

Council Briefing Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 28 May, 2025
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Civic Centre, Te Iwitahi, 9 Rust Avenue

In Attendance

His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Deborah Harding
Cr Patrick Holmes
Cr Scott McKenzie
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Phoenix Ruka

Not in Attendance

Cr Ken Couper
Cr Marie Olsen
Cr Simon Reid
Cr Paul Yovich

Scribe

V. Kloet (Democracy Adviser)

1. Apologies / Kore Tae Mai

Cr's Ken Couper, Marie Olsen, Simon Reid and Cr Paul Yovich

2. Reports / Ngā Ripoata

2.1 Local Water Done Well update

The purpose of this briefing is for Council to consider the 73 submissions received on the Consultation Document for the Local Water Done Well consultation.

Council consulted on the following two options:

- Option 1: In-house business unit with increased collaboration with Northland councils (the preferred option).
- Option 2: Northland Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) with Kaipara District Council and Far North District Council (drinking water and wastewater only).

The two options were analysed based on the impact on rates, debt, levels of service, any other charges for water services, as well as the potential implications of a CCO with Far North District Council and Kaipara District Council.

The consultation document was made available to the public between 2 April 2025 and 2 May 2025 for the community to provide their opinion on each option.

The results of the consultation were that approximately 73% of participants preferred option 1, while 19% were in favour of option 2. 8% of participants did not show a clear preference.

Public feedback on option 1

Common themes among those who favoured option 1 were:

- Whangarei has proven it can manage its water effectively
- Option 1 will cost less to set up and result in less debt
- Option 1 won't require cross subsidisation of neighbouring councils
- Option 1 avoids increased bureaucracy
- Local Government (Whangarei) control and democratic processes are important.

Public feedback on option 2

Common themes among those who favoured option 2 were:

- Whangarei has a social responsibility to help its neighbours
- Borrowing potential could increase
- Elected Councillors currently have too much control over water services.

Elected Member discussion/feedback

- Suggestion to change the wording of 'in-house business unit' with to a more public friendly wording as in house is not specific enough.
- Clarification on the current position other Councils - Far North District Council (FNDC) have a dedicated business unit which sits with the infrastructure team. Kaipara District Council (KDC) have indicated a preference to unite with either Whangarei or Far North. KDC is aware of their unique situation have considered what is needed in the area and things they can't live without. A CCO model will require councils to work together to achieve the necessary outcomes.
- Are we going to consider the public's concern about fluoride? Staff confirmed that the public views of fluoride are noted. However, the

Council has been directed by the Director General of Health to add fluoride at our larger water treatment plants.

- When does a decision need to be made? Council must submit this to Central Government before 3 September 2025.

Next steps

A paper will be brought to the June Council Meeting, with a recommendation that Council adopts Option 1.

3. Closure of Meeting / Te katinga o te Hui

The meeting concluded at 9:30am.