 - **section 82(2)** Council must ensure it has processes in place for consulting with Māori in accordance with the consultation principles, with section 82(3) leaving the manner of observing those principles to Council's judgement;
 - **section 93(8)-(9)** Council must act in such manner, and include such detail in the plan, as it considers on reasonable grounds to be appropriate, having regard to sections 77 to 84, 96, 97 and 101;
 - **Schedule 10, clause 8** The LTP must set out any steps Council intends to take, having undertaken the consideration required by section 81(1)(b), to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute over the period covered by the plan.
- 9.6. Relationship agreements between Council and iwi and hapū authorities commit Council to promoting that authority's active participation in the preparation, implementation and review of policies and plans that affect them. Five of the agreements refer specifically to closer involvement in Council processes including long-term planning processes. These written commitments may reasonably shape expectations regarding how Council undertakes engagement.

10. WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

- 10.1. The 16 September workshop explored councillors' views on how Māori participation obligations should be reflected in both the preparation and content of the 2027-37 Long-

term Plan. While the workshop was not a decision-making forum, several consistent themes emerged.

- 10.2. Councillors' aspirations for Māori participation in the plan, expressed as sentences they would want to read in a media release when it is adopted, suggested early involvement rather than late consultation, a process iwi and hapū could realistically use, influence visible in the content of the plan, and a relationship continuing beyond it.
- 10.3. Feedback broadly supported a preference for engagement that influenced development of the plan rather than relying solely on the special consultative procedure. Councillors also emphasised the importance of engagement being practical and accessible for iwi and hapū authorities, resulting in a clear connection between engagement undertaken and the content of the final plan.
- 10.4. Feedback also broadly supported an approach that combines engagement on matters identified by iwi and hapū with discussion of topics identified by Council where Council has not yet reached a settled position. No support was expressed for limiting engagement to public consultation alone or for seeking input on the draft plan as a whole within the available timeframe.
- 10.5. In relation to engagement methods, feedback suggested broad support for direct engagement with iwi and hapū authorities and retaining flexibility regarding the format of engagement, including individual hui and collective forums where appropriate.
- 10.6. Feedback also suggested broad support for strengthening LTP content through:
 - reference to the statutory framework informing Council's approach to Māori participation;
 - an account of engagement undertaken during preparation of the plan; and
 - a forward-looking statement on fostering Māori capacity to contribute to Council decision-making processes.
 - engagement being led by elected members, supported by officers, with officers responsible for coordination, documentation, analysis and reporting.
- 10.7. While a minority of participants expressed a preference for retaining current practice, workshop feedback generally favoured additional engagement and enhanced reporting within the LTP.

11. DISCUSSION

- 11.1. The briefing paper attached as Annex 1 outlined Council's statutory obligations, existing commitments, and a range of options for both engagement and Long-term Plan content. These matters were discussed at the councillor workshop held on 16 September 2026. While the workshop was not a decision-making forum, the feedback received provided direction on Council's preferred approach to Māori participation in development of the 2027-37 LTP.

Recommended engagement approach

- 11.2. Having considered the workshop feedback, officers recommend an engagement approach that combines:
 - direct contact with iwi and hapū authorities;
 - engagement in the format preferred by each authority;
 - discussion on matters identified by iwi and hapū authorities; and
 - consideration of a Council-defined list of topics where Council has not yet reached a settled position.

- 11.3. Officers consider that engagement which enables iwi and hapū authorities to identify matters for discussion is consistent with the intent of Council's relationship agreements and existing engagement commitments. A Council-defined list of topics addresses the practical difficulty that an open invitation gives an authority little indication of where its input can still make a difference in the time available. Used together, the invitation leads and the topic list supports it, so that authorities can see where influence is realistic without being confined to Council's agenda.
- 11.4. Engagement is to be led by elected members, supported by officers, with officers responsible for coordination, documentation, analysis and reporting.
- 11.5. Officers consider this approach best reflects the themes emerging from the workshop, particularly the desire for engagement to occur early enough to influence outcomes, to be practical and accessible for iwi and hapū authorities, and to focus on areas where participation can meaningfully inform development of the draft plan.
- 11.6. Prior to engagement commencing, officers will identify those aspects of the draft LTP where Council has not yet reached a settled position. This will provide clarity to both Council and participating authorities regarding the purpose and scope of engagement.

Reporting and accountability

- 11.7. Regardless of the form of engagement undertaken, officers recommend maintaining a record of:
 - the authorities approached;
 - the engagement undertaken;
 - the matters raised;
 - Council's response; and
 - any resulting changes to the draft plan.
- 11.8. This information would be reported back to Council alongside the draft LTP and will inform the account of engagement included within the plan and its supporting documents.

Recommended LTP content

- 11.9. Officers recommend that the 2027-37 LTP include:
 - reference to the statutory framework informing Council's approach to Māori participation;
 - a description of the engagement undertaken during development of the plan; and
 - a forward-looking statement outlining the steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute to Council decision-making processes over the period of the plan.
- 11.10. All three content options attracted majority support in the workshop. Of the three, only a forward-looking capacity statement responds to a specific legislative requirement. Schedule 10, clause 8 requires the plan to set out the steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute over the period covered by the plan. The 2024-34 LTP primarily described current practice. Officers consider that including a forward-looking statement may provide greater clarity regarding Council's intended actions over the life of the plan.
- 11.11. Explicit reference to the statutory framework and an account of the engagement undertaken are not themselves required by the Act. They respond to the accountability purpose in section 93(6) and the Auditor-General's expectation that LTP content provides a basis for accountability. The 2024-34 LTP set out mechanisms for Māori participation without referring to the obligations behind them, with the consequence that a reader cannot tell whether the approach was designed to meet legislative requirements.

- 11.12. Officers consider this approach provides a clearer basis for accountability, improves transparency regarding Council's obligations and commitments, and responds to the requirement in Schedule 10, Clause 8 of the Local Government Act 2002 to identify intended actions supporting Māori participation in Council decision-making processes.
- 11.13. Engagement undertaken through this process will inform development of the draft Long-term Plan. Council retains responsibility for determining the content of the draft and final Long-term Plan after considering all information received through engagement, consultation and statutory decision-making processes.

12. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 12.1. Subject to Council endorsement of the recommendations in this report, the Chair will write to each iwi and hapū authority within two weeks of Council's decision. The purpose of the letter will be to:
- outline Council's interest in understanding what matters are most important to iwi and hapū in the development of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan;
 - invite discussion on the steps Council could take to strengthen Māori capacity to contribute to Council decision-making processes over the life of the plan;
 - explain the LTP timetable and the timeframe available for input prior to preparation of the draft plan;
 - invite engagement kanohi ki te kanohi | face to face, or via another method preferred by the authority; and
 - invite each authority to contribute agenda items and identify matters it wishes to discuss.
- 12.2. The invitation will make clear that, while there are timeframes associated with preparation of the draft LTP and its submission for audit, Council welcomes ongoing engagement and discussion at any point throughout the development and implementation of the Long-term Plan.
- 12.3. Prior to the letters being issued, officers will identify those aspects of the draft LTP where Council has not yet reached a settled position and prepare supporting information to assist discussions with iwi and hapū authorities.
- 12.4. Officers will coordinate and support elected member engagement with iwi and hapū authorities, including arranging hui, preparing discussion material, documenting feedback, and ensuring participants are provided with appropriate information regarding the purpose and scope of engagement.
- 12.5. Engagement will be undertaken in the format preferred by each authority. This may include individual hui, collective hui-ā-iwi, joint wānanga, written feedback, or other approaches agreed between Council and the relevant authority.
- 12.6. Officers will maintain a record of:
- authorities approached;
 - engagement undertaken;
 - matters raised;
 - opportunities, concerns and priorities identified by iwi and hapū authorities;
 - views on Māori capacity and capability-building over the life of the Long-term Plan; and
 - any resulting implications for the draft LTP.

- 12.7. Feedback received through engagement will be analysed and reported back to Council, together with officer advice on how the matters raised could be reflected in the draft Long-term Plan. This information will form part of Council's consideration during development of the draft LTP and associated content relating to Māori participation.

Step	Timing
Chair writes to all iwi and hapū authorities inviting engagement	Within 2 weeks of Council decision
Council confirms areas of the draft LTP where it has not yet reached a settled position	Within 2 weeks of Council decision
Engagement undertaken with iwi and hapū authorities	October-November 2026
Feedback analysed and reported to Council	Prior to finalisation of draft LTP
Council considers engagement outcomes and their implications for the draft LTP	November 2026
Draft Māori participation content prepared and incorporated into draft LTP	November 2026
Draft LTP submitted for audit	December 2026

- 12.8. Officers will advise Council if any iwi or hapū authority raises concerns regarding the timeframe available for participation, or if matters arise through engagement that may require additional direction from Council before the draft LTP is finalised.
- 12.9. A summary of engagement outcomes and Council's response will be included in supporting material accompanying public consultation on the draft LTP.

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Approved by Elizabeth Daly
Group Manager Strategy, Regulation & Science

Michael McCartney
Chief Executive

Nikki Riley
Chair

ANNEXES

A Briefing Paper - Councils Māori Participation Obligations LTP

BRIEFING PAPER

Council's Māori Participation Obligations: Long-Term Plan Alignment and Opportunities for Improvement

For:	Horizons Regional Councillors
Author:	Te Pae Kōuka and Policy Staff
Date:	9 September 2026

PURPOSE

This briefing paper supports discussion on how Māori participation obligations should be reflected in the preparation and content of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan. It summarises Council's statutory requirements, strategic commitments and existing agreements, and identifies options for councillor consideration. It is pre-reading for the workshop on this topic on 16 September.

The workshop is intended to assist councillors to:

1. Understand Council's statutory requirements and existing commitments;
2. Discuss what meaningful Māori participation in the 2027-37 LTP should look like;
3. Consider priorities for engagement within the available timeframe; and
4. Provide guidance to officers on any additional engagement activities required.

This paper is policy advice (not legal advice) and should be treated as such. Its purpose is solely to describe Council's existing legislative requirements and non-statutory commitments bearing on both Māori participation and the content required to be included in LTPs, assess past practice, and set out opportunities for improvement.

BACKGROUND

Council has Māori participation obligations under the LGA, and its own plans (including the LTP), policies and relationship agreements. In terms of developing the LTP, these can be broadly categorised into two streams:

1. **Process** – how you engage with Māori during the preparation of the LTP (some requirements under LGA but more under Council's own plans, policies and relationship agreements).
2. **Content** – the substance required to be included in the LTP itself (primarily determined by LGA, some discretion as to what this looks like so long as it is there).

Council approved an early engagement approach for the 2027-37 LTP in April 2026. Engagement with Māori was not explicitly part of that discussion, and the approach as agreed did not provide a clear pathway for early engagement with Māori specifically.

Council needs to satisfy itself that its approach will appropriately give effect to statutory requirements and Council commitments regarding Māori participation. December is the deadline for the draft LTP to

be submitted to audit. If Council would like meaningful Māori input on the draft before this, engagement with Māori will need to occur soon.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002

The [Local Government Act 2002](#) (LGA) places statutory obligations on councils that relate to involving Māori in LTP processes. These obligations matter for Horizons for two reasons. The first, clearly, is statutory: the LTP must comply with LGA requirements and is subject to audit by the Auditor-General. The second is practical: the LTP is a local authority's primary accountability document to its community, and it should clearly demonstrate how council meets its statutory obligations.

The table below covers these provisions. The full text of each is in the appendix.

Provision	What it requires	What this means for the LTP
Section 4 – Treaty of Waitangi	The Act is to be interpreted and administered consistently with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Parts 2 and 6 provide principles and requirements intended to facilitate Māori participation in local authority decision-making processes.	Sets the frame for everything below it. Section 4 creates no standalone duty, but it means the rest of this table is to be read as being about participation, not just procedure.
Section 14(1)(d) – Principles	In performing its role, a local authority "should provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes".	A principle rather than a hard duty – the word is "should". This is the standard Council gets measured against publicly and politically, rather than in a courtroom.
Section 40(1)(i) – Local governance statement	Council's governance statement must set out its policies for liaising with, and memoranda or agreements with, Māori.	Not LTP-specific, but it is where Council has already put its commitments in writing. The statement adopted on 21 April 2026 is the benchmark our LTP process will be held to.
Section 77(1)(c) – Requirements for decisions	Where a significant decision relates to land or a body of water, Council must take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.	Conditional – it bites on particular decisions rather than the plan as a whole. But an LTP sets ten years of funding for land and water work, so a number of the decisions it locks in will engage this.
Section 81(1) – Contributions by Māori	Council must (a) establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes, (b) consider ways it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute, and (c) provide relevant information for both purposes.	The strongest duty here, and the only continuous one. "Establish and maintain" means the processes have to exist between consultation rounds, not only during them. Paragraph (b) is what Schedule 10 then requires us to set out.
Section 82(1)–(2) – Principles of consultation	Consultation must follow the principles in section 82(1). Council must ensure it has processes in place for consulting with Māori in accordance with those principles.	Under section 82(3) the principles are observed in whatever manner Council considers appropriate in the instance, so there is real discretion about how. There is no discretion about whether Māori-specific consultation processes exist.
Section 93(8)–(9) – Manner and level of detail	In complying with the Act's LTP requirements, Council must act in such manner, and include such detail in the plan, as it considers on reasonable grounds to be appropriate – and in deciding what is	This is the "how much is enough" test, and it is where sections 77, 81 and 82 attach to the LTP. Note the words "on reasonable grounds": the judgement is ours, but it has to be defensible.

Provision	What it requires	What this means for the LTP
	appropriate, must have regard to sections 77 to 84, 96, 97 and 101.	
Schedule 10, clause 8 – Māori capacity	The LTP must set out any steps Council intends to take, having undertaken the consideration required by section 81(1)(b), to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to its decision-making processes over the period covered by the plan.	The clearest Māori-specific content requirement in the Act. It implies a forward-looking plan, rather than a description of current practice.
Section 94 – Audit	The LTP must contain a report from the Auditor-General on whether the plan gives effect to the purpose set out in section 93(6), which includes providing a basis for accountability to the community.	The LTP is Council's primary accountability document, and it should clearly outline for its community what statutory obligations sit behind legislatively required content like that noted directly above.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND EXISTING COMMITMENTS

In the LTP and draft strategic framework

The 2024-34 LTP includes “Strengthening partnerships with tangata whenua” as one of Council’s four strategic priorities. The plan expands on this statement by noting:

As Te Tiriti/Treaty partners, we work to foster partnerships, enable participation, protect Māori interests and values, support capacity and capability building, and encourage early and meaningful engagement.

This commitment is picked up by the draft strategic framework Council has adopted for the 2027-37 LTP. This framework includes “Partnerships” as one of four strategic priorities, with the tagline “Our processes are participatory and pragmatic, and include meaningful engagement with Māori.”

The framework notes that, in practice, this means “involving people early enough to influence outcomes” and “working in partnership with Māori as Treaty partners.” It should be noted, however, that while Council has started to define “working in partnership with Māori as Treaty partners” through its strategic framework, further detail will be required to highlight what it means specifically in the context of the 2027-37 LTP.

In the local governance statement

Council’s recently approved local governance statement supports this. The statement includes a commitment to targeted participation through early and appropriate engagement and ongoing consultation during plan development, to ensure that Māori perspectives and relevant statutory considerations are properly understood. The full wording of the relevant section is in the appendix.

In relationship agreements

Horizons holds formal relationship agreements, including memorandums of partnership/understanding and kawenata, with the following iwi/hapū authorities:

- Muaūpoko Tribal Authority
- Ngāti Hāua Iwi Trust

- Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua
- Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated
- Te Kāuru Eastern Manawatū River Hapū Collective
- Te Nehenehenui
- Te Roopu Taiao o Ngāti Whakare Trust

Each of these agreements commits Council to promoting the active participation of that authority in the preparation, implementation and review of policies and plans that affect them. The agreements with Muaūpoko, Ngāti Hāua, Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Kāuru and Ngāti Whakare go further, committing Horizons to explore processes for closer involvement in Council processes, with the preparation of annual, long-term and regional plans given as an example.

Six of the seven do not carry statutory weight, but that does not make them without effect. They are commitments Council has made in writing and can be cited in submissions, in public commentary, and if Council's process is later examined, such as in a judicial review.

The agreement with Te Nehenehenui is different. It sits under the Maniapoto Claims Settlement Act 2022. In exercising its functions under the Local Government Act, Council is required to specifically consider the Maniapoto documents listed in clause 19, which include the Te Nehenehenui engagement strategy. While it appears this strategy document is still in development, the agreement also contains the following clauses:

51. Every six months, each council will provide Te Nehenehenui with a schedule of upcoming activities and processes under the LGA which may be of interest to Te Nehenehenui.

52. In response to that schedule, Te Nehenehenui will identify which of those activities it wishes to engage on and the relevant parties will agree on clear processes and timeframes for that engagement.

CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section addresses how the 2024-2034 LTP gives effect to the statutory obligations and non-statutory commitments outlined above, and how the 2027-37 LTP could strengthen alignment with these.

Process (engagement)

Section 93(9) of the LGA requires Councils to "have regard to" sections 77, 81 and 82 when preparing an LTP. This is clearly separate from the special consultative procedure (general public consultation) – it's about whether Māori have opportunity to contribute through specific processes aligned with the statutory responsibility to take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. That requires processes to be designed in ways that are compatible with how Māori communities can, and do, engage, including:

- early involvement before positions are formed;
- engagement through hui rather than written submissions alone; and
- sufficient time for iwi and hapū to consider and respond in ways consistent with their own governance processes.

As noted earlier, Council's local governance statement and relationship agreements with iwi and hapū include commitments that are consistent with this approach.

The approach in 2023-24

While the 2024-34 LTP included commitments to engaging with tangata whenua as Treaty partners, records available to officers indicate limited documented evidence of specific early engagement during the preparation of the plan itself. One letter from the previous chair went to iwi and hapū representatives in June 2023, but officers have been unable to locate records of any subsequent governance-level engagement arising from that correspondence. Six entities across five iwi made a submission during the special consultative procedure.

Opportunities for improvement in 2027-37

It is worth being clear again here about the distinction the LGA draws. The special consultative procedure is general public consultation, and iwi and hapū are welcome to use it. However, Section 81 contemplates something else: standing arrangements that let Māori take part before positions are formed. Officers advise Council to consider if additional steps are required to improve alignment with both the statutory obligations and our non-statutory commitments relating to this.

The following are steps that could be considered within the current timeframe. Officers are not recommending a particular combination at this stage. Each step is set out with what it would involve:

- **Directly contact iwi and hapū authorities.** Reach out to all mandated authorities within the next fortnight, be clear about the timeframe and what is still open for discussion, and ask how and when they would prefer to engage. Lowest cost, and it leaves the choice of format with each authority.
- **Offer hui as the default.** On this timeframe, written material can support a conversation but is unlikely to substitute for one. Requires councillor availability as well as officer time.
- **Joint hui or wānanga.** Efficient use of a short window and allows shared discussion. Faster, but narrower than our relationship agreements contemplate, and may not suit all authorities
- **Record and report back.** This step applies to all three of the above steps. Regardless of the type of engagement, it will be important to document who was approached, who engaged, what was heard and what changed, and report to Council alongside the draft. This is what allows the plan's supporting documents to give an account of the process.

Because the window is short, what Council engages on may matter as much as how. Below are three broad approaches to consider if a decision is made to action any of the steps above. These are not mutually exclusive:

- **The draft plan as a whole.** Comprehensive, but difficult to do meaningfully in the time available.
- **A defined set of topics where Council's position is genuinely open.** More focused and more likely to produce something usable. It requires an internal view first on which parts of the plan are still open to influence.
- **Matters iwi and hapū identify themselves.** Consistent with the partnership framing and relationship agreements. Less predictable for planning purposes.

The December cut-off for audit is a key parameter for the LTP process. If councillors consider the available timeframe insufficient for the outcomes they seek, this should inform a discussion about priorities, scope and expectations, rather than the timetable itself, so that any constraints and associated trade-offs are clearly understood by Council.

Content (substance) in an LTP

While the LGA doesn't prescribe exactly how much detail is needed in the LTP, the Auditor-General notes that LTP content should serve as "a basis for accountability." The LTP doesn't need to be a detailed operational manual, but it should be specific enough to understand and measure.

For practical accountability purposes, LTP content relating to statutory obligations to Māori participation should:

- Demonstrate that Council has thought about its obligations.
- Be specific enough that readers can understand what Council intends to do.
- Be clear enough that performance can be assessed.
- Enable accountability – Councillors, Māori and the general public should be able to tell if Council is meeting commitments.

Clause 8 of Schedule 10 is the clearest Māori-specific content requirement: the LTP must set out any steps Council intends to take, having undertaken the consideration required by s 81(1)(b), to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to Council's decision-making processes over the period covered by the plan. This requirement is clearly forward-looking.

Clause 4 (statement of service provision) is where performance measures sit. This content requirement isn't Māori-specific, but it is the mechanism that makes any partnership commitment measurable.

The approach in 2023-24

Existing mechanisms for Māori to contribute to decision-making processes were outlined on Pages 13-14 of the 2024-2034 LTP. These include:

- Two Māori ward Councillors
- Memorandums of Partnership with iwi/hapū groups
- Climate Action Joint Committee
- Project governance roles (e.g., Arawhata wetland, Foxton flood mitigation)
- Iwi/Hapū capacity funding to engage in decision and policy making processes

Additionally, pages 12-13 provided a table showing the five areas of Horizons' approach to Treaty partnership:

1. Fostering partnerships
2. Enabling participation
3. Protecting Māori interests and values
4. Supporting capacity and capability building
5. Encouraging early and meaningful engagement

As noted above, Clause 8 of Schedule 10 specifically requires the LTP to set out the steps Council will take to foster the development of Māori capacity to participate in Council decision-making processes over the plan period. The 2024-2034 LTP provides:

- General statements about "provision of funding" (page 14).
- Examples of "the ways in which Council currently does this..." (RMA training, student internships, supporting Iwi Management Plans).
- Commitment to Treaty partnership health check and implementation plan.

Opportunities for improvement

While the 2024-34 LTP outlined some mechanisms for Māori participation, it didn't explicitly reference the statutory obligations requiring them, e.g. "*Under section 81 of the Local Government Act 2002, we are required to...*" By not referring to the statutory framework behind its approach, a reader cannot tell whether it was designed to meet legislative requirements and cannot hold Council to a standard the plan does not name.

As noted above, Schedule 10, clause 8 asks for the steps Council intends to take to foster Māori capacity to contribute over the period covered by the plan. What the 2024-34 plan provides is a description of present practice. Whether that satisfies clause 8 is arguable. A forward-looking approach would remove the question.

Below are four options for reflecting Māori participation obligations and commitments in the plan (or supporting documents). These can be combined. Only the forward-looking capacity statement is a legislative requirement, but the other options to do more would also improve the LTP as a basis for accountability:

- **Retain the 2024-34 approach.** Describes current practice. Lowest effort, but leaves the clause 8 question above unresolved.
- **Add explicit reference to the statutory framework.** Sets out what the Act requires, referencing the relevant sections, and maps each requirement to Council's approach.
- **Add a forward-looking capacity statement.** Sets out what capacity means in Council's context, what will be funded, the milestones, how iwi and hapū help set priorities, and how progress will be reviewed. Responds directly to Schedule 10, clause 8 (legislative requirement)
- **Describe the engagement that occurred, including its constraints.** Gives readers an account they can assess.

Worth a look

A full LTP section written with *mana whenua*: "[Mana whenua priorities and aspirations](#)", [Greater Wellington Regional Council 2024-34 LTP](#)

Specified capability and capacity commitments with stated purposes and budget allocations: [Bay of Plenty Regional Council 2024-34 LTP, page 9](#)

A standalone capacity statement of the kind described above: [Hawke's Bay Regional Council, "Statement on fostering contributions to decision-making by Māori"](#)

Questions to consider

These are the things it would help to have elected member's thoughts on at the workshop and as the LTP develops. Nothing needs deciding on the day (particularly given it is a workshop), but the first four

carry more urgency than the rest, and some guidance will help officers prepare to move quickly should any subsequent decisions require action.

- **Given the very short timeframe for engagement, what do we most want to hear about?** Trying to cover the whole plan in that window is how a process ends up shallow. Narrowing it is a choice worth making deliberately rather than by default.
- **What is actually still open for input?** This needs to be clarified within Council before we ask anyone else for their views.
- **Are we comfortable being upfront about the timeframe,** and recording it plainly if some decline to engage on that basis?
- **If the timeframe turns out to be unworkable, what would we rather do?** There are really only two options here. One is to move the December date for taking the final draft to audit, which has consequences for everything downstream. The other is to go out for public consultation having done less early engagement than the statutory obligations and our own commitments imply, which carries legal, relational and reputational risk.
- What does "working in partnership with Māori as Treaty partners" mean for Horizons in practice? Would we rather define it in the plan, or leave it broad?
- What does building capacity mean in our context, and who should set the priorities: Council, or iwi and hapū?
- What would we want to be able to say, when the 2027-37 LTP is adopted, about how our tangata whenua partners helped shape this plan? Working backwards from that answer would be the fastest way to design the process.

If anything in this paper raises a question that is better answered before the workshop than during it, please get in touch with the team via the Governance Team.

APPENDIX: FULL TEXT OF KEY PROVISIONS

Local Government Act 2002 unless otherwise stated.

Section 4 – Treaty of Waitangi

In order to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes, Parts 2 and 6 provide principles and requirements for local authorities that are intended to facilitate participation by Māori in local authority decision-making processes.

Section 14(1)(d) – Principles relating to local authorities

A local authority should provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes.

Section 40 – Local governance statements

(1) A local authority must prepare and make publicly available, following the triennial general election of members, a local governance statement that includes information on — (...)

(i) policies for liaising with, and memoranda or agreements with, Māori.

Section 12.1.3 of the local governance statement Council approved on 21 April 2026 says:

Horizons reflects its commitment to meeting its legislative obligations [to providing for Māori participation in decision making] through various council processes. These include targeted participation through early engagement and ongoing consultation during plan development (...) Horizons considers it best practice to engage early and appropriately to ensure that Māori perspectives and relevant statutory considerations are properly understood.

Section 77 – Requirements in relation to decisions

(1) A local authority must, in the course of the decision-making process, —

- (a) seek to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of the objective of a decision; and*
- (b) assess the options in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and*
- (c) if any of the options identified under paragraph (a) involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.*

Section 81 – Contributions to decision-making processes by Māori

(1) A local authority must:

- (a) establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and*
- (b) consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and*
- (c) provide relevant information to Māori for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b).*

Section 82 – Principles of consultation

(1) Consultation that a local authority undertakes in relation to any decision or other matter must be undertaken in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be provided by the local authority with reasonable access to relevant information in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons:*
- (b) that persons who will or may be affected by, or have an interest in, the decision or matter should be encouraged by the local authority to present their views to the local authority:*
- (c) that persons who are invited or encouraged to present their views to the local authority should be given clear information by the local authority concerning the purpose of the consultation and the scope of the decisions to be taken following the consideration of views presented:*
- (d) that persons who wish to have their views on the decision or matter considered by the local authority should be provided by the local authority with a reasonable opportunity to present those views to the local authority in a manner and format that is appropriate to the preferences and needs of those persons:*
- (e) that the views presented to the local authority should be received by the local authority with an open mind and should be given by the local authority, in making a decision, due consideration:*
- (f) that persons who present views to the local authority should have access to a clear record or description of relevant decisions made by the local authority and explanatory material relating to the decisions, which may include, for example, reports relating to the matter that were considered before the decisions were made.*

(2) A local authority must ensure that it has in place processes for consulting with Māori in accordance with subsection (1).

Section 93 – Long-term plan

(6) The purpose of a long-term plan is to—

- (a) describe the activities of the local authority; and*
- (b) describe the community outcomes of the local authority's district or region; and*
- (c) provide integrated decision-making and co-ordination of the resources of the local authority; and*
- (d) provide a long-term focus for the decisions and activities of the local authority; and*
- (e) provide a basis for accountability of the local authority to the community.*

(8) A local authority must, in complying with the requirements of this Act in relation to the preparation and adoption of a long-term plan, act in such manner, and include in that plan such detail, as the local authority considers on reasonable grounds to be appropriate.

(9) A local authority must, in deciding what is appropriate for the purposes of subsection (8), have regard to – the provisions of sections 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 96, 97, and 101...

Section 94 – Audit of long-term plan

(1) The long-term plan must contain a report from the Auditor-General on—

(a) whether the plan gives effect to the purpose set out in [section 93\(6\)](#);

Schedule 10, clause 8 – Development of Māori capacity to contribute to decision-making processes

A long-term plan must set out any steps that the local authority intends to take, having undertaken the consideration required by section 81(1)(b), to foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority over the period covered by that plan.

Report No.	26-169
Decision Required	

REVENUE AND FINANCING POLICY - STEP 1

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To seek Council direction on Step 1 of the draft funding needs assessment, in order for officers to proceed to Step 2.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-169 and Annex.
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the decisions in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is: inform;
- c. endorses in principle the Local Government Act 2002 section 101(3)(a) considerations set out in Annex A;
- d. endorses in principle the following Local Government Act 2002 section 101(3)(a) rationale for passenger transport;
 - i. Option 1: the target rate component of this activity should be funded through a **uniform rate** to recognise that all urban ratepayers benefit equally from reduced congestion and emissions; **OR**
 - ii. Option 2: the targeted rate component of this activity should be funded through a **capital value rate** to recognise that reduced congestion supports a well-functioning urban economy;
- e. directs the Chief Executive to provide Council the analysis required by section 101(3)(b), and to base this analysis on the endorsed section 101(3)(a) considerations.

3. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- 3.1. Council Strategic Priorities
 - Not applicable. The topic does not relate to Council's strategic priorities.
- 3.2. Council's Community Outcomes



Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered

- 3.2.1. Council has reviewed and updated its strategic priorities and community outcomes for the 2027-37 Long-term Plan (resolution 26-157).

3.2.2. Council's updated strategic priorities and outcomes are summarised below:

Community Outcomes	Strategic Priorities
Resilient communities Our region's communities are flourishing. They are well prepared, adaptable and resilient to natural hazards, environmental and climate related risks.	Resilience Our Region anticipates and responds to risks
Healthy environment Our region's natural environment is healthy and resilient, supporting native biodiversity and delivering important ecosystem services that sustain our communities and the economy, now and into the future.	Stewardship Our natural assets are enjoyed by and protected for current and future generations
Prosperous economy Our region's economy is strong and sustainable, enabled by effective local infrastructure, services and systems that deliver opportunity, innovation and improved wellbeing.	Prosperity Our region is prosperous, enhancing social and economic wellbeing
Strong relationships Our region's communities are enabled to participate meaningfully in decision making processes and take action to benefit our collective wellbeing. Mutually beneficial relationships with our community, iwi and hapū are respectful and mana-enhancing.	Partnerships Our processes are participatory, and pragmatic, and include meaningful engagement with Māori

3.2.3. As noted in paragraph 9, as part of the review process, each of Council's activities are assessed against Council's community outcomes to determine how funding might promote or work against the achievement of these outcomes.

3.2.4. Council's strategic priorities are not an appropriate statutory consideration for Step 1 of the funding needs assessment. However, Council may consider them at Step 2, if Council considers them to be relevant to its assessment of the impact on current and future communities.

3.3. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Nil

4. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1. Significance Assessment

4.1.1. This is an interim step in the review of the Revenue and Financing Policy, so does not in of itself affect the community or the region. Therefore, this decision is not significant.

4.1.2. However, the decision to adopt or amend a Revenue and Financing Policy is likely to be significant, given it affects every person who pays a rate or fee to Horizons.

4.2. Engagement section:

- 4.2.1. Section 102(4)(b) requires that Council consults on the amendment of this policy in a manner that gives effect to section 82 (the principles of consultation). The review draft of the RFP will be consulted on alongside the LTP in early 2027.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. In general, revenue and financing policy decisions do not have any budget implications for Council. The revenue and financing policies are set as percentages of an activity budget; therefore budgets can increase or decrease without requiring a change to the RFP.
- 5.2. However, a Bill that will cap annual rates increases has been referred to select committee by the outgoing 54th Parliament. Should this Bill come into force, Council's ability to raise revenue will depend on its willingness to use non-rates revenue.

6. CLIMATE IMPACT

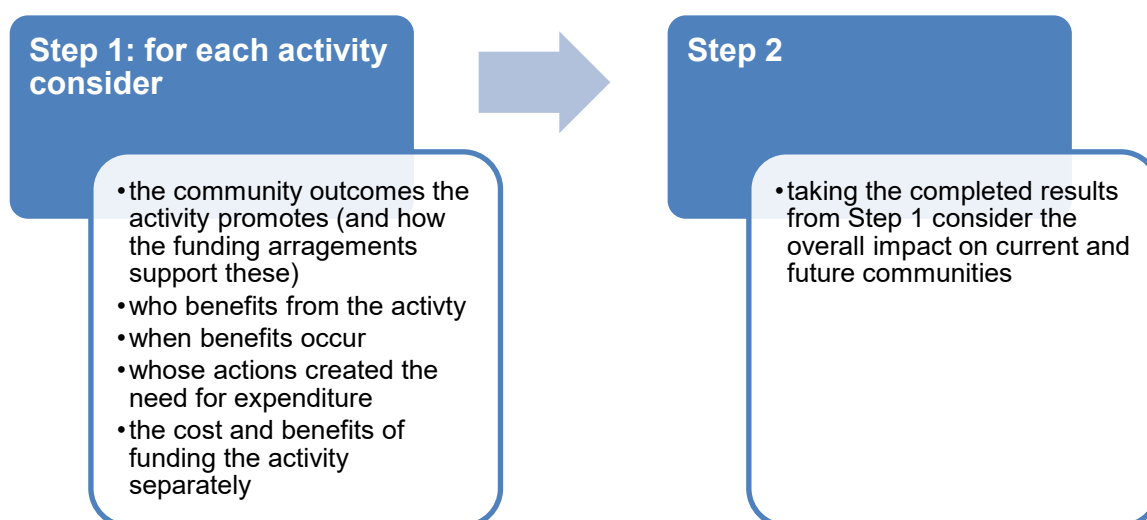
- 6.1. Council should consider whether its funding choices support or work against its community outcomes, including its outcome of resilient communities.
- 6.2. No negative effects on the resilient communities community outcome have been identified.

7. RISK

- 7.1. The following risks have been identified in relation to the matters raised in this report:
- 7.1.1. **Strategic:** Council's choice of revenue and financing tools can promote or work against the achievement of Council's community outcomes.
Mitigation: this is a mandatory consideration in Step 1.
- 7.1.2. **Environmental:** see Strategic.
- 7.1.3. **Financial:** Should the Local Government (Rates Capping) Amendment Bill be enacted, Council's revenue and financing policy decision could contribute to compliance issues with the rates cap.
Mitigation: Consider the rates cap in Step 2.
- 7.1.4. **Compliance:** Revenue and financing policy decisions can and do get challenged if members of the public don't like the decisions a local authority has made.
Mitigation: Documentation should demonstrate how the council applied each of the five Step 1 matters at the activity level, what the overall Step 1 results were and what factors were considered in Step 2.
- 7.1.5. **Reputational:** Rates and other revenue tools affect a wide range of people and attract a range of views as to what is equitable. Council's choices could be perceived as unfair or arbitrary if not well justified.
Mitigation: Council providing rationale for its Step 1 considerations and recording that rationale.

8. BACKGROUND

- 8.1. The Revenue and Financing Policy is the first step in the rate setting process. Council is required to review its Revenue and Financing Policy every three years and adopt its reviewed policy before the adoption of its Long-term Plan.
- 8.2. Council's Revenue and Financing Policy must flow from Council's application of the considerations in the two-step funding process set out in section 101(3) of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA).



- 8.3. **Step 1:** The first step of the process is undertaken at the activity level (not at the group of activity level). In this step, Council is applying a set of considerations that include:
- the community outcomes and how funding might promote or work against the achievement of these outcomes.
 - the distribution of benefits between the community, identifiable parts of the community and individuals (sometimes referred to as the public/private good split or the user pays principle). For example, activities that predominantly benefit the community as a whole are generally candidates for funding sourced from the community as a whole (such as a general rate), activities that primarily benefit identifiable groups might be candidates for a targeted rate or a user charge.
 - the period over which benefits are expected to accrue (sometimes referred to as the intergenerational equity principle). Local authorities provide assets with long service lives; this principle requires local authorities to consider whether they should be funding future consumption from the future community.
 - the extent to which the action of some contributes to the need to fund the activity.
 - the costs and benefits from funding an activity separately, including those for transparency and accountability. Although the legislation does not specifically set out any particular issues or considerations, it would be prudent to consider matters such as the financial scale of the activity, administrative costs, and legal requirements.
- 8.4. The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Act 2026 came into force on 19 September 2026. It does not make any changes to Step 1. It does, however, amend Step 2.
- 8.5. **Step 2:** Having done this analysis for each of Council's activities the next step is to aggregate all of the results from Step 1 and consider the impact that these results might have on community interests.
- 8.6. Section 101(3)(b) now requires Council to consider 'the overall impact of any allocation of liability for revenue needs on current and future communities', rather than considering the overall impact on the four well-beings. In other words, Step 2 is a "stand back test".
- 8.7. The Act does not set out a process for considering the overall impact of the aggregation of activity funding arrangements.

9. DISCUSSION

- 9.1. Council has had four opportunities to workshop officer advice on the application of Step 1 for each activity and ask questions of officers. A draft funding needs assessment (Step 1) is provided in Annex A.
- 9.2. Council requested options for funding the passenger transport activity. Two options are provided in paragraph 2 and Annex A.
- 9.3. Should Council wish to take a decision that differs from Annex A, it would assist officers if Council recorded its alternative consideration of s101(3)(a).

10. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 10.1. Officers will prepare advice to enable Council to apply Step 2 of the funding needs assessment, based on the Step 1 decision Council makes in this meeting. A workshop is scheduled for Step 2 on 27 October 2026.
- 10.2. Officers will also seek a legal review of Step 1 of Council's funding needs assessment

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ANNEXES

A RFP Review - Funding Needs Analysis

REVENUE AND FINANCING POLICY REVIEW 2026 – FUNDING NEEDS ANALYSIS CATCHMENT OPERATIONS								
DRAFT - NOT COUNCIL POLICY								
SUB-ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES TO WHICH THE ACTIVITY PRIMARILY CONTRIBUTES (s101(3)(a)(i))	WHO BENEFITS? (s101(3)(a)(ii))	PERIOD OF BENEFIT (s101(3)(a)(iii))	WHO OR WHAT CREATES THE NEED? (s101(3)(a)(iv))	SEPARATE (DISTINCT) FUNDING (s101(3)(a)(v))	PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPLIT (%)	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION FUNDING SOURCE(S)	RATIONALE FOR FUNDING SOURCE(S)
	Note which of the community outcomes to which the activity primarily contributes	The distribution of benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community, and individuals	The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur.	The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity	The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability, of funding the activity distinctly from other activities	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, what percentage of this activity should be funded publicly? You may want to consider providing a range if there may be differences in benefit between rating years	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, identify the most appropriate type of funding source and its % weighting	Provide a brief rationale for the funding source and weighting you have recommended.
BIODIVERSITY AND BIOSECURITY								
Biodiversity and Biosecurity - Implementation Everything in the biodiversity and biosecurity activity not covered by other sub-activities	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region-wide Benefits from improved biodiversity and ecosystem health occur in the ecological districts where those improvements are made. However, this has broader benefits to the region and the nation Targeted. A component of biosecurity protection also protects the rural economy and rural landowners.	Ongoing	Need for this activity comes from habitat loss and introduced pest species as a result of the actions of current and previous generations.	Funding environmental expenditure like environmental education through a targeted rate ensures that it is ring fenced and therefore only spent on activities which benefit the environment. The administrative cost of doing this is low	100% publicly funded, however some programmes are supported by private grants for biodiversity enhancement and protection, and some ICON sites will also receive funding from private or other funding streams.	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder 55% General Rate 30% UAC (Environmental Initiatives) 15% targeted per ha rate on properties >4 ha Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since ecosystem health is a public good, these activities will largely be funded from a general rate and UAC. To recognise the benefits of biosecurity protection that accrues to rural landowners, a portion of these activities will be funded through a targeted rate on properties larger than four hectares. With the exception of the three sub-activities that follow, this activity is funded as a whole, to recognise the interconnections between biosecurity and biodiversity works.
Totara Reserve Regional Park Camp Ground The maintenance and management of the campground part of Totara Reserve	Healthy Environment	Targeted The regional park campground largely benefits individuals and organisations who use the campground. These people are most likely to come from the Manawatu and Palmerston North districts	Ongoing	This service is provided to assist us in achieving our community outcomes	Separate funding allows costs for this sub-activity to be recovered from the individuals and communities who benefit the most. The administrative cost to this is low	70% publicly funded, 30% funding by private users	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) >30% fees and charges Remainder 90% Targeted UAC to Palmerston North City and Manawatu District 10% General rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	The regional park campground will be funded through a targeted rate to nearby ratepayers, and user fees, with a small general rate contribution The camp ground component of Totara Reserve Management is funded separately to the broader management of the reserve e.g. biodiversity and biosecurity management activity, track management etc. that are funded as a part of the Biodiversity and Biosecurity policy in the row above.
Rangitikei Environment Group Old Mans' Beard Control	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted The focus is to undertake Old Mans' Beard Control in the Rangitikei District as one component of efforts to re-establish, enhance and sustain the native flora and fauna of the Rangitikei District that is being degraded and destroyed by introduced exotic plant and animal pests. For this service, it is Rangitikei District residents that benefit. These benefits are delivered across both urban and rural areas within and around high value locations. Council assumes that the >4ha properties generally receive greater benefit from the Old Mans' Beard control improvements than <4ha properties as larger properties have more desirable habitat at risk from OMB. Protection of reserves benefits the district's residents who visit them.	Ongoing	Need for this activity comes from introduced pest species as a result of the actions of previous generations	Separate funding allows costs for this sub-activity to be recovered from land that benefits the most, this benefit outweighs the administrative cost.	100% publicly funded from the community of benefit	50% UAC on properties >4 ha in the Rangitikei District 50% UAC on properties <4 ha in the Rangitikei District	The benefits of the Rangitikei Environment Group will be funded through UACs targeted to the communities in the areas this sub-activity will benefit. For the purposes of funding the Rangitikei Environment Group Old Mans' Beard control activity, the properties in the Rangitikei District have been divided into those that are less than four hectares (<4ha), and those that are more than four hectares (>4ha). The >4ha properties pay more per property to reflect the greater benefit.
Waitāre Community Biodiversity Programme	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted The Waitāre Beach community benefits from this service - Horizons controls exotic plants and restore native plants on the dunes. This programme has focused on environmental restoration	Ongoing	Need for this activity comes from habitat loss and introduced pest species as a result of the actions of current and previous generations	Separate funding allows costs for this sub-activity to be recovered from the communities who benefit the most. The administrative cost to this is low	100% publicly funded from the community of benefit	Grants and Subsidies in the first instance 100% targeted (Waitāre Community) CV rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	The benefits of the Waitāre Community Biodiversity, will be funded through capital value targeted to the communities in the areas these activities will benefit
FRESHWATER AND PARTNERSHIPS								
Freshwater and Partnerships Regional Implementation This sub-activity carries out freshwater improvement projects across the region.	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region wide The Freshwater and Projects team work with a range of partners to improve water quality and aquatic habitat outcomes, including supporting and facilitating community involvement. The primary mechanism of delivery is to work directly with landowners on fencing and planting, however, this also includes work with territorial authorities around aquatic habitat enhancement including fish passage and work with iwi/hapū, non-government organisations and community groups	Ongoing	Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the catchment. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute.	There is no reason to fund this separately	Landowner contribution to the grant programmes is between 40 - 50% of a project (stream fencing and riparian planting), up to 100% for community and fish passage projects. These contributions may or may not be received as revenue by Council. If funding opportunities from Central Government arise these will be pursued with approval from Council.	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder 100% General Rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	This programme is set up to deliver the water quality and aquatic habitat improvements across the region (including the Manawatu catchment). Works are undertaken throughout the region and therefore the funding is sourced from ratepayers across the region. Any future Central Government funding opportunities will be considered and brought through to Council for decisions on applying for such funding.

Manawatu Catchment Water Quality Improvement This sub-activity carries out freshwater improvement projects in the Manawatu catchment over and above the level of service provided by Regional Implementation	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted - this service benefits residents within the Manawatu River catchment area. The Freshwater and Projects team work with a range of partners to improve water quality and aquatic habitat outcomes, including supporting and facilitating community involvement. The primary mechanism of delivery is to work directly with landowners on fencing and planting, however, this also includes work with territorial authorities of aquatic habitat enhancement including fish passage and work with iwi/hapū, non-government organisations and community groups.	Ongoing	Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the catchment. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute.	A targeted rate is proposed for funding so ratepayers can clearly identify the costs and benefits of the programme. The use of a targeted rate will also improve accountability for expenditure.	Landowner contribution to the grant programmes is between 40 - 50% of a project (stream fencing and riparian planting), up to 100% for community and fish passage projects. These contributions may or may not be revealed as revenue by Council. If funding opportunities from Central Government arise these will be pursued with approval from Council.	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder: 100% UAC to properties in the Manawatu Catchment Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	This programme is set up to deliver the commitments that Horizons has made to the Manawatu Leaders Accord and any future action plans that are developed as part of the Accord. The works are specific to the Manawatu catchment and therefore the funding is sourced from ratepayers within the catchment. Any future Central Government funding opportunities will be considered and brought through to Council for decisions on applying for such funding.
Horowhenua Catchment Water Quality Improvement This sub-activity carries out freshwater improvement projects in the Horowhenua catchment over and above the level of service provided by Regional Implementation	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted - this service mostly benefits residents within the Horowhenua District who have direct access to the Lake Horowhenua catchment. However, there are wider regional and national benefits to landuse within the Horowhenua catchment area.	Ongoing	Water quality outcomes are the result of local catchment characteristics and what happens in the catchment. Land use, discharges and water takes contribute to water quality outcomes. Extreme weather events and climate change also contribute. The Horowhenua catchment plays a regional and national role in the supply of leafy green vegetables and therefore landuse within the catchment is of regional and national importance.	A targeted rate is proposed for funding so ratepayers can clearly identify the costs and benefits of the programme. The use of a targeted rate will also improve accountability for expenditure.	The major programmes within this work programme are the Arawhata wetland complex and the Horowhenua weed harvesting operation. The ongoing maintenance of the Arawhata wetland complex and the weed harvesting operation are 100% publicly funded. Options to construct phases 1.2 and 2 will be sought with external funding.	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder: 100% UAC to properties in the Horowhenua District Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	This work programme is focused water quality interventions within the Lake Horowhenua groundwater and surface water boundaries which will result in an water quality improvement in Lake Horowhenua. The rating mechanism is targeted to the community this activity will benefit (i.e. the Horowhenua District).
RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD PROTECTION								
River and Drainage - General This sub-activity carries out work that isn't linked to a specific scheme. It includes investigations, technical advice, planning, and support of projects that provide wider community benefit.	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region-wide Benefits are provided to the community as a whole - this service protect the lives and property of people within the region.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.	There is no reason to fund this separately		Grants and subsidies in the first instance Remainder: 100% General Rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since this service is a public good, this activity will be funded from the general rate.
River and Drainage: River Schemes (excluding Pohangia-Oroua and Perewa) This sub-activity operates, maintains, renews, and upgrades flood protection infrastructure within formal river scheme areas	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that each river scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials. Region-wide There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.	Because of the substantial private benefits, and Council's considerable commitment to these services, separate funding provides transparency and accountability benefits.		Grants and subsidies in the first instance. Remainder: 80% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model), including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges) 20% General Rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since the benefits of flood protection and control primarily accrue to the properties protected, these activities will generally be funded through targeted rates. These targeted rates mechanisms have been set following consultation with the individual schemes. The targeting of rates within schemes prioritises recognising the differing levels of benefit provided within each scheme, over the cost of administrative complexity and inefficiency. To recognise the broader benefits that accrue to the region as a whole, 20% of scheme cost is applied across the whole region. To recognise the intergenerational benefit of these assets, their capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.
River and Drainage: Drainage schemes This sub-activity operates, maintains, renews, and upgrades drainage infrastructure within formal drainage scheme areas	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that each drainage scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials. Region-wide There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.	Because of the substantial private benefits, and Council's considerable commitment to these services, separate funding provides transparency and accountability benefits.		Grants and subsidies in the first instance Remainder: 80% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model), including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges) 20% General Rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since the benefits of flood protection and control primarily accrue to the properties protected, these activities will generally be funded through targeted rates. These targeted rates mechanisms have been set following consultation with the individual schemes. The targeting of rates within schemes prioritises recognising the differing levels of benefit provided within each scheme, over the cost of administrative complexity and inefficiency. To recognise the broader benefits that accrue to the region as a whole, 20% of scheme cost is applied across the whole region. To recognise the intergenerational benefit of these assets, their capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.

River and Drainage Porewa Scheme This sub-activity operates, maintains, renews, and upgrades flood control infrastructure within the Porewa Scheme areas	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region wide This scheme provides regional and national benefit through the reduction of flooding risk to State Highway 1 and the Southern North Island Main Trunk Railway. Flood protection enables distribution of goods on these significant corridors as well as productive use of the land. Targeted The properties in the Porewa Valley also directly benefit because the land is protected by flood and erosion control works.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.	Because of the substantial private benefits, and Council's considerable commitment to these services, separate funding provides transparency and accountability benefits.		Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder 60% General Rate 40% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges) Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since the benefits of flood protection and control primarily accrue to the properties protected, these activities will generally be funded through targeted rates. These targeted rates mechanisms have been set following consultation with the scheme. The targeting of rates within the scheme prioritises recognising the differing levels of benefit provided within the scheme, over the cost of administrative complexity and inefficiency. To recognise the broader benefits that accrue to the region as a whole, particularly through protection of nationally significant infrastructure, 40% of scheme cost is applied across the whole region. To recognise the intergenerational benefit of these assets, their capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.
River and Drainage Pohangina-Oroua Scheme This sub-activity operates, maintains, renews, and upgrades flood control infrastructure within the Pohangina-Oroua Scheme areas	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted Benefits primarily accrue to the populations and properties that each drainage scheme protects, over the lifetime of those scheme assets. A mechanism for distributing costs in relation to benefits for this targeted rating has been determined through the use of differentials. Region wide There is also some broader benefit to the whole region from the schemes contributing to a functional regional economy, and some broader national benefit for the same reason.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from human activity on flood-prone land. It is exacerbated by further development on flood-prone land.	Because of the substantial private benefits, and Council's considerable commitment to these services, separate funding provides transparency and accountability benefits.		Grants and subsidies in the first instance (including 60% landowner contribution to erosion control works) Remainder 20% General Rate 80% Targeted scheme rates (mixed model, including CV, LV, UAC and per ha charges) Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since the benefits of flood protection and control primarily accrue to the properties protected, these activities will generally be funded through targeted rates. These targeted rates mechanisms have been set following consultation with the scheme. The targeting of rates within the scheme prioritises recognising the differing levels of benefit provided within each scheme, over the cost of administrative complexity and inefficiency. To recognise the broader benefits that accrue to the region as a whole, 20% of scheme cost is applied across the whole region. To recognise the intergenerational benefit of these assets, their capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.
LAND MANAGEMENT								
Regional and Coast This sub-activity undertakes a range of monitoring, advice and grants to support erosion control and soil health.	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region wide . Benefits accrue to the whole region, as our land management activity responds to land-based issues which impact on the health of our soil resources and water ecosystems.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from environmental degradation as a result of a range of factors, including catchment characteristics, climate change impacts and rural land use. The deforestation of erodible hill country was in-part encouraged by central government policy historically.	There is no reason to fund this separately.	Grants and subsidies in the first instance including funding through application to WREI, and landowner contribution to grant programmes of between 50 and 70% (Note the landowner contribution doesn't come to Horizons, so doesn't show up in the RF Policy or FIS).	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder 100% General Rate Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Since ecosystem health is a public good, the remainder of this activity will be funded from the general rate.
Sustainable Land Use Initiative This sub-activity undertakes farm mapping to identify and prioritise erosion control works and supports landowners to complete those works.	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region wide . Benefits accrue to the whole region, as our land management activity responds to land-based issues which impact on the health of our soil resources and water ecosystems.	Ongoing	The need for this activity comes from environmental degradation as a result of a range of factors, including catchment characteristics, climate change impacts and rural land use. The deforestation of erodible hill country was in-part encouraged by central government policy historically.	Funding SLUI through a targeted rate ensures that it is ring-fenced and therefore only spent on the SLUI programme, and is clearly visible to ratepayers. The administrative cost of doing this is low in the context of a large programme.	Grants and subsidies in the first instance including funding through application to MPI (Hill Country Erosion Fund), and landowner contribution to grant programmes of between 30-70% (Note the landowner contribution doesn't come to Horizons, so doesn't show up in the RF Policy or FIS).	Grants and subsidies (in the first instance) Remainder 100% UAC (SLUI, region-wide) Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from external sources for this activity. The remainder of the activity will be funded via rating mechanisms. Benefits accrue to the whole region as our land management activity responds to land-based issues which impact on the health of our soil and water resources and increased regional resilience to storm events. Funding via targeted rate is transparent to ratepayers and external funders and allows any underspend to be clearly ring-fenced for SLUI.
Nursery This sub-activity runs pole nurseries and purchases poles to supply erosion control material to projects in the region.	Healthy Environment Resilient Communities Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Targeted This sub-activity directly benefits landowners to be receiving nursery products. Region wide There are broader region-wide benefits where nursery products are used to address soils and freshwater issues.	Ongoing	This activity supports the Regional and Coast and SLUI sub-activities.	Separate funding allows costs for this sub-activity to be recovered from the individuals who directly benefit. The administrative cost to this is low.	Budgeted to be 100% private. Any shortfall is covered through general rate.	100% fees and charges Any budget shortfall should be funded through general rates. Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing.	Funding will be sought from nursery users. Since ecosystem health is a public good, budget shortfall will be funded from the general rate. The broader regional benefits will be provided through the grant programmes set out in the regional and coast, and SLUI sub-activities.

Who are the groups of occupiers in question?	s100T(2)(a) - What is the extent to which the plan relates to the interests of the group of occupiers	s100T(2)(b) - What is the extent to which each group of occupiers will obtain direct or indirect benefits from the implementation of the plan	s100T(2)(c) - What are the collective benefits of the implementation of the plan to each group of occupiers compared with the collective costs to them of the rate:	s100T(2)(d) - What is the extent to which the characteristics of the properties of each group of occupiers and the uses to which they are but contribute to the presence or prevalence of the pest or pests covered by it:
All ratepayers	Medium Pest management protects valued ecosystems and reduces costs for those not having to undertake pest management. Worst case scenarios for pests reducing productivity to the extent	Lesser proportional work than >4ha properties, but still important for landowners receiving protection from future infestations and those receiving direct control of current. Knowledge of pest management protecting values of the community is similar to <4ha properties.	Medium the benefits of controlling production and environmental pests to the region were shown to outweigh the costs when the RPMP was prepared. Council does not believe this has changed.	High Smaller properties tend to be harder to search given the sheer number of them, and they contain less valuable ecosystems/landscape values as well as potential for harbouring new or high threat pests due to gardens.
Larger land owners (properties >4 ha)	High Due to targeted rate component there are specific rules which protect land currently being managed for or kept clear of named pest plants.	High Rules to protect land of these occupiers, and work to remove pests from land of these occupiers occurs proportionally more than smaller properties. Knowledge of pest management protecting values of the community	High the benefits of controlling pests to protect properties >4ha were shown to outweigh the costs when the RPMP was prepared. Council does not believe this has changed.	High Larger properties are more likely to have vulnerable habitat in closer proximity to spread risk pathways, roads, gardens, rivers and established infection zones on neighbouring properties. Have the risk of economic impacts potentially minimising self-management thus creating good neighbour rule events. Tend to have a good understanding of what is not supposed to be present and likely have a more direct relationship with the regional council through the number of interactions with various parts of the regional function so more freely able to contact staff and alert to actions required.

REVENUE AND FINANCING POLICY REVIEW 2026 – FUNDING NEEDS ANALYSIS PARTNERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, & LEADERSHIP DRAFT - NOT COUNCIL POLICY								
ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES TO WHICH THE ACTIVITY PRIMARILY CONTRIBUTES (s101(3)(a)(i))	WHO BENEFITS? (s101(3)(a)(ii))	PERIOD OF BENEFIT (s101(3)(a)(iii))	WHO OR WHAT CREATES THE NEED? (s101(3)(a)(iv))	SEPARATE (DISTINCT) FUNDING (s101(3)(a)(v))	PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPLIT (%)	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION FUNDING SOURCE(S)	RATIONALE FOR FUNDING SOURCE(S)
	Note which of the community outcomes to which the activity primarily contributes.	The distribution of benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community, and individuals.	The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur.	The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity.	The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability, of funding the activity distinctly from other activities.	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, what percentage of this activity should be funded publicly? You may want to consider providing a range if there may be differences in benefit between rating years.	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, identify the most appropriate type of funding source and its % weighting.	Provide a brief rationale for the funding source and weighting you have recommended.
Governance	Strong Relationships	Region-wide The entire region benefits from robust and democratic local government that enables democratic local decision making and action by and on behalf of communities, and promotes the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities now and in the future.	Ongoing	Legislative requirements mandate this activity.	There is no need to fund this activity separately.	100% publicly funded	100% UAGC	As all of the region benefits from this activity, it relates to people and does not directly change the condition or value of individual properties, a Uniform Annual General Charge is considered the most appropriate funding source.
Iwi and hapū relationships	Strong Relationships	Region-wide Benefits from this group of activities apply to the whole region. Regional communities benefit from the quality of decision making that is enabled when mana whenua participate in decision-making and regulatory processes.	Ongoing	Legislative requirements mandate engagement with the community, including iwi and hapū. Treaty Settlement legislation create specific mandatory obligations on Council	There is no need to fund this activity separately. For transparency, funding under this activity largely relates to regional policy development and internal capability/development in tikanga. Where activities are also legislatively required to engage with community, including iwi and hapū this is funded through that activity budget. For example, engagement specific to a flood protection scheme would be funded through that activity budget OR engagement required with iwi and hapū as part of a consent process would be funded through consent application fees and charges.	100% publicly funded	100% UAGC	The whole region benefits from this activity. The expenditure is related to relationships with people, the region's mana whenua (not property) and ensuring the Council upholds its statutory obligations with respect to iwi and hapū involvement policy development and decision-making. The UAGC is therefore the most appropriate funding source.
Community Engagement - excluding environmental education	Strong Relationships	Region-wide Benefits from this group of activities accrue to the whole region. Council's engagement efforts are provided across the region.	Ongoing	Legislative requirements mandate engagement with the community	There is no need to fund this activity separately.	100% publicly funded	100% UAGC	As all of the region benefits from this activity, it relates to people and does not directly change the condition or value of individual properties, a Uniform Annual General Charge is considered the most appropriate funding source.
Environmental education	Strong Relationships Healthy Environment	Region-wide Benefits from this group of activities accrue to the whole region. Council's education efforts are provided across the region.	Ongoing	This service is provided to assist us in achieving our community outcomes	Funding environmental expenditure like environmental education through a targeted rate ensures that it is ring-fenced and therefore only spent on activities which benefit the environment. The administrative cost of doing this is low.	100% publicly funded	Grants and subsidies in the first instance Remainder, UAGC (Environmental Initiatives)	As all of the region benefits from this activity, it relates to people and does not directly change the condition or value of individual properties, it should be applied uniformly via an Uniform Annual Charge. This is considered the most appropriate funding source as it ring fences the funding to be spent on a targeted activity (environmental education) rather than broad activities that receive funding through a UAGC.

REVENUE AND FINANCING POLICY REVIEW 2026 – FUNDING NEEDS ANALYSIS TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES								
DRAFT - NOT COUNCIL POLICY								
ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES TO WHICH THE ACTIVITY PRIMARILY CONTRIBUTES (s101(3)(a)(i))	WHO BENEFITS? (s101(3)(a)(ii))	PERIOD OF BENEFIT (s101(3)(a)(iii))	WHO OR WHAT CREATES THE NEED? (s101(3)(a)(iv))	SEPARATE (DISTINCT) FUNDING (s101(3)(a)(v))	PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPLIT (%)	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION FUNDING SOURCE(S)	RATIONALE FOR FUNDING SOURCE(S)
	Note which of the community outcomes to which the activity primarily contributes	The distribution of benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community, and individuals	The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur	The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity	The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability, of funding the activity distinctly from other activities	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, what percentage of this activity should be funded publicly? You may want to consider providing a range if there may be differences in benefit between rating years.	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, identify the most appropriate type of funding source and its % weighting	Provide a brief rationale for the funding source and weighting you have recommended.
TRANSPORT PLANNING								
Transport Planning	Prosperous Economy Resilient Communities	Region-wide The region as a whole benefits from safe, effective and sustainable transport networks.	Ongoing	Effective transport networks are needed to move people and goods within and between our communities. Our region's transport networks also make a significant contribution to the region's greenhouse gas emissions and must transition to a low carbon system.	There is no particular need to fund this activity separately, except to receive NZTA funding.	100% public	49% General Rate 51% Grants and subsidies	Since transport planning and safety benefits the region as a whole, it is funded from the General Rate. This service is also significantly subsidised by Waka Kotahi NZTA.
PASSENGER SERVICES								
Public Transport	Prosperous Economy Resilient Communities	Targeted Public transport and Total Mobility both primarily benefit their users. However, there are also social wellbeing benefits to providing transport services to those without other transport options. Public transport can also provide wider benefits to urban communities from reduced congestion, which support the functioning of the urban economy. Public transport can also support reduced transport emissions.	Ongoing	There is demand for transport options beyond the private vehicle. Individuals without vehicles or other private modes of transport require affordable transport options. For others public transport is a choice. For some, this may be public transport, for others it may be Total Mobility.	A mixture of funding sources provides transparency to service users, residents, ratepayers, and funders about the costs and relative shares paid by different groups.	20% private 80% public	40-45% Grants and subsidies 35-40% Targeted Rate (CV) 15-20% Fees and Charges 1-2% Other Revenue	Pasenger services should be funded in part by fares and other charges, to recognise the benefits that accrue to their users. While benefits primarily accrue to their users, a primarily user pays approach would depress patronage, and therefore undermine the community outcomes being sought. A portion of their funding should also come from rates targeted to the urban areas that are served by the routes, to recognise the wider benefits to the urban environment. These services are also significantly subsidised by Waka Kotahi (Public transport and Total mobility services are subsidised at different rates.) Option 1: the target rate component of this activity should be funded through a uniform rate to recognise that all urban ratepayers benefit equally from reduced congestion and emissions OR Option 2: the targeted rate component of this activity should be funded through a capital value rate to recognise that reduced congestion supports a well-functioning urban economy
Total Mobility	Prosperous Economy		Ongoing			100% public	70-75% Grants and Subsidies 25-30% Targeted Rate (CV)	
ROAD SAFETY								
Road Safety	Strong Relationships Prosperous Economy	Region-wide The region as a whole benefits from safe, effective and sustainable transport networks.	Ongoing	Dangerous roads, driving conditions and drivers create the need for activities that promote and support improved road safety.	There is no particular need to fund this activity separately, except to receive NZTA funding.	100% public	42% General Rate 58% Grants and subsidies	Since the Road Safety activity benefits the region as a whole, it is funded from the General Rate. This service is also significantly subsidised by Waka Kotahi.
DISTRICT ADVICE								
District Advice - excluding building act functions below	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	Region-wide The community as a whole benefits from this activity. By better understanding natural hazards, property developments are built to be safer and communities are better prepared.	Ongoing	People and the community need safe buildings which is the main driver for this activity.	There is no particular need to fund this activity separately	100% public	100% General Rate	Since the District Advice activity benefits the region as a whole, it is funded from the General Rate. Also, much of the data and information collected that is used by District Advice has already been funded via the general rate. Council choose not to charge developers as this might disincentivise the use of the service. As this is about improving the capital value of the land, it should be funded from the General Rate. Natural hazard LIM provision to TAs is mandated by the LGOMIA and charging a fee is not provided for under
Building Act: dam consents, project information memoranda and dam safety	Resilient Communities	The community and dam owners benefit from this sub-activity. As reducing the potential impacts of dam incidents and failures helps to protect dam owners and the public (including their properties) downstream of dams	Ongoing (For dam safety regulations - cycle of compliance activities required for classifiable dam owners)	Dam owners create the need for this activity. Town water supply reservoir dams are built for water storage and supply, which is essential for the community. Hydroelectric dams generate electricity to meet the energy demands of the community. Flood detention dams reduce the risk of flooding to downstream communities, properties, and the environment. Agricultural dams are a water source for stock and irrigation.	A mixture of funding sources provides transparency to the community while still holding dam owners accountable for their responsibilities. Cost recover from dam owners requires a separate stream		As actual and reasonable: fees and charges Remainder: general rate	There is some public good with administering and monitoring dam consenting and safety, however, the primary beneficiaries are the dam owner and future dam owners during the lifespan of the large dam therefore most of the cost of this activity is recovered from them.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT								
Regional Emergency Management - Manawatu-Whanganui Emergency Management Committee This function covers the region-wide statutory responsibilities for reduction, readiness, response, and recovery under the Emergency Management Act 2026. It includes strategic planning, regional and local capability development, emergency coordination centre operations, welfare and lifeline infrastructure coordination, exercising, public education, hazard risk reduction, recovery planning, and support to territorial authorities.	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region-wide 1. Whole-of-Community Benefit All people in the region benefit through improved safety, preparedness, and reduced consequences from natural hazards and emergencies. 2. Territorial Authorities Councils benefit from coordinated Group planning, GECC support, capability development, and shared resources across the region. 3. Iwi and Hapū Partners benefit from inclusive planning, hazard information, and coordinated response and recovery support. 4. Households and Whānau Residents benefit through warnings, welfare services, community resilience programmes, and faster recovery after emergencies. 5. Businesses and the Regional Economy The business sector benefits from reduced disruption, better continuity planning, resilient infrastructure, and coordinated recovery. 6. Lifeline Utilities & Critical Infrastructure Providers Essential service operators benefit from coordinated risk reduction, joint planning, and regional lifelines engagement. 7. Emergency Services & Partner Agencies Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, health agencies, NGOs, and others benefit from shared operating frameworks and regional coordination.	The region benefits from strong relationships between iwi, local authorities, government agencies, emergency services, and community organisations to improve resilience and emergency readiness. Benefits occur before an event (through planning and readiness), during an event (through effective response), and after an event (through coordinated recovery).	The need for Emergency Management activity is generated by the presence of natural hazards, increasing climate-related risks, and the statutory duties placed on councils and EM Committees by the Emergency Management Act 2026. These needs arise from the external risk environment and the requirement for coordinated regional readiness, response, and recovery. The activity is not driven by the actions or inaction of any particular group, but by unavoidable regional risks and clear legislative obligations.	No reason to fund separately.	100% public	100% General Rate	Regional emergency management provides a broad public benefit across the entire region. The activity supports community safety, resilience, and continuity of essential services, and the benefits occur regardless of where hazards originate or which communities are directly impacted. As such, it is appropriate to fund this activity collectively through a region-wide rate. Capital value is considered appropriate as there is an element of benefit to property and infrastructure which scales with CV.
MARITIME AND HARBOUR SAFETY								
The Harbourmaster and Navigation Safety activity fulfils the region's legal responsibilities under the Maritime Transport Act 1994.	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	The Harbourmaster's role includes public education, safety communication, and responding to community reports of hazards or issues on the river. This strengthens relationships with iwi, recreational users, clubs, and local communities, supporting shared stewardship of the awa. The community as a whole benefits from the Navigation Safety Bylaw through safer use of the Manawatu River and its tributaries. The bylaw is designed to minimise fatalities, injuries, accidents, collisions, and nuisances, creating safer conditions for all users and enhancing overall community wellbeing and confidence in water safety. An identifiable part of the community that receives targeted benefits includes river users such as recreational boaters, water skiers, jet ski users, and clubs who depend on clear rules, designated activity areas, and predictable safety conditions. These users benefit from regulated speed zones, defined ski areas, hazard management, and the Harbourmaster's enforcement powers, all of which support safe and enjoyable recreation.	The benefits of the Navigation Safety Bylaw are ongoing and continuous	The need for this activity arises from the actions of river users whose behaviour can create safety risks on the Manawatu River. Unsafe vessel operation, speeding, failure to wear lifejackets, and non-compliance with navigation rules contribute directly to accidents, collisions, and hazards, which the Navigation Safety Bylaw is designed to prevent. Specific groups such as boaters, water-skiers, and jet ski users also create demand for regulation because their activities require designated areas, speed controls, and clear rules to maintain safe shared use of the river. Additionally, natural and physical conditions on the river such as river management assets, debris, and changing river channels can create navigation hazards, increasing the need for Harbourmaster oversight and active safety management.	Budget for this activity is relatively low, so benefits from separate funding would also be low.	100% public. There is a private cost to jet ski users for registration, this is recovered by HBRC (so doesn't show up in the RF Policy or FIS).	100% general rate	Funded from general rate due to broad regional benefits, and because benefits of targeted funding are unlikely to outweigh costs.
This sub-activity supports marine oil spill response in partnership with Maritime New Zealand, including maintaining an Oil Spill Contingency Plan and responding to spills to protect maritime waterways and coastal environments.	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Marine Oil Spill Response benefits the whole region by protecting waterways and coastal environments from pollution, preserving ecological health and public use	The benefits of Marine Oil Spill Response are ongoing and long-term, as readiness and rapid response capability are required whenever there is a pollution risk in the marine environment. Maintaining an Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the ability to respond ensures we can protect waterways, coastlines, and communities continuously over time, providing enduring environmental and public safety benefits whenever a spill occurs.	Individuals and businesses using oil create a risk of oil spills, therefore requiring this activity to respond to the spill.	It is impractical to fund this activity directly from individuals and businesses creating the risk. There are no other reasons for distinct funding.	100% public	General rate	Use of a region-wide rate is appropriate given the region wide benefits, and the impracticability of distinct funding. Rating based on capital value is appropriate as oil use likely scales with economic activity.
ENVIRONMENTAL DATA								
Environmental Data	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region-wide The acquisition, provision and reporting of nationally consistent long-term environmental data benefits the whole region as it enables evidence-based management of natural resources and natural hazards. Real time acquisition of environmental data supports flood warning services, catchment forecasting, and regulation of resource use.	Ongoing.	Legislative requirements mandate the acquisition and reporting of environmental data. Environmental data is needed by the Emergency Management, science, strategy and regulation, and catchment operations functions of Council.	Internal charging enables the cost of the environmental monitoring network to be apportioned to the Council functions that benefit from the data, who then recover the costs based on their own funding policies. The benefits of this approach outweighs the administrative cost.	Mix of public and private, as determined by the funding policies of the activities Environmental Data is charging to.	Internally recovered through other activities: - Science and Environmental Reporting (~60%) - Emergency Management (~30%) - River Management and Flood Protection (~9%) - Freshwater and Partnerships (~1%) The funding sources for each of these activities are reflected in other parts of the policy.	The data collected by this activity is utilised by activities across the organisation. Each activity funds a proportion of the cost of this data based on benefit.
INFORMATION SERVICES								
Information Services	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy	Region-wide Benefits from this group of activities accrue to the whole region. The provision of trustworthy, accessible information supports a range of activities, including flood protection and drainage, emergency management, land use advice to the public, and science-related activities	Ongoing.	This activity is fundamental to the success of all other activities undertaken by Council. Providing a centralised, robust, accessible & secure information service is critical to other departments across HRC and to the public.	Internal charging enables the cost of the activity to be shared across the other activities who benefit from it, who then recover the costs based on their own funding policies. The benefits of this approach outweighs the administrative cost.		Internally recovered through other activities	This is an internal service

REVENUE AND FINANCING POLICY REVIEW 2026 – FUNDING NEEDS ANALYSIS STRATEGY, SCIENCE & REGULATION								
DRAFT - NOT COUNCIL POLICY								
ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES TO WHICH THE ACTIVITY PRIMARILY CONTRIBUTES (s101(3)(a)(i))	WHO BENEFITS? (s101(3)(a)(ii))	PERIOD OF BENEFIT (s101(3)(a)(iii))	WHO OR WHAT CREATES THE NEED? (s101(3)(a)(iv))	SEPARATE (DISTINCT) FUNDING (s101(3)(a)(v))	PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPLIT (%)	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION FUNDING SOURCE(S)	RATIONALE FOR FUNDING SOURCE(S)
	Note which of the community outcomes to which the activity primarily contributes	The distribution of benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community, and individuals	The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur	The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity	The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability, of funding the activity distinctly from other activities	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, what percentage of this activity should be funded publicly? You may want to consider providing a range if there may be differences in benefit between rating years	In light of the assessment of the columns to the left, identify the most appropriate type of funding source and its % weighting	Provide a brief rationale for the funding source and weighting you have recommended
POLICY, STRATEGY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE								
Policy, Strategy and Climate Resilience	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Region-wide This activity provides benefit to the whole region through the delivery of integrated plans, policies, strategies and advice that guide the management of our natural and physical resources	Ongoing	Legislative mandates along with anyone who wants to use natural resources for private and public benefit create the need for the policy, strategy and climate resilience activity. In reality everyone uses the region's natural resources to some extent	No need to be funded separately	100% publicly funded funding is largely rates funded, with some central government subsidies / grants	100% General Rate	This activity benefits the entire region equally both now and into the future. This holistic and intergenerational approach lends itself to being funded by a general rate. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity
REGULATORY MANAGEMENT								
Regulatory Management - excluding RMA advice	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Those regulated parties who derive a direct private benefit from being able to use natural resources Those regulated parties, who are using natural resources for a direct public benefit The regional community as a whole, knowing that resources are been used sustainably and will be available for use by future generations and when regulated persons fail to use these resources sustainably they are held to account	Ongoing	Individuals, businesses, government departments who want to use natural resources for private and public benefit Central Government who, through setting national legislation and policy documents set the regulatory framework, and expect that framework to be implemented Community expectation that resources will be used sustainably, will be available for future generations and that those who fail to meet their obligations regarding natural resource use are held to account	Separate funding enables costs of operating the regulatory activity to be recovered from resource users. There is no reason to collect the rates portion separately	Private (as much as is actual and reasonable)	User Charges in the first instance (as Actual and Reasonable) Remainder General Rate	User charges ensure those regulated parties who derive a private benefit from using a natural resource pay the costs associated with authorising those activities and monitoring those activities to determine whether compliance is being achieved There are number of activities undertaken by the Regulatory Team, which have a wider public benefit, where it is not appropriate to pass costs on. These include the initial provision of advice, keeping abreast of legislative reform and responding to reform changes in an effective and timely manner, providing input into council system upgrades, ensuring information on website(s) and council systems are up to date to assist with the effective dissemination of information and implementation of national regulations and plan changes. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity
RMA advice - this sub-activity provides initial advice to resource users seeking to understand their RMA obligations. It does not provide advice to resource users with substantial or ongoing need for advice (see fees and charges schedule for specifics)	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment Prosperous Economy Strong Relationships	Resource users and potential resource users who need advice on their RMA obligations	Ongoing	Individuals, businesses, government departments who want to use natural resources for private and public benefit	As the budget for this is low, the benefits for separate funding would also be low	100% public	100% General rate	Sub activity should be funded from a general rate as the benefits from separate funding is low, and providing free access to RMA advice encourages people to make informed resource management decisions, thus contributing to the Health Environment community outcome. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity
SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING								
Water Quality, General - this sub activity carries our water quality monitoring and research that would be required regardless of whether the regions natural resources were being used	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	Region as a whole - High - This allows tracking of water quality and quantity against national and community derived values as expressed through the regional plan. It is for the benefit of the entire community	Ongoing	Monitoring and research on water quality are mandated by central government	No need to be funded separately	100% public funded	100% General Rates, Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	As this is for the benefit of the whole community, and is mandated by central government on behalf of the public of New Zealand, it is a benefit for all. Equally utilisation and degradation of these natural resources are a result of human activity in New Zealand, so all individuals within the community pay. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity. Within the programme of works, there are relatively expensive pieces of specialist equipment, which have a long life span. To recognise the long term benefit of these assets, capital expenditure may b funded through borrowing
Water Quality and Quantity Direct Impact - this sub activity carries our water quality and quantity research that is required to understand the direct impact of resource use on water	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	User - High, Region as a whole - High. This activity is for the use of natural resources, or the direct discharge of contaminants, where there is a consent for an immediate and direct impact (either large point source discharge, or gravel extraction). In either case the user benefits by being allowed to operate and utilise this natural resource, equally, the community benefits as the existence of the large municipal or other discharge enables the town or city it serves to exist, or the business to exist providing jobs and income into the community	For the period of consent, likely on going	The existence of the large point source discharge, or the immediate gravel extraction operation. In both cases there are immediate measurable impacts upon the receiving environment	Separate funding enables costs of operating the activity to be recovered from resource users. There is no reason to collect the rates portion separately	50% private: 50% public	40 60% Fees and charges 40 60% general rates, Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	There is benefit both to the discharger/extractor, as they are able to operate and impact the natural resource, and to the community who benefits via provision of services or jobs and income into the community. The impact however is direct and measurable to the immediate environment. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity

Water Quality and Quantity: cumulative impact - this sub-activity carries out water quality and quantity research that is required to understand the cumulative impact of resource use on water	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	User - medium; Region as a whole - High. This activity is for the use of natural resources (including capacity to assimilate pollution). This use enables these businesses to operate in the current form, so provides direct benefit to the user. The existence of these businesses brings jobs and income into the community, with money made by the business resulting in equal or generally more money made in the remainder of the community, as the money circulates through the economy.	Ongoing	the existence of the activity requiring consent to either abstract water, or discharge contaminants.	Separate funding enables costs of operating the regulatory activity to be recovered from resource users. There is no reason to collect the rates portion separately.	30% private: 70% public	20-40% Fees and charges : 60-80% general rates; Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	These impacts to natural resources, and the need therefore to measure and study their effects on community values, only exist due to the existence of the activity requiring consent. Equally the consent holder directly financially benefits. The community also benefits through the provision of jobs and income to the region. The impact of discharges and takes in this activity tend to be cumulative, with multiple consents collectively impacting the natural resource rather than the individual permit holder having an immediate measurable effect. For these reasons, the user pays a portion, with the community at large paying a larger portion. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity.
Land, Biodiversity and Air	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	Region as a whole - High. This is of benefit to the community as a whole, by monitoring and researching impacts on land, biodiversity and air resources.	Ongoing	Monitoring and research on soil and land use, Biodiversity and Air quality are mandated by central government.	No reason to fund separately	100% public funded	100% general rates; Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	These activities are mandated by central government, and are for the benefit of the entire community. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity.
Environmental Reporting and Support - this sub-activity ensures that statutory reporting requirements are met and that information is analysed and communicated well to internal and external stakeholders.	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	Region as a whole - High. Reporting benefits both members of the community directly or members of the public outside the region (in the case of data provision to LAWA for example). This budget also holds science support to enable other regulatory and non regulatory functions, and provision of data and information to Iwi and Hapu as mandated under legislation or directed by council.	Ongoing	Reporting is mandated by central government under the resource management act, and its anticipated replacements. Support of other non-regulatory and regulatory functions allows regional council to most efficiently perform its functions, and there are legal requirements and council direction regarding support of Iwi and Hapu.	No reason to fund separately	100% public funded	100% general rates; Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	These functions are legally required by central government in most instances, and are for the benefit of the community as a whole. Council assumes resource use scales with capital value and economic activity.
Consent Holders Research - this sub-activity funds research that is specific to a particular group of resource users	Resilient Communities Healthy Environment	Resource users specifically	ongoing	Resource users have specific resource allocation or use research needs, that are specific to their use case only	Separate funding enables costs of operating the activity to be recovered from resource users. There is no reason to collect the rates portion separately.	100% private	100% Fees and Charges; Capital expenditure may be funded through borrowing	This sub activity is for the targeted research on a specific resource in a specific time, for the benefit of the relevant consent holders only. This may include the efficient use of a resource already beyond target limits, or where an activity is not allowed due to anticipated impacts upon a resource, but where the council is well placed to deliver targeted research. In this case, the need and benefits accrue only to the user, and therefore the resource users pay all associated costs.

Report No.	26-170
Decision Required	

LONG-TERM PLAN - INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To seek Council decisions on the key strategic issues, preferred levels of change, and future direction of the Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 to support preparation of the draft Strategy for inclusion in the 2027-37 Long-term Plan process.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Council has been considering the development of the Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 since March 2026 through a series of workshops, reports, and discussions. Through this process, four key issues were initially identified:
 - Ensuring Delivery
 - Enhancing Communication
 - Enabling Emergency Management Response and Recovery
 - Transitioning River Management to a New Delivery Model
- 2.2. As development of the Infrastructure Strategy progressed, a fifth proposed key issue, Defining and Delivering the Capital Programme, was identified for Council's consideration.
- 2.3. Over 2026, Council has also continued to implement the current Infrastructure Strategy, including project delivery, improvements to asset management and reporting, and engagement with scheme ratepayers on budgets and rates requirements.
- 2.4. Throughout 2026, Council has considered the level of change it wishes to pursue for each key issue, ranging from maintaining current approaches through to more significant changes in service delivery, investment, and organisational capability. Following previous discussions, Council's indicative direction was generally towards Status Quo or Moderate Change options, while recognising that further information was required before confirming preferred levels of change.
- 2.5. As discussions have progressed, Council has sought additional information on the benefits, risks, costs, timing, and deliverability associated with different levels of change. This information was considered at a Council workshop on 15 September 2026. As part of this work, several key issues were refined into sub-categories and decision points to enable more targeted consideration of the available options including the provision of further information. For example, the Ensuring Delivery issue was separated into maintenance, repairs, and renewals, allowing Council to consider each component independently.
- 2.6. This report builds on previous Council discussions and seeks confirmation or refinement of Council's preferred level of change for each key issue and associated sub-categories. The decisions sought will guide the continued development of the Infrastructure Strategy and supporting work programmes.
- 2.7. A fifth key issue, Defining and Delivering the Capital Programme, is also proposed for inclusion within the Infrastructure Strategy. Given its significance to future levels of service, asset resilience, affordability, and infrastructure investment, further discussion has occurred on Defining and Delivering the Capital Programme prior to finalisation of this report. This item subsequently seeks Council direction on both the inclusion of this key issue and the preferred level of change to guide its further development within the Strategy.

- 2.8. The decisions sought through this report will help shape the future direction of service delivery, asset management, infrastructure investment, emergency management capability, organisational capacity, and affordability. The resulting direction will inform the preparation of a draft Infrastructure Strategy for Council consideration before the end of 2026, ahead of community consultation through the 2027-37 Long-term Plan process.
- 2.9. Council is not being asked to approve final budgets, staffing levels, implementation programmes, or funding arrangements through this report. The decisions sought are intended to provide strategic direction to inform development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 and associated Long-term Plan financial modelling.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-170.
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the matters and decisions in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is to inform.
- c. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 1A – Maintenance, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain current maintenance budget levels, adjusted annually for inflation over the life of the Infrastructure Strategy; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Increase maintenance budgets by 10% in the first year of the Infrastructure Strategy, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Increase maintenance budgets by 20% in the first year of the Infrastructure Strategy, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter.
- d. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 1B – Repairs, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain current repair budget levels, adjusted annually for inflation over the life of the Infrastructure Strategy; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Increase repair budgets by 10% in the first year of the Infrastructure Strategy, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Increase repair budgets by 20% in the first year of the Infrastructure Strategy, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter, and direct the Chief Executive to present resourcing requirements, including any additional staffing requirements, as part of the draft Infrastructure Strategy.
- e. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 1C – Renewals, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain the current approach, with renewal programmes applying to seven of the 27 schemes with eligible assets and existing renewal budgets adjusted annually for inflation over the life of the Infrastructure Strategy; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Increase the number of schemes with renewal programmes and renewal funding arrangements, and direct the Chief Executive to present further analysis, options, and funding implications as part of the draft Infrastructure Strategy; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Establish renewal programmes and renewal budgets for all schemes with eligible assets and direct the Chief Executive to present further analysis, options, and funding implications as part of the draft Infrastructure Strategy

- f. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 2 – Enhancing Communication, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain current communication and engagement activities, including one annual round of district-based scheme meetings, Council reporting, the Horizons website, and project/issue specific communications; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Maintain current communication and engagement activities and introduce additional engagement opportunities, including two annual rounds of district-based scheme meetings and an annual scheme newsletter; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Further enhance communication and engagement beyond the Moderate Change option and direct the Chief Executive to develop and present additional communication and engagement initiatives, with associated costs and resource requirements, as part of the draft Infrastructure Strategy.
- g. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 3 – Emergency Management Response and Recovery (Financial Resilience), as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain current insurance and financial resilience arrangements, including participation in shared insurance arrangements, progression towards existing emergency reserve targets, use of reserves to fund insurance excesses, and annual insurance budget increases based on inflationary assumptions; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Increase insurance budgets to reflect both inflation and the insurance costs associated with new assets, using a provisional planning assumption of 10% annual insurance cost increases, subject to refinement as updated information becomes available; increase emergency reserve targets; and direct the Chief Executive to undertake a review of insurance coverage, insured assets, reserve adequacy, affordability impacts, and funding implications within the first three years of the Infrastructure Strategy; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Increase overall financial resilience through a combination of higher insurance cover, increased reserve levels, and/or greater self-insurance, and direct the Chief Executive to present options, funding implications, affordability impacts, and associated costs as part of the draft Infrastructure Strategy.
- h. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 4A – Transition: Structure of Schemes, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Maintain the current structure, function, and funding arrangements of schemes, with a continued focus on improving systems, processes, documentation, service delivery, and maintaining accurate rating information within the existing rating framework; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Maintain the current structure, function, and funding arrangements of schemes and undertake engagement through the Long-term Plan process to seek community views, ideas, concerns, and aspirations regarding the future form, function, and funding of schemes. Use this information to help inform Council's future priorities for work relating to scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating approaches; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Commit additional resources during Years 1 to 3 of the Infrastructure Strategy to investigate and develop alternative scheme structures and funding models including consideration of local government reform implications, and options such as district-based or catchment-based schemes and alternative rating approaches. This work would include assessment of costs,

benefits, affordability impacts, funding implications, community views, and implementation requirements, with recommendations to inform future decision-making.

- i. approves the preferred level of change for Key Issue 4B – Transition: River Management Approaches, as follows:
 - i. Status Quo: Continue the current approach to river management, including implementation of the Room for the River programme in the Rangitikei Catchment, progression of river line investigations at current levels, and consideration of blue-green infrastructure as part of capital project development; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change: Continue the current approach and increase investment in investigating how Room for the River and river line approaches could be applied in other catchments, initially focusing on the Pohangina-Ōroua catchment and drawing on national examples. Further invest in blue-green infrastructure initiatives, including the Arawhata Wetland project within the Hōkio Scheme; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change: Commit additional resources during Years 1 to 3 of the Infrastructure Strategy to develop policy, implementation pathways, and investment options for applying Room for the River approaches within the Pohangina-Ōroua catchment, while identifying opportunities for wider application across other catchments over the life of the Infrastructure Strategy. This would include investigating land acquisition requirements, blue-green infrastructure opportunities, affordability impacts, funding implications, and implementation requirements, with recommendations reported back to Council for future decision-making.
- j. approves the inclusion of Key Issue 5 – Defining and Delivering the Capital Programme within the Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57.
- k. approves the preferred level of change for the Key Issue 5 – Defining and Delivering the Capital Programme approaches as:
 - i. Status Quo – Deliver a Resilience Focussed Programme:
 - Adopt a resilience-focused approach, prioritising repairs, renewals, and capital projects expected to be construction-ready within the first three years of the Long-term Plan. Do not provide dedicated funding or resources for the systematic development of additional future capital projects beyond those already underway or approved. Existing resources remain focused on delivering maintenance, repair and renewal programmes, asset management, and programme reporting; **or**
 - ii. Moderate Change – Develop a Future Capital Project Pipeline:
 - Adopt the Status Quo approach and provide dedicated resources to investigate and develop future capital projects for new areas identified and prioritised by Council, using the Flood Vulnerability Assessment and other strategic planning information as guides. This would include progressing up to two potential projects per year towards investment readiness, including investigation, concept design, detailed design, consenting, landowner engagement, and business case development; **or**
 - iii. Stretch Change – Accelerate and Expand the Capital Project Pipeline:
 - Adopt the Moderate Change approach and provide additional funding and resources to accelerate the development of a larger pipeline of future capital projects, enabling additional projects beyond the Moderate Change approach to be progressed towards investment readiness. This would include consideration of affordability impacts, funding requirements, resourcing needs,

programme prioritisation, and future delivery pathways as part of the Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan implementation

- l. directs the Chief Executive to incorporate Council's preferred levels of change, including any amendments resolved through this report, into the development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 and to report back to Council with the completed draft Strategy for endorsement prior to inclusion in the 2027-37 Long-term Plan consultation process.
- m. notes that some elements of the preferred levels of change may continue to be refined during the development and implementation of the Infrastructure Strategy, taking into account feedback received through the Long-term Plan process, Council's final decisions, confirmed resourcing and funding, and any relevant local government reforms.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

4.1. Council Strategic Priorities

- A holistic approach, from the mountains to the sea (integrated catchment management)
- Building resilience to the impacts of climate change

4.2. Council's Community Outcomes



Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered



Our region's ecosystems are healthy



Our region's communities are resilient to the impact of natural hazards and climate change



Our region's economy is thriving and environmentally sustainable

4.2.1. The benefit to the community of this work is informing the 30-year Infrastructure Strategy as part of the Long-term Plan.

4.3. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Long-term Plan
- Annual Plan
- 30 year Infrastructure Strategy
- Asset Management Policy

5. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Significance Assessment

5.1. Council's Significance and Engagement Policy is not triggered by matters discussed in this report. This report seeks direction on the preparation of the draft Infrastructure Strategy. At

this stage in the process, the decisions sought in this report are not significant. However, the adoption of the draft Infrastructure Strategy for consultation, and the adoption of the final Infrastructure Strategy following consultation, will be significant, as it will likely meet all the criteria in section 4b of the policy:

- i. The number of people who may be affected.
- ii. The potential impact on any affected person or persons.
- iii. Whether the matter has a history of wide public interest in the region, or is likely to generate considerable public interest.
- iv. Whether the decision is permanent or can be reversed, such as the potential impact on the environment.
- v. Whether the decision involves a strategic asset (Section 6 (ii) of the policy identifies *river and drainage schemes taken as a whole but not any specific part of the asset group* as a strategic asset).
- vi. Whether the decision is likely to be of high interest to Māori (see also section 5(c)).
- vii. The impact the decision will have on Council's resources and/or future direction.
- viii. Financial consequences to Council.
- ix. Alignment with Council's vision and community outcomes.
- x. Alignment with Council's policies and plans.

Engagement section

- 5.2. No stakeholder engagement is required at this stage in the drafting process. Consultation will be undertaken on the Infrastructure Strategy as part of the Long-term Plan consultation process. Engagement is also planned via district-based scheme meetings in early 2027.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 6.1. The Infrastructure Strategy is a key input into the 2027-37 Long-term Plan and will inform future decisions on service levels, operating budgets, capital investment, funding requirements, reserves, insurance, and rates. The Strategy has a direct relationship with the Financial Strategy and will influence the affordability and funding assumptions considered through the Long-term Plan process.
- 6.2. This report seeks Council direction on the preferred levels of change for each key issue. The options presented include indicative costs and resource implications where these can currently be estimated. No financial commitments arise directly from this report. However, the decisions made by Council may result in future operating and capital expenditure, funding requirements, reserve levels, staffing requirements, and rating impacts that will be considered and confirmed through development of the Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan.
- 6.3. The development of the Infrastructure Strategy is currently being funded from existing budgets. Given the limited timeframe available to prepare the draft Strategy, some cost estimates and financial assumptions are indicative and will require further refinement. The extent of additional analysis required will depend on the preferred levels of change approved by Council. Further work may occur through development of the draft Strategy, the Long-term Plan consultation and deliberation process, and the early years of implementation as funding, resourcing, strategic priorities, and any relevant local government reforms become clearer.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT

Climate Impact Statements

- 7.1. The Infrastructure Strategy provides the long-term strategic direction for the management of Horizons' river management and flood protection assets over a 30-year period. Climate change is a key consideration within the Strategy and is reflected in the assessment of

future asset resilience, flood risk, emergency management requirements, river management approaches, and long-term infrastructure investment needs.

- 7.2. The preferred levels of change selected by Council through this report will influence the extent to which climate change risks, adaptation responses, and resilience measures are incorporated into the Infrastructure Strategy.

8. RISK

- 8.1. The following risks have been identified in relation to the matters raised in this report.

Strategy Development and Decision-Making Risk

- 8.2. There is a risk that delays in confirming Council's preferred response to the Draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 key issues may impact the timely development of the Infrastructure Strategy, Financial Strategy, and Long-term Plan. Delays may also reduce opportunities for the preferred levels of change to be fully assessed and incorporated into future decision-making.

Likelihood: Rare Consequence: Moderate Overall Risk: Moderate

- 8.3. **Mitigation:** This report provides Council with an assessment of the options, indicative costs, benefits, risks, and implementation considerations associated with each key issue. Council direction through this report will enable continued development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy and alignment with the Long-term Plan process.

Levels of Service Risk

- 8.4. There is a risk that future investment requirements, repair programmes, renewals, and capital projects are not aligned with actual levels of service performance due to limited information on whether levels of service are consistently being achieved across all schemes.

Likelihood: Possible Consequence: Moderate Overall Risk: Moderate

- 8.5. **Mitigation:** Asset information, inspections, defect management, flood vulnerability assessments, and performance reporting continue to improve. Future work may be undertaken to better understand levels of service achievement and identify service gaps.

Information Quality and Forecasting Risk

- 8.6. There is a risk that asset information, condition data, valuations, cost estimates, and forecasting assumptions used to inform the Infrastructure Strategy do not fully reflect actual asset condition, future renewal requirements, asset performance, insurance costs, or future investment needs. This is particularly relevant given the long-term nature of the Strategy and the reliance on asset management information, valuation data, estimated asset lives, and modelling assumptions.

Likelihood: Possible Consequence: Major Overall Risk: High

- 8.7. **Mitigation:** Significant improvements have been made to asset management systems, asset data, inspections, and reporting during the current Infrastructure Strategy period. The draft Infrastructure Strategy includes forecasting assumptions and identifies areas where further investigation, condition assessment, analysis, and validation of costs may be required. Forecasts will continue to be refined over time as additional information becomes available.

Capacity and Delivery Risk

- 8.8. The Infrastructure Strategy is being developed primarily using existing staff resources while maintaining delivery of operational, maintenance, repair, renewal, capital works, emergency management response, and asset management programmes. There is a risk that limited organisational capacity and the compressed remaining timeframe for preparing

the draft Strategy may affect the extent of analysis and option development that can be completed before the draft Strategy is presented to Council.

Likelihood: Likely Consequence: Moderate Overall Risk: High

- 8.9. **Mitigation:** Development of the Strategy is being prioritised across the organisation and informed through a structured programme of workshops and Council reports. Depending on the preferred levels of change approved by Council, some further analysis, consultation, affordability assessment, implementation planning, and business case development may continue alongside the Long-term Plan process and during the early years of Infrastructure Strategy implementation.

Implementation, Affordability and Funding Risk

- 8.10. There is a risk that implementation of the preferred levels of change may require additional operating expenditure, capital investment, staffing, reserve funding, insurance funding, or rating increases beyond current assumptions. The scale of this risk will depend on the levels of change selected by Council and subsequent decisions through the Long-term Plan process.

Likelihood: Possible Consequence: Major Overall Risk: High

- 8.11. **Mitigation:** The report presents a range of options to enable Council to balance resilience, service levels, affordability, delivery capability, and risk. Indicative financial information has been provided where available. Further affordability assessments, funding analysis, consultation, and implementation planning will be undertaken as part of the development of the Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan.

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. Council is currently preparing the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 as part of development of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan. The Infrastructure Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act 2002 and provides the long-term strategic direction for Council's infrastructure assets, investment decisions, and levels of service. The Act requires the Strategy to identify the significant infrastructure issues facing Council over the period covered by the Strategy and the principal options available for managing those issues.
- 9.2. The Infrastructure Strategy has a 30-year planning horizon and is reviewed every three years alongside the Long-term Plan. It is a key strategic document that informs future infrastructure investment, service levels, funding requirements, and the development of the Financial Strategy and Revenue and Financing Policy.
- 9.3. The Strategy focuses on Horizons' river management, flood protection, and drainage infrastructure. The current 2024-54 Infrastructure Strategy identified a number of long-term challenges, including affordability, climate change, asset management, and Integrated Catchment Management. Development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 provides an opportunity to review these issues, consider emerging challenges, and establish Council's preferred strategic direction for the next 30 years.
- 9.4. Under section 101B(3) of the Local Government Act 2002, the Infrastructure Strategy must consider:
- Renewal and replacement requirements.
 - Expected changes in demand.
 - Planned changes to levels of service.
 - How public health and environmental outcomes will be maintained or improved.
 - The resilience of infrastructure assets, including risks arising from natural hazards.
- 9.5. Development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 has included Council workshops, environmental scanning, Scheme Committee discussions, operational experience,

consideration of current infrastructure performance, asset management information, funding arrangements, and emerging strategic issues. This work has informed the identification of the proposed key issues and options presented in this report.

- 9.6. Council has progressively considered the draft key issues through a series of workshops and reports during 2026. The four key issues presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 12 August 2026 were:
- Key Issue 1: Ensuring Delivery.
 - Key Issue 2: Enhancing Communication.
 - Key Issue 3: Emergency Management Response and Recovery.
 - Key Issue 4: Transitioning River Management to a New Delivery Model.
- 9.7. At that time, Council indicated a preference for a largely status quo approach to Key Issues 1, 2 and 3, and a moderate level of change for Key Issue 4.
- 9.8. Following Council's initial consideration of the key issues, further information was requested on the implications, costs, timing, resourcing requirements, and deliverability of the various levels of change. This information was considered at a Council workshop on 15 September 2026. In some cases, the key issues were further refined into sub-categories to enable more targeted decision-making.
- 9.9. This report follows that workshop and seeks Council's direction on the preferred level of change for each key issue and associated sub-category, together with Council's consideration of a proposed fifth key issue relating to defining and delivering the capital programme. The outcomes of these decisions will guide the continued development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57.

10. KEY ISSUES ASSESSMENT

- 10.1. The following sections provide further information on each key issue and the implications of the proposed levels of change. Unless otherwise stated, the draft Long-term Plan budget has been prepared on the basis of a Status Quo approach, with any Moderate or Stretch options requiring additional resourcing, funding, or reprioritisation. Council's direction is sought to inform the continued development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan.

11. Key Issue 1. Ensuring Delivery

Previous Council Direction: Status Quo

- 11.1. Ensuring delivery focuses on maintaining levels of service and ensuring Council can effectively manage its river management, flood protection, and drainage assets. To support decision-making, this key issue has been separated into three related components:
- **1A Maintenance** – Maintaining existing levels of service through routine and planned maintenance activities, including vegetation management and other ongoing works.
 - **1B Repairs** – Addressing known asset defects, damage, and deterioration to restore or maintain asset performance.
 - **1C Renewals** – Planning and funding the replacement of assets that have reached the end of their useful life.
- 11.2. While these components are closely related, they have different drivers, risks, funding requirements, and planning horizons. Separating them enables Council to consider the appropriate level of change for each component independently.
- 11.3. The current Infrastructure Strategy has increased the focus on maintenance programmes, asset management, condition inspections, and reporting. This has improved Council's understanding of asset condition, maintenance requirements, defect management, and future renewal needs.

- 11.4. Despite this progress, several challenges remain, including:
- Variation between schemes in maintenance and repair funding requirements.
 - Increasing regulatory, compliance, and operational costs.
 - Improving understanding of asset condition and defect repair requirements as inspections continue.
 - Limited information on long-term renewal requirements for some assets and schemes.
 - Balancing affordability, asset resilience, and levels of service when allocating funding between maintenance, repairs, renewals, and future capital works.

- 11.5. The following sections outline the options available to Council for maintenance, repairs, and renewals.

Maintenance

- 11.6. The current Infrastructure Strategy introduced a more structured maintenance programme supported by improved reporting, tracking, and scheme-level budgeting. Progress is reported through the Catchment Operations Progress Report to the Integrated Catchment Committee. Scheme Committee discussions have consistently highlighted the importance of maintenance activities in maintaining levels of service and reducing future asset risks, with a number of schemes identifying demand for additional maintenance work beyond current budget provision.
- 11.7. Improvements in reporting and work tracking have provided greater visibility of maintenance activity, expenditure, and funding requirements across schemes. This includes scheme-by-scheme reporting on maintenance and repair budgets, expenditure, and forecast costs to support financial oversight and decision-making. The improved information available through the maintenance programme has also enabled higher Long-term Plan performance targets to be proposed under the Status Quo option, reflecting increased confidence in delivery planning, tracking, and reporting.
- 11.8. Demand for maintenance funding varies between schemes. Some schemes have identified maintenance requirements that exceed current budget provision, while others have less immediate pressure. In addition, some schemes are focused on vegetation management and broader works programmes rather than maintenance of physical assets, resulting in different funding and delivery requirements.
- 11.9. Maintenance budgets are increasingly required to fund a wider range of activities than routine asset maintenance alone. These can include regulatory and compliance requirements, dam safety obligations, investigations, design work, enabling works, and responses to storm damage or emerging issues. As a result, funding available for planned maintenance activities can vary from year to year.
- 11.10. Climate change may also increase future demand for maintenance activities. Changes in flood frequency and severity, river behaviour, sedimentation, vegetation growth, and storm-related damage may place additional pressure on maintenance programmes and funding requirements over time.
- 11.11. Council therefore has a choice between maintaining current maintenance funding levels or increasing investment to provide greater capacity to address maintenance demand, emerging risks, climate-related pressures, and competing programme requirements. The options for maintenance are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Ensuring Delivery, 1A Maintenance.

Level of change	Response description	Cost	Years
Status Quo - Maintain Current Maintenance Funding	- Maintain current maintenance budget levels, adjusted annually for inflation. Continue improving delivery efficiency, work planning and reporting. - Maintain the current maintenance programme within existing funding levels - Emerging issues, storm damage and unfunded priorities may require reprioritisation of planned works. - Does not provide additional funding for activities such as Ōroua and Moutoa siltation removal.	\$5.47M + inflation	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Moderate Change - Increase Maintenance Funding	- Increase maintenance budgets by approximately 10% in Year 1, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter. - Provides additional capacity to address known maintenance pressures and competing programme demands. - Enables a greater proportion of identified maintenance work to be completed each year.	\$6.02M +inflation	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Stretch Change - Significantly Increase Maintenance Funding	- Increase maintenance budgets by approximately 20% in Year 1, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter. - Accelerates delivery of maintenance programmes across schemes. - Provides greater capacity to address known maintenance demand, emerging issues, and climate-related maintenance pressures. - Reduces the risk of maintenance activities being deferred.	\$6.56M +inflation	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Note	- Maintenance tracking, reporting, and asset information continue to improve and Council's understanding of long-term maintenance requirements is still developing. - Scheme Committee discussions have consistently highlighted the importance of maintenance activities and, in some cases, identified demand for additional maintenance work. - Proposed Long-term Plan performance measures have been increased under the Status Quo option to reflect improved maintenance planning, tracking, and reporting. - Climate change may increase future maintenance requirements through changes in flood frequency, river behaviour, sedimentation, vegetation growth, and storm-related damage.		

Repairs

- 11.12. The current Infrastructure Strategy increased the focus on asset management, condition inspections, and defect reporting. This has improved Council's understanding of asset condition and increased transparency around known defects within the river management, flood protection, and drainage network.
- 11.13. Regular asset condition reporting is provided through the Catchment Operations Progress Report to the Integrated Catchment Committee. As Council's understanding of the network has improved, the number of identified defects has increased. This reflects both ongoing asset deterioration, the impact of weather events, and improved identification of defects through the inspection programme.
- 11.14. In 2025-26, approximately half of Council's assets were inspected. Asset condition was generally consistent with the previous year, with around 3% of inspected assets identified as having significant or major damage. At the same time, known defects increased from 1,104 to 1,440 as inspections continued, asset information improved, and the data reflected the impact of the approximately five weather events that required some form of emergency management response and/or recovery from the River Management Team in 2025-26 year (Table 2).
- 11.15. While a significant proportion of known defects are being addressed through existing work programmes and capital projects, many assets require further investigation before an appropriate repair, renewal, replacement, or decommissioning solution can be determined. In many cases, the costs, timing, and preferred treatment options remain unknown.
- 11.16. Council is continuing to improve the integration of inspection information, defect management, work programming, and asset management planning. A key consideration

for the Infrastructure Strategy is whether to maintain the current rate of progress or increase investment in repairs and associated investigations to address known defects more quickly.

11.17. The options for repairs are outlined in Table 3.

Table 2: Summary of asset condition and risk ratings of defect as presented in the July 2026 Integrated Catchment Committee report to Councillors. Asset condition is reported as at 22 June 2026, risk ratings are as at March 2026.

Asset Condition			Risk Rating		
	# Assets	% of Assets		# Defects	% of Defects
1 - Fully Effective	913	23.1%	Low	317	34%
2 - Functional	2566	65.0%	Medium	372	40%
3 - Minor damage	361	9.1%	High	123	13%
4 - Major damage	72	1.8%	Very High	22	2%
5 - Significant loss	25	0.6%	Not Risk Rated	98	11%
6 - Admin issue	13	0.3%			
Total	3950	100%	Total	932	100%

Table 3: Ensuring Delivery, 1B Repairs.

Level of change	Response description	Cost	Years
Status Quo - Maintain Current Repair Funding	- Maintain current repair budgets, adjusted annually for inflation. - Continue improving understanding of asset condition, defects, and repair requirements. - Continue prioritising repairs within existing funding levels and work programmes. - Some high-priority defects may remain unresolved for several years.	\$2.95M + inflation	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Moderate Change - Increase Repair Funding	- Increase repair budgets by approximately 10% in Year 1, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter. - Provides additional capacity to address known repair pressures and competing programme demands. - Enables a greater proportion of identified repair work to be completed each year.	\$3.25M + inflation *	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Stretch Change - Increase Repair Funding and Capability	- Increase repair budgets by approximately 20% in Year 1, with annual inflation adjustments thereafter. - Accelerates delivery of repair programmes across schemes. - Provides greater capacity to address known repair demands, emerging issues, and climate-related repair pressures. - Reduces the risk of repair activities being deferred.	\$3.54 + inflation* plus costs for 1 or more staff members	Assumes this continues for Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy
Note	- Council's understanding of asset condition and defects continues to improve as inspections are completed. - The number of identified defects is expected to increase as inspection information improves. - In many cases, further investigation is required before the preferred repair, renewal, replacement, or decommissioning response can be determined. - Climate change and more frequent storm events may increase future repair requirements.		

Renewals

11.18. The Local Government Act requires the Infrastructure Strategy to consider the renewal and replacement needs of infrastructure assets. Currently, seven of the 27 eligible schemes

(schemes with assets) have established renewal programmes and associated renewal funding arrangements.

- 11.19. Renewal planning remains an area of ongoing development. Current forecasts are largely based on asset valuations, estimated useful lives, condition information, and asset management data. While these provide an indication of future renewal requirements, additional inspections, condition assessments, and validation of replacement costs will be required over time to improve confidence in renewal forecasts.
- 11.20. A key consideration for Council is the extent to which formal renewal programmes should be established across additional schemes. Expanding renewal programmes would require further investment in asset information, inspections, renewal planning, and funding analysis to develop a more complete understanding of future replacement obligations. In addition to the costs of developing renewal programmes, future funding will be required to deliver the physical renewals themselves, including associated planning, design, consenting, and regulatory costs. Where assets have been in service for long periods of time, renewal projects may also create a need or opportunity to consider upgrades or changes to asset design, capacity, resilience, or levels of service.
- 11.21. Renewal expenditure is inherently uneven, with replacement requirements varying significantly between years and between schemes. As a result, renewal programmes generally operate through the collection of relatively consistent annual funding, with renewal reserves accumulated over time and drawn upon when major renewal works are required.
- 11.22. From both a governance and audit perspective, the Infrastructure Strategy should demonstrate that Council has considered future asset replacement obligations and has a credible funding pathway to address them. While renewal forecasts will continue to be refined over time, establishing renewal programmes and associated reserves provides a transparent and prudent mechanism for managing long-term renewal liabilities and the associated planning, design, consenting, and replacement costs that may arise over the life of infrastructure assets.
- 11.23. Council has options regarding the extent to which renewal programmes and associated reserve funding should be expanded across additional schemes. The options for renewals are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Ensuring Delivery, 1C Renewals.

Level of change	Response description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Maintain Current Renewal Programmes	- Maintain the current approach, with renewal programmes applying to seven schemes with eligible assets. - Continue existing renewal funding arrangements and annual inflation adjustments. - Continue refining renewal forecasts using available asset information and condition inspections.	Current budget + inflation	Assumes this continues years 1-30
Moderate Change – Expand Renewal Programmes	- Increase the number of schemes with renewal programmes and renewal funding arrangements. - Provide dedicated staff resources to support renewal planning and associated investigations. - Undertake additional inspections and condition assessments to improve renewal forecasting and replacement planning - Develop renewal reserve requirements and funding approaches for the additional schemes selected by Council.	To be determined following Council direction on the number of schemes included and the level of investigation required.	Initial development Years 1-3, ongoing implementation Years 1-30
Stretch Change – Renewal Programmes for All Eligible Schemes	- Implement renewal programmes and renewal funding arrangements for all schemes with eligible fixed-life assets. - Complete a structured programme of inspections, condition assessments, and renewal planning. - Establish renewal reserves and long-term replacement funding arrangements across all eligible schemes. - Create a comprehensive and funded approach to future asset replacement obligations.	To be determined through further analysis of asset condition, replacement requirements, reserve funding needs, affordability impacts, and scheme funding arrangements.	Initial development Years 1-3, ongoing implementation Years 1-30
Note	- More than 3,900 assets are currently recorded within Council's asset management systems, many of which have finite useful lives. - Renewal forecasts continue to be refined as asset information, inspections, and condition assessments improve. - Renewal reserve funding helps smooth the impact of uneven renewal expenditure over time and supports long-term affordability. - The extent of future renewal programmes will influence rates, reserve requirements, affordability, and funding arrangements within individual schemes. - The Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan will need to demonstrate a credible and funded approach to future asset replacement obligations, supported by the best information available at the time.		

12. Key Issue 2: Enhancing Communication

12.1. Previous Council Direction: Status Quo

12.2. Effective communication supports informed decision-making, improves understanding of infrastructure investment and service levels, and helps build trust and relationships with scheme ratepayers, communities, stakeholders, and partners. The Infrastructure Strategy provides an opportunity for Council to consider the extent to which communication and engagement should be strengthened over the next 30 years.

12.3. Communication occurs through a range of channels including scheme meetings, Council reporting, the Horizons website, project-specific communications, media releases, Long-term Plan consultation, and engagement with communities and stakeholders. Recent years have seen increased reporting on infrastructure performance, budgets, asset condition, maintenance activities, and defect management.

- 12.4. Future communication demands are likely to increase as Council responds to climate change, affordability pressures, infrastructure investment decisions, evolving community expectations, and potential local government reform. There may also be greater demand for information on levels of service, infrastructure performance, risk management, and future funding requirements.
- 12.5. Council therefore has a choice between maintaining the current communication approach or investing in additional engagement, reporting, and stakeholder communication activities. The options for enhancing communication are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Enhancing communication.

Level of change	Response description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Maintain Current Communication Approach	- Continue current communication and engagement activities. - One annual round of district-based scheme meetings. - Continue Council reporting, Horizons website updates, project-specific communications, media releases, and Long-term Plan engagement activities. - Continue improving communication within existing resources.	Within existing budgets	Assumes this continues years 1-30
Moderate Change – Increase Communication and Engagement	- Maintain current communication activities and introduce additional engagement opportunities. - Two annual rounds of district-based scheme meetings. - Annual scheme newsletter. - Increased communication on programme delivery.	Additional funding required or reallocation from existing budgets.	Assumes this continues years 1-30
Stretch Change – Expand Communication and Stakeholder Relationships	- Adopt the Moderate Change approach. - Introduce more formal engagement arrangements and increased stakeholder participation. - Increase engagement with catchment groups, communities, and broader stakeholders. - Consider dedicated communication and engagement resources. - Expand discussions beyond scheme operations to include integrated catchment management considerations.	Further scoping required. Costs and resource requirements to be determined.	Assumes this continues years 1-30
Note	- Communication requirements are likely to increase over time due to climate change, infrastructure investment decisions, affordability pressures, community expectations, and possible local government reform. - Enhanced communication may improve understanding of infrastructure investment decisions, levels of service, risks, and future funding requirements. - The cost and resource implications of the Stretch Change option require further development.		

13. Key Issue 3: Emergency Management Response and Recovery

- 13.1. Previous Council Direction: Status Quo
- 13.2. River management, flood protection, and drainage infrastructure are exposed to a range of risks, including flooding, storm damage, infrastructure failure, and other emergency events. Financial resilience influences Council's ability to respond to and recover from these events while maintaining levels of service and managing affordability impacts on ratepayers.
- 13.3. Council currently manages financial resilience through a combination of insurance arrangements, emergency reserves, renewal reserves, operational budgets, and access to borrowing where required. As discussed in previous sections of this report, insurance costs are a significant and growing operating cost for many schemes and are expected to

increase over time. Existing reserve arrangements are intended to help manage insurance excesses, emergency response costs, and other unforeseen expenditure.

- 13.4. Current insurance arrangements benefit from risk being spread across a broader pool of infrastructure assets and organisations. Historically, local government participation in shared insurance arrangements has enabled risk diversification across a wide range of asset types and geographic locations. These arrangements have assisted in managing affordability and maintaining access to insurance cover for infrastructure assets.
- 13.5. However, the operating environment is changing. Rising insurance costs, climate change, increasing asset values, and evolving infrastructure ownership and service delivery models may place additional pressure on current arrangements. For example, the transfer of three waters infrastructure from councils to new entities may alter the mix of assets participating in local government insurance arrangements. Future local government reform or infrastructure sector changes may further affect the effectiveness, affordability, and availability of insurance cover and opportunities to share risk across the sector.
- 13.6. A further consideration is the extent to which current insurance settings continue to provide an appropriate level of cover relative to the value of Council's infrastructure assets. Over the past decade, replacement values for river management and flood protection assets have increased significantly through asset revaluations, inflation, growth in the asset base, and improved asset information. While insurance cover limits have remained relatively unchanged, the proportion of asset value that can be claimed in a single event has reduced over time. Previous Infrastructure Strategy work identified that the maximum claim value of up to \$100 million represented approximately 27% of total asset value in 2015, reducing to approximately 10% by 2023. More recent asset valuations indicate that this proportion may have reduced further. As a result, Council's effective level of self-insurance has increased over time, placing greater reliance on reserve funding, borrowing, government assistance, reprioritisation of expenditure, and future affordability decisions following a major event.
- 13.7. As a result, Council's financial exposure to major emergency events may be increasing despite ongoing participation in insurance arrangements. Rising asset values, changing insurance market conditions, increasing insurance costs, and uncertainty regarding future risk-sharing arrangements may require greater reliance on emergency reserves, self-insurance, borrowing, government assistance, or alternative funding mechanisms following a major event. The balance between insurance, reserves, self-insurance, affordability, and residual risk is therefore an increasingly important strategic consideration for Council.
- 13.8. Council therefore has a choice regarding the level of financial resilience it wishes to maintain and the extent to which future risks are managed through insurance, reserve funding, self-insurance, borrowing capacity, or alternative approaches. The options for emergency management response and recovery (financial resilience) are outlined in (Table 6). It is noted that an assumed annual increase of 10% has been used for planning purposes to reflect a combination of inflation, asset growth, climate-related risk pricing, and uncertainty in future insurance markets. Actual insurance cost increases may be higher or lower and will continue to be reviewed through future Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Table 6: Emergency Management Response and Recovery, financial resilience.

Level of change	Response description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Maintain Current Financial Resilience Arrangements	- Maintain current insurance arrangements and emergency reserve targets. - Continue participation in existing shared insurance arrangements. - Continue funding insurance excesses from reserve balances. - Continue to monitor insurance market changes and reserve adequacy through normal planning processes.	Current insurance and reserve funding settings.	Assumes current arrangements continue throughout Years 1-30 of the Infrastructure Strategy.
Moderate Change – Strengthen Financial Resilience	- Increase insurance budgets to reflect inflation, asset growth, and changing risk profiles. - Review current insurance arrangements, emergency reserve targets, and financial resilience assumptions during the first three years of the Infrastructure Strategy. - Assess the impacts of climate change, changing infrastructure ownership arrangements, insurance market trends, affordability considerations, and future risk-sharing arrangements. - Report findings and recommendations to Council for future decisions on insurance and reserve settings.	Existing funding plus: - Insurance increases (assumed at 10% per year for planning purposes) - Review costs - Potential increases in insurance and reserve funding requirements (indicatively \$300k-\$500k per annum, subject to review findings).	Review undertaken in Years 1-3, informing future insurance and reserve settings for Years 4-30.
Stretch Change – Increase Financial Resilience and Risk Capacity	- Implement increased insurance, reserve and/or self-insurance arrangements arising from the review. - Establish a long-term funding strategy for emergency response and recovery. - Increase Council's capacity to absorb and respond to major emergency events and changes in insurance markets. - Reduce exposure to financial shocks arising from emergency events, infrastructure failure, climate-related impacts, and changes to sector-wide risk-sharing arrangements.	Additional insurance, reserve and/or self-insurance funding requirements. Funding impacts to be determined through detailed analysis and Council direction.	Progressive implementation throughout Years 1-30, subject to future Council decisions on insurance, reserve funding, and self-insurance arrangements.
Note	- Awaiting updated information on forecast insurance cost increases. - Insurance cost assumptions used in this assessment are indicative only and will be refined as further information becomes available. - Current insurance arrangements rely on risk being shared across a broader pool of local government infrastructure assets and participants. - Changes to infrastructure ownership arrangements, including Three Waters reform, and any future local government reform may affect the availability, affordability, and effectiveness of these shared insurance arrangements. - Insurance costs and resilience funding requirements were considered through the current Long-term Plan and Infrastructure Strategy, with Council resolving to maintain the Status Quo approach at that time. - Current emergency reserve targets are based on reserve calculations developed through the 2017 Asset Management Plan process and continue to be used in current financial planning. The methodology was based on estimated damage from a 1-in-50-year (2% AEP) flood event, including damage to uninsured assets and the local share of insurance deductibles. While reserve methodologies have subsequently been reviewed, reserve targets have not been comprehensively reassessed against updated asset values, climate change projections, insurance market changes, infrastructure ownership arrangements, and current risk profiles. - Climate change, increasing asset values, and changes to infrastructure ownership models may indicate a need to reassess both insurance arrangements and emergency reserve targets. Asset valuations have increased significantly over the past decade, reducing the proportion of total asset value covered by current insurance arrangements and increasing Council's effective level of self-insurance.		

14. Key Issue 4: Transitioning River Management to a new delivery model

- 14.1. Previous Council Direction: Moderate Change
- 14.2. Transitioning river management to a new delivery model recognises that the way flood risk, river management, and drainage services are delivered may continue to evolve over time. This may be influenced by local government reform, changing community expectations, climate change, affordability considerations, and emerging approaches to river management.
- 14.3. To support decision-making, this key issue has been separated into two related but distinct components:

4A – Transition: Structure of Schemes

- Form, function, and funding of schemes.
- Rating and funding arrangements.
- Future scheme structures.
- Potential implications of local government reform.

4B – Transition: River Management Approaches

- Integrated Catchment Management.
 - Room for the River approaches.
 - River line investigations.
 - Nature-based solutions and blue-green infrastructure.
 - Long-term climate adaptation and resilience.
- 14.4. While these components are related, they involve different risks, opportunities, costs, and implementation pathways. Separating them enables Council to consider governance and funding arrangements independently from operational river management approaches.
- 14.5. The Infrastructure Strategy provides an opportunity for Council to determine how proactive it wishes to be in investigating, developing, and where appropriate implementing alternative approaches over the next 30 years.
- 14.6. Council is asked to determine:
- the extent to which it wishes to investigate alternative scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating models (Table 7); and
 - the extent to which it wishes to investigate and develop alternative river management approaches such as Integrated Catchment Management, Room for the River, and blue-green infrastructure (Table 8).

Table 7: Transition, structure of schemes.

Level of change	Description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Maintain Current Scheme Arrangements	- Maintain existing scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating methodologies. - Continue improving systems, processes, documentation, and delivery performance. - Continue maintaining scheme information required to support current rating systems. - Consider implications of future local government reform as information becomes available.	Within existing river management budgets and work programmes.	Assumes this continues all years (1-30)
Moderate Change – Understand Community Preferences	- Maintain existing scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating methodologies. - Use the Long-term Plan consultation process to seek community views, ideas, concerns, and aspirations regarding the future structure, function, and funding of schemes. - Continue maintaining scheme information required to support current rating systems. - Use community feedback to inform Council's future prioritisation of work programmes relating to scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating approaches alongside other Infrastructure Strategy priorities.	Within existing Long-term Plan consultation budgets and work programmes.	Undertaken as part of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan consultation process and considered through subsequent Council decision-making.
Stretch Change – Develop Alternative Scheme Models	- Commit resources during Years 1-3 of the Infrastructure Strategy to investigate alternative scheme structures and funding models. - Investigate district-based or catchment-based models and alternative rating approaches. - Assess affordability impacts, funding implications, implementation requirements, community views, rating equity considerations, and implications of local government reform. - Report options back to Council for future decision-making.	Additional staff, consultant, legal, valuation, and engagement resources required. Costs to be determined through scoping, the alternative models selected for investigation, and Council direction.	Investigation and option development undertaken during Years 1-3, with future implementation subject to Council decisions.
Note	- Current scheme structures, funding arrangements, and rating methodologies have generally evolved over time and vary between schemes based on local circumstances, historical decisions, and the services provided. - Future local government reform may influence governance structures, service delivery responsibilities, funding arrangements, or the entity responsible for river management and flood protection activities. - The Moderate and Stretch options do not commit Council to changing scheme structures, funding arrangements, or rating methodologies. The Moderate option focuses on understanding community views and priorities, while the Stretch option involves investigating and developing alternative future models. - Should Council wish to pursue alternative models, direction will be required on the types of models to be investigated. This may include district-based schemes, catchment-based schemes, alternative rating methodologies, changes to scheme boundaries, or other governance and funding arrangements. - The development of alternative models may require technical analysis, financial modelling, legal review, valuation and rating assessments, community engagement, and consultation. - Any future implementation of alternative scheme structures or funding arrangements may result in one-off transition costs and ongoing operational costs. These costs would need to be assessed alongside potential benefits, affordability impacts, rating equity considerations, operational efficiency gains, and service delivery outcomes. - Any significant changes to scheme structures, funding arrangements, or rating methodologies would require further analysis, community engagement, and future Council decisions before implementation. - The current rating system requires ongoing maintenance of property, benefit allocation, and rating information regardless of the option selected. - Any future implementation of alternative scheme structures or funding arrangements may require amendments to funding policies, rating methodologies, asset management plans, and future Long-term Plans.		

Table 8: Transition, river management approaches.

Level of change	Description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Continue Current River Management Approaches	- Continue implementation of Room for the River initiatives in the Rangitikei Catchment. - Continue river line investigations at current levels. - Continue considering blue-green infrastructure within capital project development.	Current budget + inflation	Assumes this continues years 1-30
Moderate Change – Expand Investigation and Demonstration Projects	- Continue the Status Quo approach. - Investigate application of Room for the River and river line approaches in additional catchments, initially focusing on Pohangina-Ōroua. - Undertake economic and implementation analysis drawing on national examples. - Consider further investment in existing blue-green infrastructure initiatives, including the Arawhata Wetland project, and evaluate opportunities for wider application across other catchments.	Additional investigation, economic analysis, and project development funding required. Costs to be confirmed through project scoping and Council direction.	Investigation primarily undertaken during Years 1-3, with future implementation considered over Years 4-30.
Stretch Change – Develop and Implement Future River Management Models	- Commit additional resources during Years 1-3 of the Infrastructure Strategy to develop policy, implementation pathways, and investment options for Room for the River approaches in the Pohangina-Ōroua catchment. - Investigate land acquisition requirements and implementation opportunities. - Develop options for integrating blue-green infrastructure into wider scheme management. - Report recommendations, future investment requirements, implementation pathways, affordability impacts, and funding implications back to Council for future decision-making.	Additional staff, consultant, investigation, landowner engagement, and policy development resources required. Future implementation, land acquisition, and ongoing programme costs to be determined following investigation and Council decisions.	Policy development, investigation, and option assessment undertaken during Years 1-3, with future implementation subject to subsequent Council decisions.
Note	- Integrated Catchment Management, Room for the River, river line investigations, and blue-green infrastructure are complementary approaches that may improve long-term flood resilience, environmental outcomes, and climate adaptation. - Many of these approaches are still emerging within New Zealand and may require further economic analysis, community engagement, and policy development prior to implementation. - The costs, benefits, and implementation implications will vary between catchments and require further investigation before large-scale implementation decisions can be made. - Some Stretch Change options would require additional investigation, business case development, community engagement, landowner discussions, and potentially land acquisition before implementation decisions could be considered by Council. - Some approaches may deliver wider environmental, biodiversity, water quality, recreational, cultural, or climate adaptation benefits in addition to flood risk management outcomes.		

15. Key Issue 5: Defining and delivering the capital programme

- 15.1. Defining and delivering the capital programme has emerged as a potential fifth key issue for the Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57. The Infrastructure Strategy requires Council to consider how existing levels of service will be maintained through repairs, renewals, and capital investment, as well as how future investment may respond to changing levels of service, resilience requirements, flood risk, population change, and emerging challenges over the next 30 years.

- 15.2. The current Infrastructure Strategy 2024-54 took a deliberate approach of focusing on the delivery of a significant programme of government co-funded, Council-funded, and other capital projects, while limiting investment in the development of additional future projects. The Strategy sought to consolidate the capital programme, deliver committed projects, complete a Flood Vulnerability Assessment, and continue work in areas such as Feilding and Palmerston North where projects were already underway. The financial modelling assumed that few, if any, new capital projects would be developed beyond those already identified and that debt levels would progressively reduce over time as existing projects were completed.
- 15.3. Since adoption of the current Infrastructure Strategy, progress has been made in delivering and progressing the capital programme. Government co-funded projects and other Council projects have advanced, the Flood Vulnerability Assessment has been completed, and project planning has continued in a number of locations. Through this work, Council's understanding of future investment needs, flood vulnerability, project delivery requirements, and capital programme management has improved. Council is now faced with a decision regarding the extent to which future capital projects should be identified, developed, and progressed as part of the Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57.
- 15.4. Council resolved during 2026 to continue progressing a range of capital projects, investigations, land purchases, and funding applications, including projects in Palmerston North, Feilding, Te Ara Kura, Te Pūwaha, Taumarunui, and other locations. Not all projects have confirmed funding at this stage, and opportunities for future government co-funding remain uncertain.
- 15.5. Potential capital programme activity can generally be grouped into five categories:
- **Repairs of existing assets** – addressing known defects and damage within existing asset networks. As discussed under Key Issue 1B, the full scope and cost of future repair programmes is still being developed as Council improves its understanding of asset condition and defect requirements.
 - **Renewals of existing assets** – replacement of assets that have reached the end of their useful life. As discussed under Key Issue 1C, future renewal requirements and funding needs are still being refined through ongoing asset management and renewal planning work.
 - **Projects currently underway** – projects that are already funded, under development, or expected to be construction-ready within the first three years of the Long-term Plan. This includes projects such as Reid Line, Te Ara Kura, Heatley Avenue, Rangiotu Gates and other projects currently being progressed through investigations, design, land acquisition or consenting processes.
 - **Maintaining levels of service** – projects or works required to sustain current levels of service where issues have been identified. At present there is no comprehensive or structured process for assessing whether all river management schemes are consistently achieving their intended levels of service. While asset condition information, maintenance records, flood performance information and flood modelling provide partial indicators, further work may be required to define performance measures, assess actual levels of service, identify service gaps, and determine whether investment is required to maintain current service levels. Examples may include sedimentation issues, flood gate performance, stopbank performance, channel capacity constraints, or other network issues affecting scheme outcomes.
 - **Expanding levels of service** – new projects responding to future risks, changing demand, flood vulnerability assessments, climate adaptation needs, or community expectations. These projects typically require problem definition, prioritisation, investigations, flood modelling, option assessments, engagement, design, consenting and business case development before construction funding can be considered.

- 15.6. Council now faces decisions regarding both the future size of the capital programme and the extent to which resources should be invested in developing future capital investment opportunities. This includes determining the balance between investing in repairs, renewals, and projects already underway, and investing resources in the identification and development of future capital projects.
- 15.7. Noting that every \$1 million of additional rates-funded borrowing on current assumptions equates to approximately a 0.1% increase in rates in the following year, the extent of future capital investment will directly influence the Financial Strategy. Government funding contributions may reduce this impact; however, future co-funding opportunities should not be assumed.
- 15.8. The costs associated with a resilience-focused capital programme are still being developed. Further work is underway to better understand future renewal requirements, repair programmes, achievement of levels of service, and the costs of projects currently being progressed towards construction readiness. As a result, this key issue is focused less on confirming future capital expenditure amounts, and more on determining the extent to which Council wishes to invest in identifying, developing, and progressing future capital investment opportunities for inclusion in future Long-term Plans.
- 15.9. Council is therefore being asked to determine whether the capital programme should primarily focus on delivering the current resilience programme, or whether additional resources should be invested in developing future capital investment opportunities. This includes consideration of the extent to which Council wishes to invest in identifying future projects, understanding levels of service requirements, and developing a pipeline of projects for future Long-term Plans. It also requires consideration of the potential implications for future debt levels, affordability, funding requirements, and rates should those projects ultimately proceed to implementation. The options available to Council are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Options assessment for proposed key issue 5: defining and delivering the capital programme.

Level of change	Description	Cost	Years
Status Quo – Deliver a Resilience Focused Programme	- Continue repairs, renewals, and delivery of approved capital projects. - Deliver projects currently underway or expected to be construction-ready within the first three years of the Long-term Plan. - No dedicated funding or staffing for developing additional future projects.	- Existing repair, renewal, capital project delivery and asset management budgets plus inflation. - Includes approved projects and projects currently progressing towards construction readiness. - Repair, renewal, level of service and project costs continue to be refined.	Continues throughout Years 1-30. Early years focused on approved and construction-ready projects.
Moderate Change – Develop a Future Capital Project Pipeline	- Adopt the Status Quo approach. - Develop up to two future projects per year towards investment readiness. - Undertake investigations and planning required to progress future projects towards investment readiness	- Dedicated project development funding required. - Indicatively \$200,000-\$250,000 per project per year plus inflation. - Some projects may require multiple years to reach construction-ready status.	Up to two projects per year progressed towards investment readiness throughout the Infrastructure Strategy period.
Stretch Change – Accelerate and Expand the Capital Project Pipeline	- Adopt the Moderate Change approach. - Accelerate project development through additional staffing and funding. - Progress more than two future projects per year. - Build a larger pipeline of future capital investment opportunities	- Additional project development and staffing resources required. - Costs dependent on project numbers, scope and investigation requirements.	Expanded project development programme throughout the Infrastructure Strategy period
Note	- This key issue relates primarily to the development of future capital investment opportunities rather than a commitment to construct future projects. - The current capital programme is largely focused on approved projects, projects already underway, or projects expected to be construction-ready within the first three years of the Long-term Plan. - Cost estimates for repairs, renewals, levels of service projects, and some projects currently under development are still being refined. - There is currently no dedicated programme funded to systematically assess whether all schemes are achieving their intended levels of service. Future project development may include investigations, modelling, design, consenting, engagement, business cases and funding applications.		

16. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 16.1. Council's decisions on the proposed key issues, preferred levels of change, and associated options will be used to continue development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 and associated Long-term Plan work programme.
- 16.2. Given the time available before preparation of the draft Long-term Plan and Financial Strategy, further work will be undertaken to refine expenditure forecasts, funding requirements, and budget projections associated with Council's preferred options. This includes further work on maintenance, repairs, renewals, financial resilience, communication initiatives, future delivery models, and capital investment programmes.

- 16.3. The resulting funding and investment assumptions will be incorporated into the draft Financial Strategy to enable Council to understand the impacts of its preferred options on rates, debt, reserves, affordability, and long-term financial sustainability.
- 16.4. As part of developing the draft Infrastructure Strategy, information, assumptions, and supporting analysis will be shared with Audit New Zealand to obtain early feedback and assist in identifying any areas requiring further work prior to consultation.
- 16.5. A draft Infrastructure Strategy 2027-57 is expected to be presented to Council for review in November/December 2026 alongside the draft Financial Strategy. These documents will then be used to support development of the consultation material for the Long-term Plan.
- 16.6. Consultation on the draft Infrastructure Strategy and Long-term Plan is expected to occur in early 2027. This is anticipated to include engagement with River and Drainage Scheme meetings during March 2027, alongside the wider Long-term Plan consultation process.
- 16.7. The Infrastructure Strategy will continue to be refined following consultation, audit feedback, submissions, hearings, and Council deliberations before a final Infrastructure Strategy is adopted as part of the Long-term Plan process.

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ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.

Report No.	26-172
Decision Required	

MANAWATŪ RIVER LEADERS' ACCORD ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report updates Council on the development of the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan and seeks Council's endorsement of Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Action Plan and ongoing support for the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum.
- 1.2. Council's endorsement is sought ahead of the next Manawatū River Leaders' Forum meeting on 23 October 2026.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. The Manawatū River Leaders' Accord was established in 2010 following widespread concern about the condition of the Manawatū River and recognition that improving outcomes would require a collaborative catchment-wide response. Horizons played a leadership role in establishing the Accord and Forum and has continued to support coordination, reporting, funding administration and programme delivery.
- 2.2. The Accord brings together iwi and hapū, local and central government, industry, farmers, environmental organisations, recreational interests and community groups to encourage practical collective action to improve the health and mauri of the Manawatū River and its catchment.
- 2.3. Over the past 15 years, more than \$70 million has been invested through government co-funded initiatives associated with the Accord, alongside substantial investment from Horizons, territorial authorities, iwi and hapū, landowners, industry, community organisations and volunteers.
- 2.4. Accord partners have contributed to wastewater treatment upgrades, riparian restoration, freshwater habitat enhancement, fish-passage projects, environmental monitoring, community-led restoration initiatives, cultural projects including Tū Te Manawa, iwi environmental management planning, education programmes and public engagement initiatives.
- 2.5. Beyond the projects delivered, the Accord has created enduring relationships between organisations with differing interests and responsibilities, enabling collaborative approaches, shared knowledge and co-investment that would have been difficult for individual organisations to achieve independently.
- 2.6. An independent evaluation completed in 2024 found broad support for the Accord and Forum to continue. Participants identified relationships, collective direction, voluntary commitments and the ability to attract investment as key strengths, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen priorities, accountability, reporting, community engagement and implementation of He Anga Mātauranga Māori.
- 2.7. Development of a new Action Plan has been underway since 2025 following completion of the evaluation process. The work has involved Forum hui, workshops, focus groups and direct engagement with partner organisations. Forty participants from 21 organisations contributed to development of the proposed Action Plan.
- 2.8. The proposed Action Plan includes:

- freshwater restoration and habitat enhancement;
- biodiversity and wetland restoration;
- fish passage;
- monitoring, research and information sharing;
- wastewater, stormwater and land-management improvements;
- community engagement and education;
- cultural initiatives and mātauranga Māori; and
- continued collaboration and coordination across the catchment.

- 2.9. A summary of Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Action Plan is provided in Annex A. The appendix identifies the key programmes and activities that Horizons intends to continue supporting, noting that delivery remains subject to approved budgets, available resources, future funding decisions and any changes to legislative or organisational arrangements.
- 2.10. The next Manawatū River Leaders' Forum meeting is scheduled for 23 October 2026. Council is being asked to support the continued development of the Accord through the Forum and endorse Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Action Plan.
- 2.11. Endorsement would provide a clear mandate for Horizons' participation in the Accord and direction for current work programmes and engagement with Accord partners. The endorsement relates only to Horizons' proposed contribution and does not approve actions on behalf of other Accord partners or commit future funding decisions.
- 2.12. The Action Plan is being completed during a period of change. Significant government co-funding programmes have concluded, local government reform may alter future delivery arrangements, and Treaty settlement legislation provides for arrangements relevant to management of the river catchment.
- 2.13. Future funding availability, affordability requirements, external funding opportunities, staffing capacity, local government reform and future organisational arrangements may influence the scale and timing of Horizons' contribution and associated performance measures over time.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 26-172 and Annex.
- b. agrees that, in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, the decisions in this report are not significant, and the appropriate level of engagement is: inform.
- c. acknowledges the significant contributions made by iwi and hapū, councils, government agencies, landowners, industry, community organisations and other Accord partners to improving the health and mauri of the Manawatū River;
- d. notes the proposed Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan and supports its continued development through the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum;
- e. endorses Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Action Plan, as identified in Appendix 1, subject to approved budgets, available resources and future funding, service level, statutory and organisational decisions, noting that this endorsement applies only to Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution and does not approve actions on behalf of other Accord partners or commit future funding decisions;

- f. approves Horizons continuing to coordinate and support the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum during the current period of organisational and legislative change;
- g. endorses Chair Nikki Riley and Councillor Te Kenehi Teira continuing as co-chairs of the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum and agrees that any future proposal regarding appointment of an independent chair be reported back to Council for consideration;
- h. supports Horizons participating, at the invitation of iwi and hapū and within available resources and responsibilities, in future discussions regarding the relationship between the Forum and statutory Treaty settlement arrangements;
- i. supports the intended outcomes, relationships and programme information associated with the Accord being considered in any future transition of regional freshwater functions;
- j. notes that future funding availability, staffing capacity, external funding opportunities, affordability requirements, local government reform and future budget or service level decisions may require changes to Horizons' future contribution and associated performance measures; and
- k. notes that progress against Horizons' actions will continue to be reported through the Integrated Catchment Committee.

4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

4.1. Council Strategic Priorities

- A holistic approach, from the mountains to the sea (integrated catchment management)

4.2. Council's Community Outcomes



Our region's communities are vibrant and empowered



Our region's ecosystems are healthy



Our region's communities are resilient to the impact of natural hazards and climate change



Our region's relationship with iwi and hapū are respectful and mana-enhancing

4.3. The benefit to the community of this work is that the Accord supports Horizons' outcomes relating to integrated catchment management, freshwater quality, biodiversity, climate resilience, partnerships and community engagement.

4.4. The Action Plan provides a mechanism through which organisations across the catchment can align their activities around shared outcomes for the Manawatū River. The Accord complements, but does not replace, the statutory responsibilities and functions of participating organisations.

4.5. The matters in this report align with the following adopted policies, strategies and plans:

- Annual Plan
- Long-term Plan

5. SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENTSignificance Assessment

- 5.1. This report seeks direction on Horizons' contribution to a voluntary partnership initiative. The decisions sought do not approve unbudgeted expenditure, amend levels of service or determine future local government structures. The proposal is not considered significant under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Engagement

- 5.2. Development of the Action Plan builds on an independent evaluation undertaken during 2023–24. The evaluation included participation from 37 Forum members and 148 public survey respondents. Participants broadly supported continuation of the Accord and identified:
- strong relationships between members;
 - collective direction;
 - voluntary commitments;
 - attraction of external funding;
 - accountability through action planning; and
 - continuing relevance of the Forum.
- 5.3. Areas identified for improvement included:
- clearer priorities and outcomes;
 - improved reporting and accountability;
 - stronger community engagement;
 - implementation of He Anga Mātauranga Māori;
 - meeting effectiveness and communication; and
 - future leadership arrangements.
- 5.4. Action-plan development has included workshops, hui, focus groups and direct engagement with partner organisations. Further stakeholder engagement is planned as outlined elsewhere in the paper.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 6.1. The conclusion of major government co-funding programmes has reduced the scale of external investment available to support Accord-related activities and Horizons' Freshwater Enhancement Programme. As a result, staff capacity at Horizons for this work has been reduced in recent years.
- 6.2. Horizons currently contributes through targeted-rate funding, staff resources, technical support, project delivery and Forum coordination. The current Long-term Plan provides approximately \$450,000 per annum for the Manawatū River Water Quality Enhancement Programme. It is noted that staff costs (funded via freshwater budgets) and expenses related to hosting the forum (funded via the governance budget) are additional to this.
- 6.3. The proposed Action Plan does not seek additional funding. Future funding levels, affordability requirements, external funding opportunities and staffing capacity will be considered through development of the 2027–37 Long-term Plan. Future decisions may require changes to the scale of activity delivered and associated performance targets.
- 6.4. The activities identified in Annex A generally reflect existing programmes and levels of service currently provided by Horizons.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT

- 7.1. Endorsement of the Action Plan itself has no direct climate impact. Several proposed actions are considered to contribute to climate resilience through restoration of freshwater ecosystems, riparian planting, wetland protection and catchment management.

8. RISK

- 8.1. The principal risks associated with the proposed Action Plan are:
- Accord partners not confirming proposed actions or commitments;
 - insufficient funding or staffing capacity to deliver the scale of activity currently identified;
 - uncertainty arising from local government reform, future organisational arrangements and the evolving governance environment; and
 - stakeholder expectations exceeding available resources or future funding decisions.
- 8.2. These risks are in-part mitigated through:
- confirmation of partner commitments prior to finalising the Action Plan;
 - alignment of Horizons' contribution with approved budgets, available resources and future funding decisions;
 - ongoing review of Horizons' role as funding, organisational arrangements and statutory requirements evolve; and
 - regular reporting through the Integrated Catchment Committee.

9. BACKGROUND

- 9.1. The Manawatū River Leaders' Accord was established in 2010 following widespread concern about the condition of the river and recognition that improving outcomes would require a collaborative catchment-wide response. The Accord created a voluntary partnership bringing together iwi and hapū, local and central government, industry, farmers, environmental organisations and community groups.
- 9.2. Since establishment, the Accord has supported two successive five-year Action Plans and attracted substantial external investment into the catchment. More than \$70 million has been invested through government co-funded initiatives associated with Accord objectives alongside significant contributions from Accord partners. Through these investments, partners have delivered wastewater improvements, habitat restoration, riparian fencing and planting, fish-passage projects, environmental monitoring, cultural initiatives, community grants, education programmes and community-led restoration projects.
- 9.3. The Accord has also helped create enduring relationships between organisations and provided a framework for attracting external funding and coordinating action across the catchment.
- 9.4. Independent evaluation completed in 2024 concluded there remains a strong case for continuing the Accord and Forum while updating priorities and improving the way the Forum operates.
- 9.5. Council endorsed development of a new Action Plan in March 2025 and approved funding to support that process.

10. DISCUSSION

Proposed Action Plan

- 10.1. The proposed Action Plan represents the next phase of the Accord rather than a new initiative.

- 10.2. It builds on fifteen years of collaboration, investment and relationship development while responding to recommendations from the independent evaluation.
- 10.3. The plan focuses on practical actions led by partner organisations rather than creating new governance structures.
- 10.4. The proposed Horizons contribution, summarised in Annex A, largely aligns with existing Council functions and programmes. It primarily consists of continuing support for the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum, delivery of activities funded through the Manawatū River Water Quality Enhancement Programme, provision of technical and scientific support, partnership and community engagement activities, administration of relevant funding, and participation in collaborative programmes aligned with Council priorities and available resources.

Why continue the Accord?

- 10.5. Significant work remains to improve the health and mauri of the river.
- 10.6. Forum participants consistently identified the relationships established, accountability created through voluntary commitments, collective direction and ability to attract external investment as enduring strengths.
- 10.7. The Accord continues to provide a mechanism for organisations to coordinate activity, attract funding and maintain collective focus on the river irrespective of future changes to government policy or organisational structures.

Local Government Reform

- 10.8. The Action Plan extends across a period in which local government structures may change. Council endorsement is therefore proposed as endorsement of Horizons' intended contribution under current arrangements.
- 10.9. Future delivery responsibilities may change depending on legislative reform and future organisational arrangements.

Treaty Settlement Arrangements

- 10.10. Statutory Treaty settlement arrangements and the voluntary Leaders' Forum serve different purposes.
- 10.11. The Action Plan does not seek to define future statutory arrangements.
- 10.12. Where iwi and hapū wish to explore the relationship between the Forum and statutory arrangements, Horizons may participate and support those discussions when invited and within available resources.

11. COMPLETION OF THE ACTION PLAN

- 11.1. The next Manawatū River Leaders' Forum meeting is scheduled for 23 October 2026.
- 11.2. Prior to that meeting, staff and the facilitator will complete partner feedback and final refinements to the proposed Action Plan.
- 11.3. Forum members will be asked to confirm proposed actions and provide direction on any remaining matters.
- 11.4. Subject to Forum confirmation, the Action Plan will be finalised and issued following the October meeting.
- 11.5. Following adoption, the Action Plan will be published and communicated through Horizons and Accord partner channels.

12. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

12.1. The proposed next steps are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Proposed next steps for finalisation of the Manawatu River Leaders' Accord Action Plan.

Action	Timing	Next Step
1	October 2026	Finalise Action Plan following partner feedback
2	23 October 2026	Present Action Plan to Manawātū River Leaders' Forum
3	Late 2026	Finalise and publish Action Plan
4	2027–37 LTP development	Confirm future funding, levels of service and performance measures
5	Ongoing	Report Horizons' contribution and progress through the Integrated Catchment Committee
6	As required	Review Horizons' role following any material legislative, funding or organisational change

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ANNEXES

A Manawātū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan

Annex 1: Horizons Regional Council Proposed Contribution to the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan

1. Purpose

This annex summarises Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan.

The activities identified in this annex are primarily existing programmes, services, projects and functions currently delivered by Horizons Regional Council through approved policies, plans and budgets. The contribution reflects Horizons' intended participation in supporting the objectives of the Accord and does not create additional funding commitments beyond those approved through Council processes.

Many activities rely on partnerships with landowners, iwi and hapū, community organisations, territorial authorities, government agencies and other Accord partners to achieve successful outcomes.

The timing, scale and delivery of these activities may change in response to future Long-term Plan decisions, funding availability, service level decisions, legislative requirements, local government reform, organisational arrangements, partner participation and resource availability.

2. Proposed Horizons Regional Council Contribution

Table 1: Proposed Horizons Regional Council Contribution to the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan

Activity	Horizons contribution	Indicative timeframe	Location	Key requirements	Intended outcomes / measures of success
Riparian fencing	Provide technical advice and financial assistance to encourage exclusion of stock from waterways.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Across the Manawatū catchment.	Landowner participation and co-funding contributions.	Approximately 15 km of fencing established annually, with reduced stock access to waterways.
Riparian planting	Provide technical advice and financial assistance to support riparian planting for water quality, biodiversity and aquatic habitat enhancement.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Across the Manawatū catchment.	Landowner participation and co-funding contributions.	Approximately 35,000 plants established annually, with improved riparian and freshwater habitat values.
Fish passage improvement	Provide technical, regulatory and financial support to improve fish passage where appropriate.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Across the catchment, prioritising locations with the greatest ecological benefit.	Partnership with landowners, infrastructure owners and funding partners.	Two fish-passage remediation projects completed annually, with improved access to suitable habitat for native fish species.
Community-led environmental projects	Provide funding, technical support, education and advice for community restoration and environmental initiatives.	Ongoing.	Across the Manawatū catchment.	Community participation and funding availability.	At least five community-led projects supported annually, with increased community involvement in catchment restoration and stewardship.
Forum continuity and transition planning	Continue coordinating and supporting Forum functions and assist with future delivery arrangements where required.	As required.	Manawatū River Leaders' Forum.	Support from Accord partners and clarity regarding future organisational arrangements.	Key Forum functions, relationships and reporting processes maintained through any transition period.
Environmental monitoring and reporting	Continue monitoring environmental indicators and reporting on the state and trends of the catchment environment.	Ongoing within established sampling and reporting timeframes.	Monitoring sites across the Manawatū catchment.	Continued monitoring programmes, technical capability and resourcing.	Monitoring and data collection maintained, with reliable environmental information available to support planning, management and reporting.

Activity	Horizons contribution	Indicative timeframe	Location	Key requirements	Intended outcomes / measures of success
Science advice and information sharing	Present scientific findings, monitoring information and technical advice to the Forum when requested.	Ongoing.	Forum meetings and associated activities.	Availability of relevant monitoring and research information.	Scientific information is shared as required to support informed discussion, collective decision-making and action planning.
Large-scale possum control	Undertake possum control operations on rateable land and provide advice, education and technical support to landowners undertaking control themselves.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Across the Manawātū catchment.	Landowner access and ongoing participation.	Possum populations maintained below applicable programme target levels, consistent with the Regional Pest Management Plan and current Long-term Plan measures.
Protection of significant natural areas	Support landowners managing rare and threatened wetland and forest ecosystems through funding, advice, pest management and monitoring.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Rare and threatened significant natural areas across the catchment.	Landowner participation, ongoing funding, protection arrangements where appropriate, pest control and monitoring.	Rare and threatened ecosystem remnants are maintained or improved, preserving indigenous biodiversity.
Community biodiversity grants	Provide contestable funding and technical advice to community biodiversity initiatives.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Biodiversity projects across the Manawātū catchment.	Funding availability and community participation.	Increased awareness, capability, collaboration and community involvement in biodiversity protection and restoration.
Te Āpiti restoration project	Provide funding, facilitation, coordination, communications and partnership support for landscape-scale forest protection and restoration.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Te Āpiti / Manawātū Gorge.	Ongoing funding and continued collaboration with iwi partners, the Department of Conservation, territorial authorities and other partners.	Indigenous forest ecosystems protected and enhanced, with iwi and community actively involved as kaitiaki.
Totara Reserve Regional Park	Continue management of Totara Reserve Regional Park to protect indigenous biodiversity while providing recreation and environmental education opportunities.	Ongoing through current Long-term Plan provisions (2024-34).	Totara Reserve Regional Park, Pohangina Valley.	Continued operational funding and community support.	Indigenous ecosystems are protected and enhanced, and the reserve provides valued recreational and educational experiences that foster connection, respect and stewardship.
Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI)	Continue delivery of erosion-control and sediment-reduction initiatives on erosion-prone land through farm planning, advice and financial support.	Ongoing, subject to future funding decisions.	Across the Manawātū catchment, prioritising erosion-prone areas.	Landowner participation and co-funding contributions.	Increased uptake of erosion-control measures and modelled reductions in sediment. Over time, measurable reductions in river sediment and associated improvements in water quality and aquatic ecosystem health are sought.

3. Explanatory Notes

1. The activities identified in Table 1 represent Horizons Regional Council's proposed contribution to the Manawātū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan. They do not represent the full contribution of Accord partners.
2. Delivery remains subject to approved budgets, available resources, future Long-term Plan decisions, statutory requirements and future organisational arrangements.
3. Some activities are supported through specific funding programmes, while others are delivered through existing operational, environmental management, scientific, biodiversity, biosecurity and community engagement programmes.
4. Performance measures in Table 1 generally reflect current programme targets and outcomes where available. Future targets and levels of service may be reviewed through Council planning and budgeting processes.
5. Progress on Horizons Regional Council's contribution will continue to be reported through existing Council reporting processes, including reporting to the Integrated Catchment Committee where appropriate.

Public Excluded Section

RECOMMENDATION

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the Council meeting as the general subject matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution follows.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public, as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
PX1 Confirmation of Public Excluded Meeting held on 22 September 2026	s7(2)(h) - the withholding of the information is necessary to enable the local authority to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities. s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.
PX2 Long-term Plan 2027-37 Budget - Getting from Draft 1 to Draft 2	s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. This report discusses one budget proposal for the 2027-37 LTP that may have possible implications for staff retention..	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.
PX3 Chief Executive — Implications of the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Act 2026	s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. This report is confidential because it concerns the employment of an identifiable individual..	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists under section 7.
PX4 Council / Committee to consider whether any item in the Public Excluded minutes can be moved into the public domain and define the extent of the release		