

Council Briefing Agenda

Date: Thursday, 11 September, 2025

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Civic Centre, Te Iwitihi, 9 Rust Avenue

Elected Members: His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Ken Couper
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Deborah Harding
Cr Patrick Holmes
Cr Scott McKenzie
Cr Marie Olsen
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid
Cr Phoenix Ruka
Cr Paul Yovich

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

1. Apologies / Kore Tae Mai	
2. Reports / Ngā Ripoata	
2.1 Annual Plan 2026-27 Action Plan	3
2.2 EM Capex Fund - Consideration of Proposals	19
2.3 Ruakaka Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade - Project Update September 2025	31
3. Closure of Meeting / Te katinga o te Hui	

2.1 Annual Plan 2026-27 Action Plan

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 11 September 2025
Reporting officer: Aaron Taikato – General Manager, Strategy & Democracy
 Bronwyn Bayne – Manager, Corporate Planning

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To discuss three high-level options and indicative timeframes to develop the Annual Plan for the 2026-27 financial year and the Long-Term Plan (LTP) for 2027-37.

This briefing does not present details on spending priorities, information on efficiency gains or options on different rates for next year. Once the new Council is in place after the Elections, these details and the discussion from this meeting will be incorporated into the Elected Members' induction programme and early Council meetings. This will enable the incoming Council to provide strategic direction on next year's Annual Plan before the end of the year so that any required engagement and public consultation (and audit requirements, if applicable) can be met in a timely manner.

2 Background / Horopaki

During the June Deliberations on this year's Annual Plan, Elected Members requested that staff present an Action Plan to Council in September:

“Directs staff to develop an action plan for improving and simplifying the 2026–27 Annual Planning process, with a focus on efficiency gains and value for money to reduce the cost burden on ratepayers, and to report back to Council in September 2025.”

Since the adoption of the LTP in mid-2024 and the initial decisions on this year's Annual Plan in October 2024, **ongoing economic pressures** have continued to affect our District. As a result, during the deliberations process on the 2025–26 Annual Plan, Elected Members expressed interest in revisiting whether the Financial Strategy set in the LTP—and reaffirmed during consultation planning for the 2025–26 Annual Plan—remains appropriate. That reassessment has rightly been deferred to the incoming Council.

At the same time, **inflationary pressures on local government have continued**, though there are signs of a slight easing, and the **ongoing challenge remains of closing our operational funding gap** by aligning everyday costs with everyday revenue. This will also help to ensure sufficient funding levels for the remaining Council activities, after transitioning Water and Wastewater to the regional CCO. The everyday funding measure and general rates increases included within the LTP were introduced to ensure other activities had sufficient funding without using surpluses from wastewater targeted rates.

If this operational funding gap persists, it means today's ratepayers are not fully paying for the services they receive, and that debt, income received for capital projects, or surpluses

collected from targeted rates, are being relied on to fill the funding gap. This is not fair to future ratepayers. Council's aim is to have a **prudent and sustainable financial strategy** that means we work within financial constraints to deliver the facilities, services and infrastructure that bring the most benefit to most people for the greatest length of time.

Under the LTP, Council aimed to **meet this Everyday Funding benchmark by Year 4**, that is next financial year. However, achieving this target is at risk and has become more difficult due to the decision to partially fund stormwater activities through debt in the current financial year.

The outcome of any reassessment of the Financial Strategy by the new Council will determine whether public consultation on next year's Annual Plan is required, what level of analysis and prioritisation of spending is needed, and the scope of engagement activities to be undertaken.

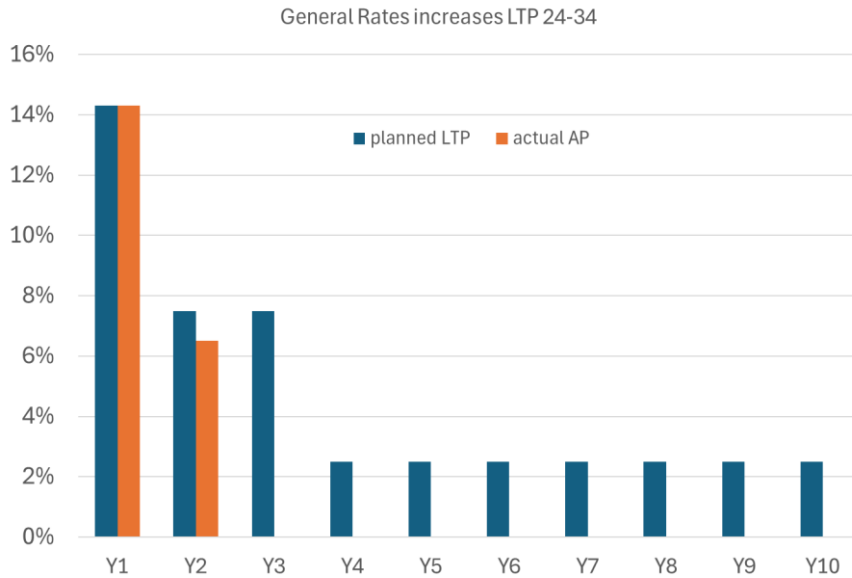
Unfortunately, **strategic direction is not possible before November** due to the election of a new Council. In contrast, for this year's Annual Plan, Council engagement on key decisions began as early as August. Even then, the timeframes to adopt the Annual Plan before the start of the financial year proved challenging given the range of issues the Council consulted on. So, **timings for next year's Annual Plan are even more challenging** and ongoing legislative reforms—including the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill, the Water Services Bill, and RMA reforms—further compound the uncertainty and complexity of the decision-making environment facing the new Council ahead of next year's Annual Plan.

Staff therefore recommend a **considered approach** to any significant changes to next year's Annual Plan parameters as agreed for the LTP, noting that the timeframe (15-18 months) for developing the next LTP provides **a more fulsome opportunity** to explore any significant adjustments to the planned path of rates increases or spending priorities, if desired by the new Council.

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

As a prelude to the discussion, below is the **proposed path of rates increases that were agreed in the Long-Term Plan** for the 10-year period from 2024 to 2034 and the rationale for the increases, alongside the actual increases adopted for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 Annual Plans.

Note: the 2025 BERL report on the LGCI for 2026-27 is forecast at 2.8%.



Note the chart above excludes LGCI and growth components.

Rate	Year	Annual Inflation	Proposed additional increase	Actual total increase	Details
General Rates	Y1 2024-25	2.9%	14.3%	17.2%	These increases are set at a level to provide sufficient funding for the planned operational expenditure programme for the bulk of Council's activities. This will also allow us to work towards addressing our current funding gap by achieving an Everyday Balanced Budget by Year 4. The level of the Uniform Annual Charge will be set each year after considering, the overall movement in general rates, affordability and the universal public good aspect of Council activities.
	Y2 2025-26	3.2%	7.5%	9.7% (down 1%)	
	Y3 2026-27	LGCI forecast 2.8%	7.5%		
	Y4-10	LGCI	2.5%		
Water Targeted Rate	Y1-2	LGCI	2.5%		The increases to water rates for the first two years is limited as Council has accumulated reserves sufficient to fund the Water activity in the short term. The large increases for Years 3 and 4 are necessary to support important water resilience projects and manage increased regulatory compliance costs from Central Government. They are also included in the Water Services Delivery Plan and any deviation would require consideration of the impacts on the new Water CCO, and by extension Kaipara and Far North District Councils.
	Y3-4	LGCI	20%		
	Y5-10	LGCI	2.5%		

Wastewater Targeted Rate	Y1-10	LGCI	-		Rates increases are limited to inflation only across the plan. This will provide sufficient revenue to fund operational and capital expenditure throughout the plan and will allow us to build a reserve for future wastewater infrastructure and growth capacity.
Stormwater Targeted Rate	Y2		new rate proposed \$179 per SUIP	\$79 per SUIP	Year one of the LTP will fund this activity with debt. In Year 2 we plan to restart funding this activity. Options could include further increasing general rates or introducing a stormwater targeted rate.
	Y3-10		2.50%		

3.1 There are three high-level strategic options for next year's Annual Plan:

- Option 1: Continue with the current Long-Term Plan.**
 This means sticking with the proposed rates increases for Year 3 LTP and making decisions for the ongoing funding of stormwater activities that allow Council to meet the Everyday Funding benchmark. Further decisions on overall financial parameters and spending priorities are incorporated into LTP 2027.
- Option 2: Continue to run deficit budgets, where everyday funding does not match everyday expenses.**
 This means using the 2025-26 operational budget as our starting point and retaining the existing capital budgets from year 3 of the LTP (adjusted for carry forwards), cutting the proposed general rates increase by up to 1% and possibly increasing debt for another year to fund stormwater activities or other high priority items and pushing out achieving the Everyday Balanced Budget requirement. Further decisions on overall financial parameters and spending priorities are incorporated into LTP 2027. This approach is likely to trigger an LTP Amendment.
- Option 3: Start again with a new plan.**
 This would see more significant reductions to planned rates increase for Year 3 of the LTP along with reduced service delivery. This would necessitate a review of the Financial Strategy as a whole and might mean an increase in debt. This would essentially be an amendment of the LTP and would require significant engagement and consultation activity and require audit of the consultation document and LTP amendment.

The high-level advantages and disadvantages of each option are set out in the table below. In essence, the choice Council will have to make is between balancing the affordability concerns of a subset of current ratepayers with the interests and needs of the rest of the current ratepayers and the needs and interests of future ratepayers and residents. At the same time, Council will have to consider the practicalities and costs of pursuing each option given the limited staff and EM resource and time available across a range of other large work programmes happening at the same time (LTP 2027; Water Services CCO set-up; possible Rates Review).

Option 1: Continue with the current Long-Term Plan.	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Offers a clear path to resolving longstanding issues identified in previous LTP, particularly the overreliance on Waters funding and capital funding to fund everyday costs, and the delivery of our Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Allows us to stay on course with our Financial Strategy parameters and protects our credit rating, helping to reduce borrowing costs.</p> <p>Avoids the need to review levels of service or divert staff and Council resources toward preparing a consultation document and running a public consultation. This is especially valuable given the upcoming demands on Council time and resources, including the establishment of the new Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), responding to broader reforms of local government, and initiating engagement and planning for the next LTP.</p>	<p>Will not see reductions in planned rates increase (7.5% + LGCI) next year. This will not alleviate affordability concerns for those residents facing affordability issues.</p> <p>Our Financial Strategy and Everyday Funding position will still be under significant pressure due to the reduced Stormwater rate increase in 2025-26 and other High Priority Unbudgeted items.</p> <p>Note: the 2025 BERL report on the LGCI for 2026-27 is forecast at 2.8%.</p> <p>Note: while this approach remains consistent with funding included within the LTP, achieving our everyday funding continues to be challenged.</p>
Option 2: Continue to run deficit budgets, where everyday funding does not match everyday expenses.	
<p>Delays resolving the longstanding issues identified in previous LTP, particularly the overreliance on Waters funding and capital funding to fund everyday costs and the delivery of our Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>May go some way towards remaining within our Financial Strategy parameters and protect our credit rating, which may also help reduce borrowing costs.</p> <p>Provides a bridge to considering more significant changes as part of LTP 2027-37 if desired by Council and allows for the necessary community and Elected Member engagement and discussion over a more reasonable time period to get to a final set of proposals to consult the community on.</p> <p>Should avoid the need to review levels of service or divert staff and Council resources toward preparing a consultation document and running a public consultation. This is especially valuable given the upcoming demands on Council time and resources, including the establishment of the new Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), responding to broader reforms of</p>	<p>Goes some way to alleviating affordability concerns for those residents facing affordability issues.</p> <p>Reduces Council's financial performance against the Financial Strategy set as part of the LTP, putting further pressure on achieving everyday funding, balanced benchmark, and debt levels.</p> <p>If Water rates aren't increased as per Year 3 of the LTP, this will be inconsistent with the Water Services Delivery Plan submitted to DIA. This modelling was based on the increases proposed in the LTP so any variation from that will have an impact on the financial sustainability calculations for the Water CCO.</p> <p>This approach is likely to trigger an LTP Amendment.</p>

local government, and initiating engagement and planning for the next LTP.	
Option 3: Start again with a new plan.	
Will further consider and potentially alleviate affordability concerns for those residents facing affordability issues.	<p>Does not provide a clear path to resolving the longstanding issues identified in previous LTP, particularly the overreliance on Waters funding and capital funding to fund everyday costs, and the delivery of our Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Would not allow us to stay on course with our financial sustainability benchmarks and would not protect our credit rating—potentially leading to increased borrowing costs.</p> <p>Likely necessitate a wholesale review of our Revenue and Financing Policy, Funding Needs Analysis and Financial Strategy.</p> <p>Likely require us to review levels of service and divert staff and Council resources toward preparing a consultation document and running a public consultation. This would add a lot of extra pressures given the upcoming demands on Council time and resources, including the establishment of the new Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), responding to broader reforms of local government, and initiating engagement and planning for the next LTP.</p> <p>Would require extensive analysis of spending priorities and the impact of any reductions on community outcomes, along with significant public engagement and consultation—potentially including audit input. This would overlap with and potentially disrupt the planned engagement process for the next LTP which needs to get underway by February 2026 at the latest.</p> <p>This would require an LTP Amendment.</p>

3.2 The impact on various measures is quite different across the options:

- Staff resourcing/time required
- Engagement and consultation requirements and costs
- Audit requirements and costs
- Adherence to current Financial Strategy
- Potential impacts on Levels of Service or provision of services
- Council decision processes

Below is an analysis of each option, showing the different possible rates revenue elements under each, implications for the six areas mentioned above and estimated timeframes. Note that the details of any rates increases under Options 2 and 3 would need to be determined by the new Council. Note: the 2025 BERL report on the LGCI for 2026-27 is forecast at 2.8%.

	Option 1: Continue with the current Long-Term Plan	Option 2: Continue to run deficit budgets, where everyday funding does not match everyday expenses	Option 3: Start again with a new plan
Individual rates revenue items			
General rates	7.5% + LGCI	6.5% + LGCI	<6.5% + LGCI
Water rate	20% + LGCI	2.5%? + LGCI	?
Wastewater rate	LGCI	LGCI	LGCI
Stormwater rate	\$179 + 2.5%	Currently: \$79 + 2.5% Other portion debt funded	?
Flood protection rate	LGCI	LGCI	LGCI
Implications for:			
Staff and EM time	Minimal	Moderate	Major
Engagement and consultation requirements and costs	None	Likely LTP amendment Possibly no consultation required. Moderate engagement and costs	LTP amendment Consultation required. Significant engagement and costs
Audit requirements and costs	None	Possibly, if LTP amendment triggered	Yes, approx. \$100,000 Likely to also require legal advice
Adherence to Financial Strategy	Yes	Partially, will not meet Everyday Funding by Year 4 Possibly will not meet Balanced Budget requirement	No, new Financial Strategy required
Levels of Service / Service provision	No impact	Likely impacts	Bottom-up review of activities and LOS required across all areas
WSDP Impact	Minimal	Will vary from funding levels included in the WSDP	Will vary from funding levels included in the WSDP
Process steps and timeframes			
Decisions on direction and choices needed	Mid/late December at latest		
Council Induction	November 2025		
Council Meetings		Nov 2025 - direction steer Dec 2025 – confirm direction Feb 2026 – CD approval if required CD would need to be audited if LTP amendment triggered	Nov 2025 - direction steer Dec 2025 – confirm direction Feb 2026 – CD approval CD would need to be audited
Public Consultation	None required	April-May if required	March-April
Hearings	n/a	Early May	April
Issues and Options	n/a	May	May
Deliberations	May	June	June
Adoption	Late June	Late June	Late June LTP amendment would need to be audited prior to adoption

Total estimated operational cost of undertaking option	Equivalent to approx. 0.06% of general rates revenue	Equivalent to approx. 0.09-0.15% of general rates revenue	Equivalent to approx. 0.17% of general rates revenue
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3.3 Long-Term Plan timelines

Development of the next LTP will need to commence in parallel with work on next year's Annual Plan. Staff recommend initiating early community engagement in November and December this year, focusing on input around community outcomes and spending priorities. Initial strategic direction would then be provided by the new Council in February 2026. In November, staff will present the incoming Council with a proposed outline for the LTP engagement and consultation approach, including opportunities for Elected Members to actively support the process.

Note that for AP Option 3 (and AP Option 2 if applicable) the LTP Amendment would require an audit of the Consultation Document (CD) and the LTP Amendment as well to be factored in to the timeframes, so Feb/March for the CD and late May/Early June for the LTP Amendment.

	2025/26										2026/27										2027/28						
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
AP Option 1	Elections	EM/Induction	S						D	A																	
AP Option 2			S	C?					D	A																	
AP Option 3			S	C					D	A																	
Water CCO				work to set up and transfer																							
LTP27			E	E	S										S	S	S						S	C	D		A
<div>S= strategic direction provided</div> <div>E= early engagement</div> <div>C= consultation</div> <div>D= deliberations</div> <div>A= adoption</div>																											

3.4 Contextual information will be provided to inform decisions

As part of setting the direction for next year's Annual Plan, the new Council will be provided with a suite of contextual information through the Induction programme and initial Council meetings in November and December. This will include:

- 1) **Overview of key Corporate Planning processes:** the purpose of the LTP and Annual Plan processes and key milestones, including opportunities for Elected Member direction setting and community engagement.
- 2) **Environmental Scan for District:** key population, demographic and economic information for the District; the latest local government cost index predictions; key externally driven risks and opportunities we need to respond to; data on extent of affordability of rates in our District.
- 3) **Historical and future trends in council costs and revenues:** historical rates data and cost drivers; comparison of rates information and key operational metrics across a selection of councils.
- 4) **Current Council priorities:** as set out in the LTP 2024-34 and key Council strategies and plans.

- 5) **Operational efficiency gains and savings and challenges:** Operational efficiencies and budget reductions achieved over the past two years as well as budget pressures and challenges including depreciation and reducing NZTA funding.
- 6) **High risk unbudgeted expenditure:** remaining unbudgeted operational activities that cannot be funded from budget re-prioritisation or efficiency gains.
- 7) **Budget starting point:** for 2026-27 based on Year 3 LTP.
- 8) **Engagement and consultation plans:** ideas for how we can conduct early engagement with community and options for obtaining feedback from community through consultation period in a more efficient manner, including alternatives to traditional 'hearings'.

4 Financial/budget considerations / Ngā pānga pūtea/tahua

There are no immediate financial considerations. But depending on the strategic choice made by the new Council on the shape of the 2026-27 Annual Plan, there could be impacts on revenues and costs, debt and financial benchmarks. There will also be differing operational costs depending on the level of staff time/resource and engagement and audit costs under the chosen approach. A breakdown of the estimated operational costs expressed as a proportion of general rates under each option is provided in the table below. Note these estimates are based on several assumptions about the amount of analysis required for each option, meetings and number of staff involved. Actual costs may vary.

Cost item	Option 1: Continue with the current LTP	Option 2: Continue to run deficit budgets, where everyday funding does not match everyday expenses	Option 3: Start again with a new plan
Total costs:	Equivalent to approx. 0.06% of general rates revenue	Equivalent to approx. 0.09-0.15% of general rates revenue	Equivalent to approx. 0.17% of general rates revenue

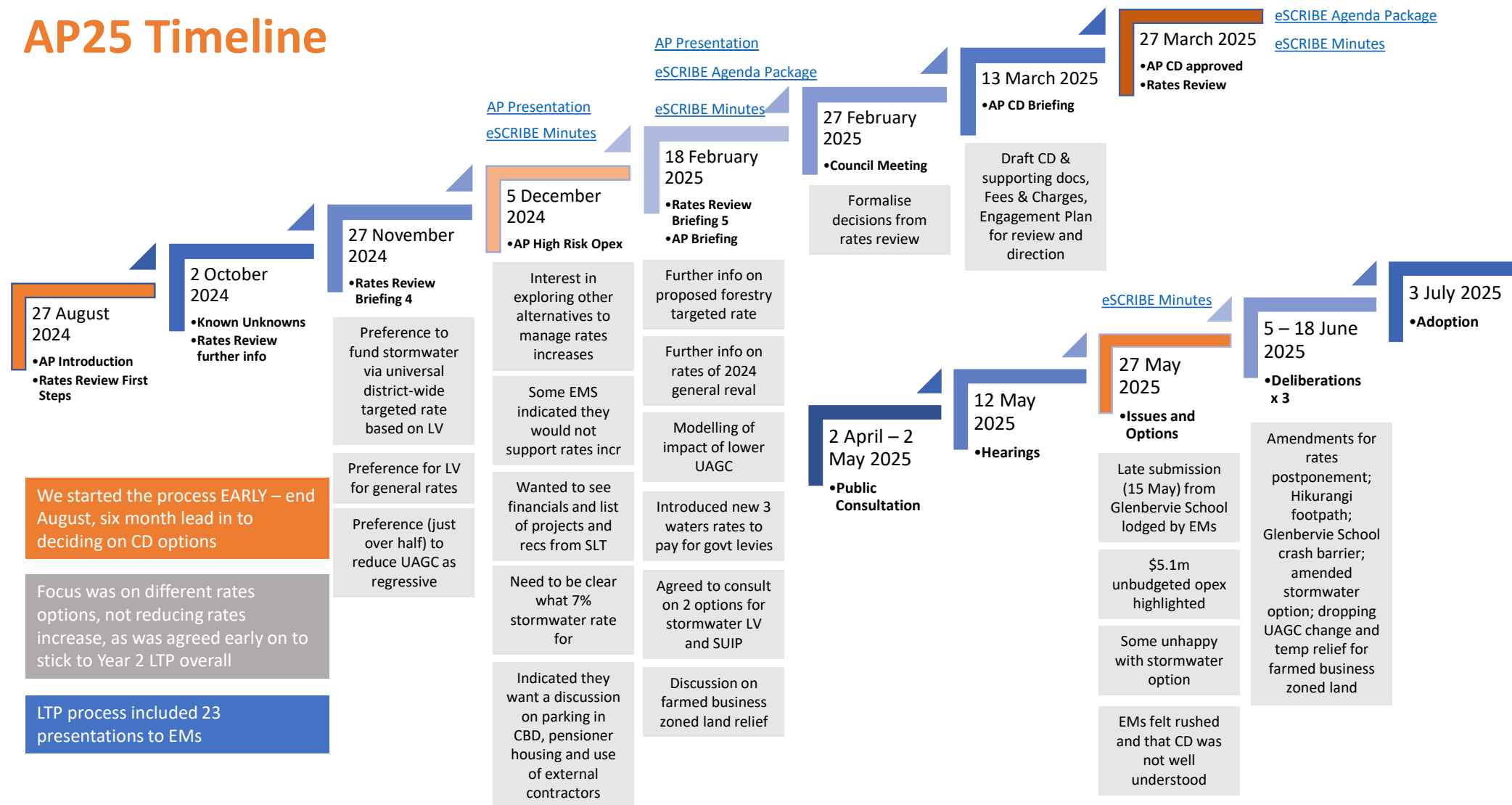
5 Significance and engagement / Te Hira me te Arawhiti

The matters of this Agenda do not trigger the significance criteria outlined in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, and the public will be informed via agenda publication on Council's website.

6 Attachments / Ngā Tāpiritanga

Attachment 1: Annual Plan 2025-26 timeline

AP25 Timeline



2025-26 Annual Plan cost saving measures of other councils

*Based on reviewing agenda reports and AP documents from Council websites – not necessarily definitive/100% accurate

Council	population	2025 general rates incr	LTP incr	Change from LTP	Net debt % revenue	Balanced Budget met	Budget cuts across Council	Reschedule capital projects	Cessation or cuts of services	Other funding mechanism	Contract reviews	Consultant reductions	Insurance adjustments	Reduction in service levels	Land sales or property reviews	Staff cuts
All councils	86,000	10.0%	11.3%	-1.9%	164%	55%	67%	57%	29%	29%	24%	24%	24%	19%	19%	14%
Hastings	89,200	15.0%	15.0%	-	250%	met	●	●			●		●			●
Far North	73,500	11.3%	11.3%	-	56%	met	●									
Whangarei	100,500	9.7%	10.7%	-1.0%	121%	met	●	●			●	●	●			
Horowhenua	38,200	9.9%	9.9%	-	226%	not met	●	●					●	●		
Kaipara	26,800	8.3%	8.9%	-0.6%	71%	met	●	●		●		●				
Manawātū	33,700	5.99%	7.56%	-1.6%	164%	not met				●						
Tararua	19,050	7.3%	11.8%	-4.5%	128%	met	●	●			●			●	●	
Selwyn	86,000	14.2%	14.2%	-	141%	not met	Stuck to LTP Year 2									
Timaru	50,100	9.0%	12.0%	-3.0%	170%	not met	●		●		●	●		●	●	●
Napier	66,800	7.9%	11.7%	-3.8%	71%	not met	●	●	●						●	
Palmerston North	91,300	6.6%	7.7%	-1.1%	177%	met	●	●								
New Plymouth	90,300	9.9%	10.3%	-0.4%	48%	not met	●	●	●	●				●		
Dunedin	136,000	10.7%	-		110%	met				●						
Hutt City	112,300	12.6%	13.4%	-0.8%	185%	not met	●									
Rotorua Lakes	77,100	8.6%	9.8%	-1.2%	196%	met	●	●	●		●	●				
Christchurch	412,000	6.6%	7.58%	-1.0%	189%	not met		●	●	●			●		●	
Queenstown Lakes	51,000	13.5%	13.5%	-	254%	met	Stuck to LTP Year 2									
Hamilton	192,000	15.5%	15.5%	-	239%	not met	Stuck to LTP Year 2									
Tauranga	161,300	9.9%	12.5%	-2.6%	268%	met	●	●				●				●
Porirua	61,800	6.39%	10.0%	-3.6%	150%	not met	●		●	●						
Wellington	209,900	12.0%	12.8%	-0.8%	223%	met		●					●			

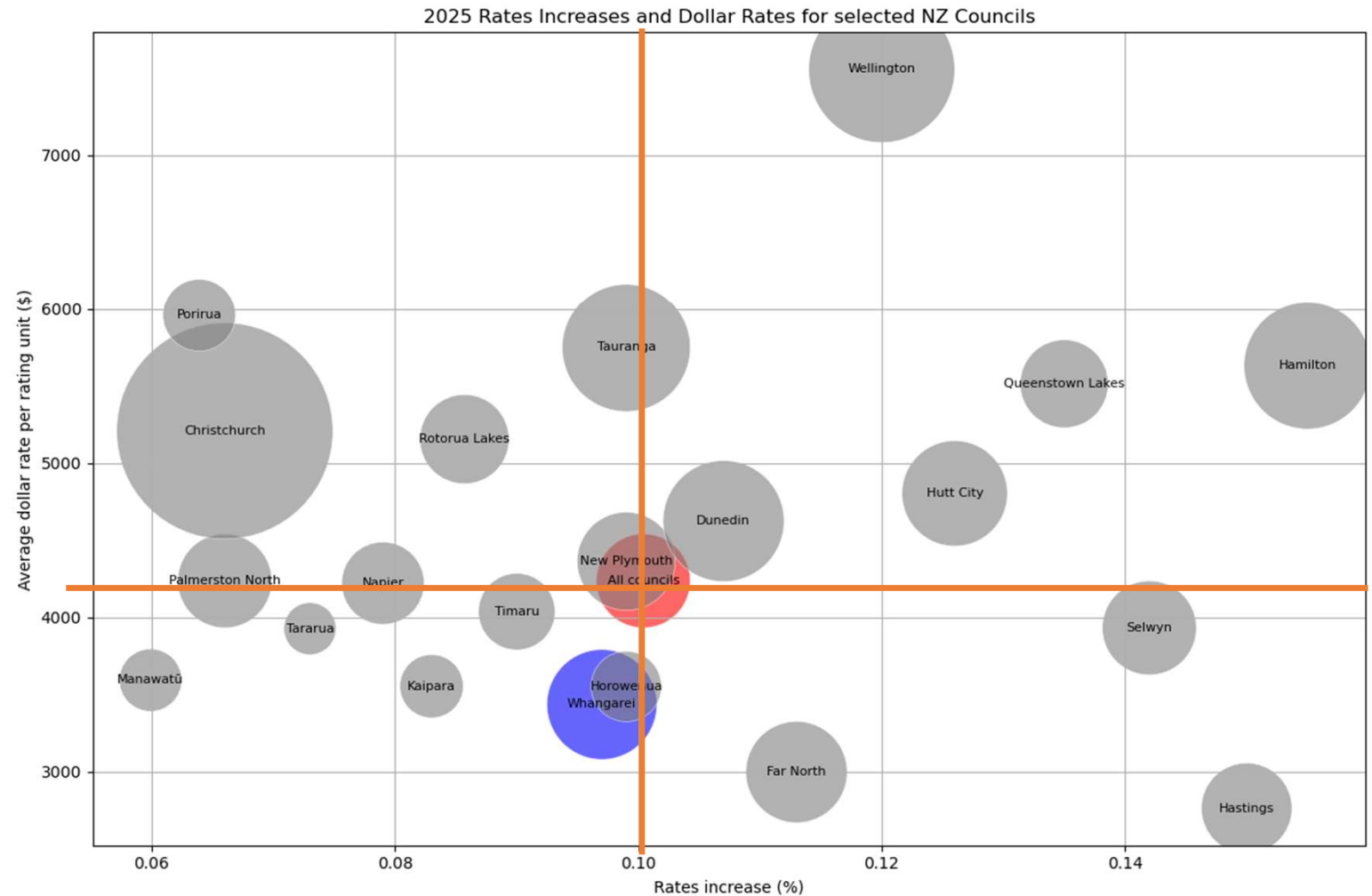
2025 rates increases and dollar rates for selected NZ councils

Whangarei **below**
median for both \$ rates
and % increase

Median rate = \$4,238
Median % incr = 10.0%

WHG rate = \$3,436
WHG % incr = 9.7%

\$ rate is calculated as total rates
revenue divided by total
rating/rateable units



Other comparatives with other councils

45% do not have a balanced budget

Average net debt % to revenue **164%**
WHG **121%**

[2025 Rates Dashboard Exposes Out of Control Rates Burden - Taxpayers' Union](#)

Council	population	rating units	total rates / rating unit	2025 general rates incr	LTP incr	Change from LTP	Net debt % revenue	Balanced Budget met	Everyday Funding
All councils	86,000	34,430	4,238	10.0%	11.3%	-1.9%	164%	55%	
Hastings	89,200	32,000	2,763	15.0%	15.0%	-	250%	met	Yr 4
Far North	73,500	40,045	2,998	11.3%	11.3%	-	56%	met	
Whangarei	100,500	47,190	3,436	9.7%	10.7%	-1.0%	121%	met	
Horowhenua	38,200	19,379	3,553	9.9%	9.9%	-	226%	not met	-
Kaipara	26,800	15,643	3,555	8.3%	8.9%	-0.6%	71%	met	-
Manawatū	33,700	15,180	3,594	5.99%	7.56%	-1.6%	164%	not met	-
Tararua	19,050	10,567	3,928	7.3%	11.8%	-4.5%	128%	met	
Selwyn	86,000	34,500	3,933	14.2%	14.2%	-	141%	not met	-
Timaru	50,100	22,905	4,038	9.0%	12.0%	-3.0%	170%	not met	
Napier	66,800	26,500	4,222	7.9%	11.7%	-3.8%	71%	not met	-
Palmerston North	91,300	34,430	4,238	6.6%	7.7%	-1.1%	177%	met	
New Plymouth	90,300	37,566	4,365	9.9%	10.3%	-0.4%	48%	not met	
Dunedin	136,000	57,207	4,625	10.7%	-		110%	met	Yr 4
Hutt City	112,300	43,380	4,804	12.6%	13.4%	-0.8%	185%	not met	Yr 4
Rotorua Lakes	77,100	31,018	5,156	8.6%	9.8%	-1.2%	196%	met	
Christchurch	412,000	182,689	5,209	6.6%	7.58%	-1.0%	189%	not met	-
Queenstown Lakes	51,000	30,226	5,515	13.5%	13.5%	-	254%	met	
Hamilton	192,000	62,836	5,633	15.5%	15.5%	-	239%	not met	-
Tauranga	161,300	63,998	5,750	9.9%	12.5%	-2.6%	268%	met	
Porirua	61,800	20,572	5,962	6.39%	10.0%	-3.6%	150%	not met	
Wellington	209,900	83,238	7,556	12.0%	12.8%	-0.8%	223%	met	

Other comparatives with other councils

WHG lowest expenses per capita
\$2,097

WHG lowest personnel costs per
capita **\$350**

And greatest number of
population served per capita **251**

		Christ- church	Dunedin	Hamilton	Hutt City	Tauranga	Wellington	Whangarei
RANKING		AA-	AA-	A	A+	A+	AA	AA
Rates / Capita	Low = 1	5	4	2	3	6	7	1
Rates / Rating Unit	Low = 1	4	2	5	3	5	7	1
Revenue / Capita	Low = 1	6	4	5	3	2	7	1
Expenses / Capita	Low = 1	4	5	3	2	6	7	1
Surplus (Deficit) /Capita	Low = 1	3	6	1	4	7	5	2
Debt / Capita	Low = 1	5	3	4	2	6	7	1
Personnel Costs / Capita	Low = 1	3	4	5	2	6	7	1
Population / FTE	High = 1	3	4	5	2	7	6	1
NUMERIC								
Rates / Capita	\$	1,668	1,500	1,332	1,355	1,812	2,245	1,247
Rates / Rating Unit	\$	3,794	3,565	4,070	3,646	4,792	5,918	2,700
Revenue / Capita	\$	2,852	2,614	2,780	2,498	2,497	4,114	2,274
Expenses / Capita	\$	2,735	2,877	2,502	2,384	3,020	4,074	2,097
Surplus (Deficit) /Capita	\$	118	(263)	278	115	(523)	40	178
Debt / Capita	\$	5,886	4,282	5,271	4,158	6,670	7,429	2,297
Personnel Costs / Capita	\$	508	611	639	429	657	718	350
Population / FTE	#	179	158	151	215	142	143	251
PERCENTAGE COMPARED TO WHANGAREI								
Rates / Capita		134%	120%	107%	109%	145%	180%	100%
Rates / Rating Unit		140%	132%	151%	135%	177%	219%	100%
Revenue / Capita		125%	115%	122%	110%	110%	181%	100%
Expenses / Capita		130%	137%	119%	114%	144%	194%	100%
Surplus (Deficit) /Capita		66%	-148%	157%	64%	-294%	23%	100%
Debt / Capita		256%	186%	229%	181%	290%	323%	100%
Personnel Costs / Capita		145%	175%	183%	122%	188%	205%	100%
Population / FTE		71%	63%	60%	85%	57%	57%	100%

2.2 Elected Member Capex Fund – Consideration of Proposals

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 11th September 2025
Reporting officer: Jim Sephton, GM Transport and Community Infrastructure

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To seek Council Direction on proposals received for consideration as part of the Elected Member Capex Fund.

2 Background / Horopaki

The 2024 Long Term Plan largely focuses on renewals investment. Several Level of Service Programmes and Projects were deferred in the capital programme.

However, during deliberations on the 29th May 2024, Council resolved to create an Elected Member fund for projects they wish to give priority to within the community facilities and services area.

11. Approve an additional capital budget of \$1 m in each of years 1, 2 and 3 for the investigation and building of public conveniences in Maungatapere Village Year 1, Parua Bay Year 2 and Pīpiwai area in Year 3 and other priority level projects within the community facilities and services activity. Any expenditure on these projects will require authorisation by resolution of full Council and will be recognised within the appropriate activity. This will be debt funded. (Elected Member Proposed Change).

\$1million in each of years 1, 2, and 3 was provided for. Once inflated this is Yr 1 \$1.029m, Yr 2 \$1.0516m, Yr 3 \$1.0758m. This was budgeted as 100% capex spend.

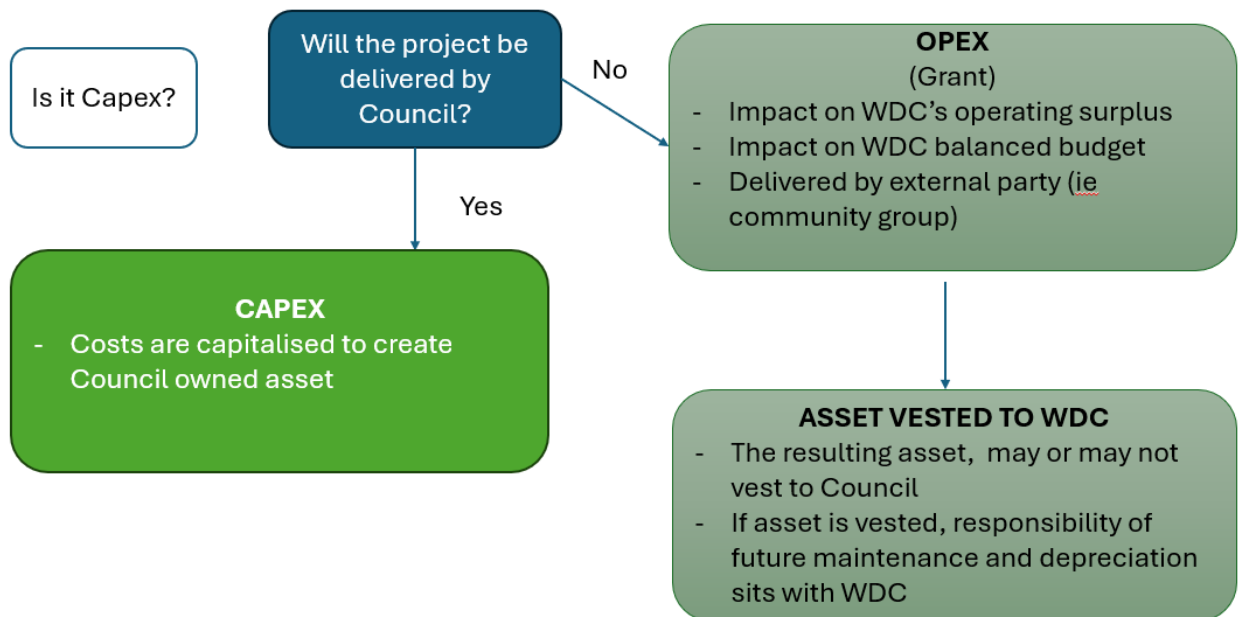
The three toilets have been procured and delivered as a package of works.

- The Maungatapere Toilet has been completed.
- Toilets at Pīpiwai and Parua Bay have been procured and are in the process of being installed.

In the 2025-26 Annual Plan deliberations, Council requested that the Hikurangi Footpath Project also be funded through the EM fund. The budget will formally be approved through Council following a public tender process. As per the resolution, this will be recognised within the Transportation Activity.

There is circa \$1.3m budget remaining (subject to the Hikurangi Footpath Tender).

The Elected Member Capex Fund has been budgeted as Capital expenditure. This means that the investment needs to be delivered by Council and result in a Council Asset. Payments made to a Community Group are treated as an operating expense for Council and are outside the scope of this budget. The diagram below illustrates these considerations.



Operational and Capital Grants are outside the scope of the EM Capex Budget and cannot be funded through this mechanism. However there are alternative channels for communities to access these funds.

At a Council Workshop on 23rd July 2025, Council provided direction on how the process for allocating budget.

1. Proposals are raised by Elected Member and information provided to Infrastructure Chair and GM Transportation and Community Infrastructure.
2. Officers review application from Elected Member to provide advice and ensure that they are Capital Projects
3. Council Briefing is held to allow all Elected Members to review the applications and provide feedback
4. Council Meeting for decisions to be made
5. Budget is allocated to the appropriate activity

It is noted that the prioritisation of projects is not being driven by normal Asset Management / Long Term Plan considerations or staff advice. Prioritisation sits with Elected Members as per the expectations of the original resolution.

The direction from this briefing will be used to formulate a Council Decision Making Paper at the September Council meeting.

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

3.1 Proposals Received

Two proposals have been received by the Chair of the Infrastructure Committee which meet the general conditions of the Elected Member Capex Fund.

- Mangakahia Sports Complex – Car Park Upgrade
- Marsden Bay Toilet Block Renovation

A proposal was received for improvements to the Whananaki Toilet Block, however this is a private property and therefore any funding would be on the basis of a community grant.

Mangakahia Sports Complex – Car Park Upgrade

A letter was provided to Councilor Simon Reid on the 24th June (Attachment A) requesting funding to upgrade the car park to meet disability parking requirements. The upgrade (Attachment B) will enable more efficient use of the space and allow for 40% more parking spaces. No further information has been provided by the Club at this time.

The Mangakahia Sports Complex is on WDC Parks & Recreation land. There is a lease arrangement for the whole site which requires the club to maintain all the land as well as property.

Marsden Bay Toilet

A quote for works to upgrade the toilet at Marsden Bay has been received by Councilor Phil Halse. These quotes have been collated through representatives of the Rate Payers Group.

Upgrades to this toilet were not included in the Long Term Plan however it does not meet disability requirements and there is benefit in upgrading the facility. WDC officers are working with the nominated Contractor to assist them in meeting the requirements to become a WDC Contractor.

The two submissions have been evaluated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Evaluation of EM Capex Priority Fund

	Mangakahia Car Park	Marsden Bay Toilet
Investment need	Yes – Disability access and increased capacity	Yes – Disability Access and due a renovation
Asset Ownership	Council – but leased to the club who are currently responsible for maintenance	Council
Proposed works	Design will need to be developed with the club to confirm specifications and consequential opex implications.	What they are proposing looks good but need to discuss some components.
Request	\$660,000	\$80,000
Procurement & Delivery	Open market tender in accordance with Procurement Policy	Direct appointment of local contractor aligns with < \$100k. Need to work with head contractor to bring them on as a WDC Contractor.
Capital Funding	Yes	Yes
Value for Money	Open tender.	Reviewed by Asset Owner - Good price
H&S	Competent Contractor should be able to do the works.	Competent Contractor should be able to do the works. Nominated Contractor is working through the process to become Sitewise WDC Asset owner will engage electrical services separately
Conflicts of Interest	Cr Reid is the appointed Elected Member for the Sports Complex	

3.2 Risks

There is a risk that decisions are being made in the Election Period. This risk was discussed at the 23rd July workshop and direction provided to staff that Elected Members are happy to proceed with these decisions as part of Business as usual.

There was a risk that funding of projects directly with community groups could bypass the Councils procurement policy. This has been mitigated as both proposals will be procured within Council Procurement Policy.

There was a risk that the projects would be Opex and not Capex, resulting in a threat to the Finance Strategy. This has been mitigated by ensuring that the proposals are aligned with the capitalization policy and that all work is commissioned by Council (rather than a grant).

Mangakahia Car Park

There is a risk that we do not have a design. This will be mitigated through the development of a basic design for the purpose of tendering.

There is a risk that maintenance costs might increase. Under the current lease these costs sit with the club.

There is a risk that this creates a precedence for Sports Clubs who have a lease that requires them to take responsibility for fields, carparks etc. This could be mitigated by changing the conditions of the lease for all clubs so that there is more balance between what the clubs and WDC are responsible for.

Marsden Bay Toilet

There is a safety risk in undertaking work through unapproved Contractors. This is being mitigated through the onboarding of the Contractor who is a licensed builder. Electrical works will be undertaken by a WDC contractor.

There is a risk that materials are used which increase whole of life/operational costs. To mitigate this, the Business Owner will work with the proposed Contractor to align expectations.

3.3 Council decision

A formal decision of Council is required under the current resolution. A Paper will be prepared for the next Council meeting to allow a decision to be made. This will incorporate feedback from this Briefing.

As stated earlier, it is not the role of Officers to prioritise the projects that have been brought for consideration. Prioritisation will be undertaken by Elected Members for this specific fund.

If Council approves the project(s), the budget will be reallocated to the appropriate activity.

4 Financial/budget considerations / Ngā pānga pūtea/tahua

Current budgets and allocations are indicated below.

It is noted that there is an expectation of the Hikurangi Footpath being delivered for \$400k however the current Engineers Estimate of \$900k has been used at this stage.

	LTP			
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total
Budget	1,029,000	1,051,600	1,075,800	3,156,400
Committed:				-
<i>Maungatapere Toilet</i>	308,700			308,700
<i>Pipiwai Toilet</i>		315,480		315,480
<i>Parua Bay</i>		322,740		322,740
<i>Hikurangi Footpath</i>		400,000	500,000	900,000
Available budget	720,300	13,380	575,800	1,309,480

There is \$1.3m available for consideration.

The total budget requirement is \$740k (including contingency).

- Mangakahia Sports Car Park - \$660,000
- One Tree Point Toilet Refurbishment - \$80,000

There is sufficient funding available for the projects that have been nominated.

It is noted that this would only leave circa \$600k for the incoming Council to consider for year 3 projects.



Mangakahia Sports & Community Complex Inc.
PDC Maungatapere, Northland 0152

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E: mangakahiasportscomplex@gmail.com

W: www.mangakahiacomplex.org.nz

24 June 2025

To Cr Simon Reid

Dear Simon Reid

As Ward Councilor, we ask that you to take our request funding for the Mangakahia Sports and Community Complex carpark upgrade to WDC for consideration.

This upgrade will meet requirements for 8 spaces dedicated to Disability Parking. Currently our disabled parking is challenging for those who need it because of the rough and uneven surface. We need the disabled parking positioned in the western carpark because it gives access to our wheelchair ramp and will provide close proximity to the area of the Complex that our Gardening Club use, which is the club with the highest need for these spaces.

The carparking space is under pressure at our busiest times and the upgrade will enable more efficient use of the space and allow for 40% more parking spaces. It will also allow better drainage and cleaner discharge on to the road reserve. The upgrade will also provide dedicated parking for the public toilets at the Complex which are used by many making the journey on SH15.

The Mangakahia Sports and Community Complex is the hub of our community which covers the Mangakahia Valley to Twin Bridges and Whatitiri, Poroti, Titoki, Kara, Kokopu and Maungatapere.

The facility is used by the community for socialising, functions, meetings, events, and participating in the many clubs and organisations that use our facility
 Rugby, squash, dance club, Lions Club, football, gardening club, fitness club, yoga, palates, pickleball.

The four local schools use our facility, especially neighbouring Poroti School which uses it as their school hall for prizegiving's etc.

We have a close association with our neighbouring Maungaronga Marae who use our facilities and our eastern carpark when extra capacity is needed. They are planning to build a new Marae, which will be bigger than the current one, and because they will lose parking spaces on their property we have agreed to provide parking space for them in our western carpark. The Complex is also a central point between four Marae in the area and is at times a convenient place for meetings between them.

Our committee is focused on fostering community. Providing opportunities for the people in our community to interact and to engage in activities that are social, cultural, sporting, recreational and educational is our aim.

Over recent years the Complex has undergone extensive upgrades which we have funded through fundraising. Our annual Summer Festival and a Garden Ramble every alternate year are major contributors. The upgrades have amounted to expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars so far over the last 10 years with the job not finished. Over the next 5 years we will face similar levels of expenditure to bring the Complex up to code with new fire exits, fire walls and much more required for Council compliance. We will fund these upgrades through our own fundraising programme and planning is well underway.

Unfortunately, it means the car park upgrade is beyond our capacity, and will be for the foreseeable future, so we ask for your assistance by funding this project. This is a major part of our upgrades to the facilities and will make it one of the enhancements that will continue to increase the use and participation by our community in active recreation

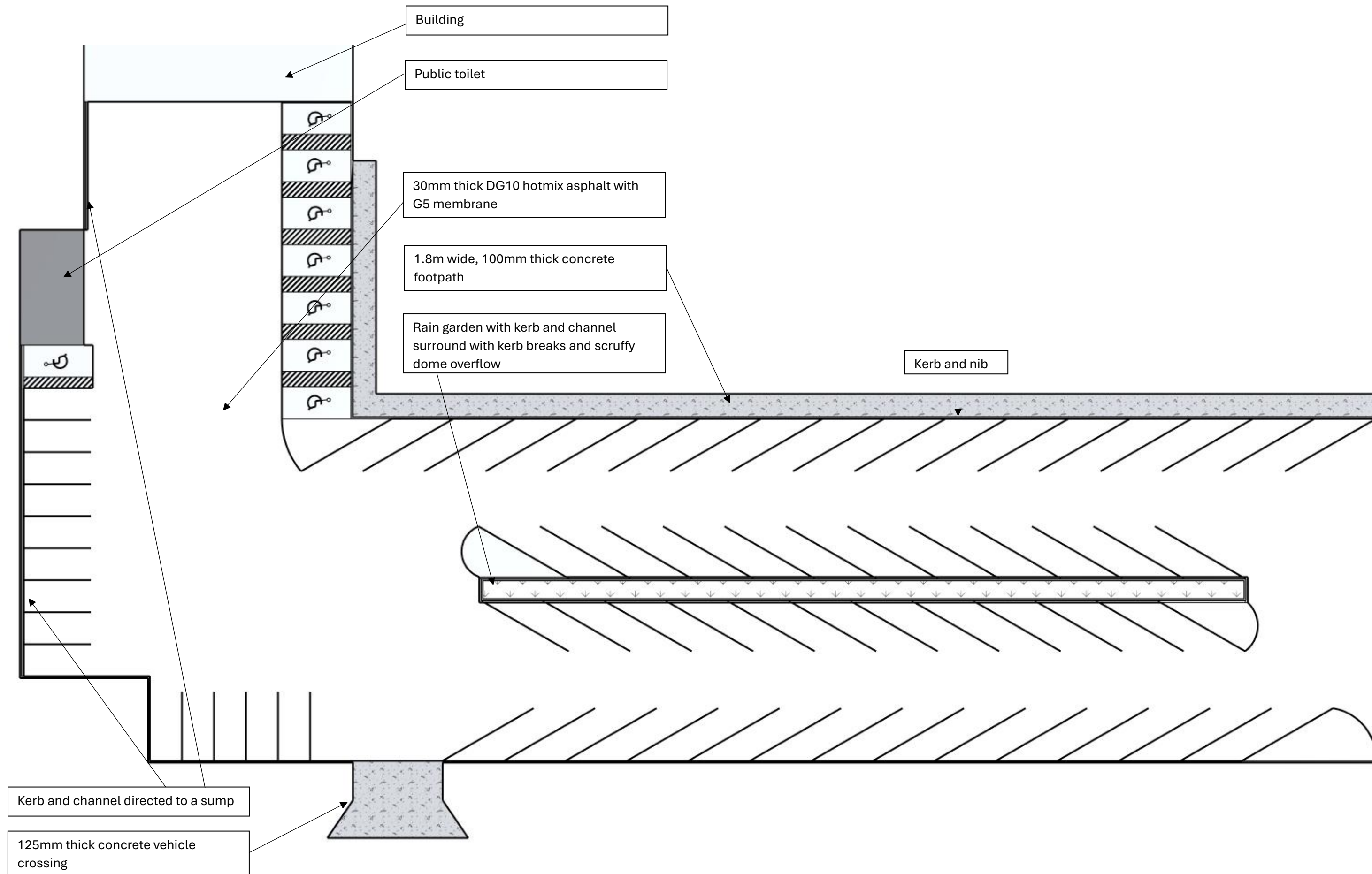
I attach a quote prepared by Robinson Asphalts.

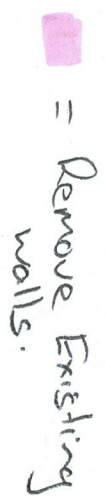
Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Grieve". The script is cursive and fluid.

Robin Grieve
Chairman Mangakahia Sports and Community Complex Inc

Mangakahia Sports Complex Carpark Design

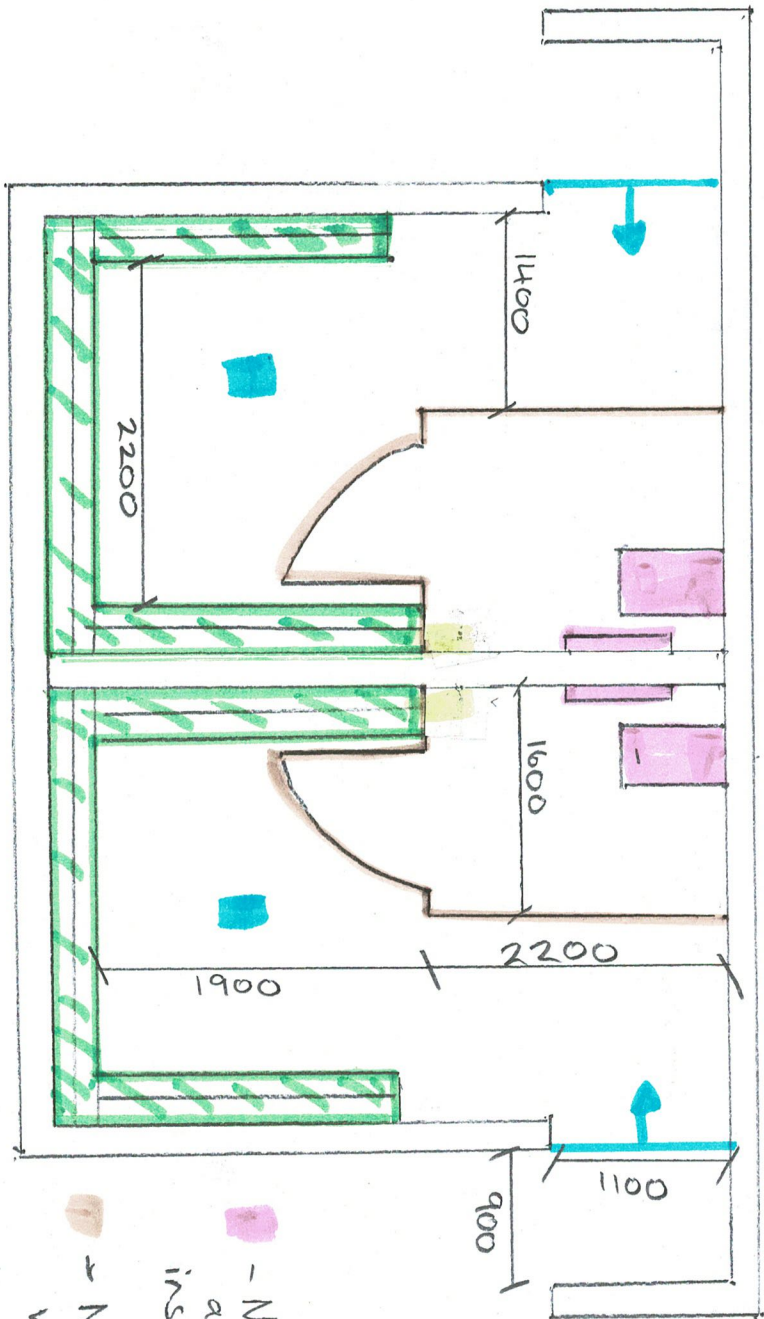




= Remove Existing walls.

Proposed New Toilet Block Layout.

30



- - New Degadur resurfacing colour TBC
- - New Stainless Steel accessible Toilet & handrail installed to NZS 4121:2001
- - New Duraplen cubicle wall & door
- - Existing seating to remain cut back to suit new layout
- - Existing handbasins to be reused.

2.3 Ruakaka Wastewater Treatment Plant – Project Update

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 11 September 2025
Reporting officer: Simon Charles, Manager Wastewater

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

This report provides Council with an update on the Ruakākā Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade project.

2 Background / Horopaki

Council obtained consent for an upgrade to the Ruakākā Wastewater Treatment Plant with ocean outfall in 2012. Construction of the new facility was delayed due to lower demand than expected in the following years. However, growth has accelerated, and the project is now proceeding with funding allocated in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 of \$85million over 10 years.

A condition of the consent was that prior to construction commencing Council must consider alternative discharge options. This condition was a response to objections from some sections of the community and Patuharakeke hapū to ocean outfall as a discharge method.

The Treatment Plant Upgrade project has been underway for around a year. In this time, the project team has been established and since January this year, investigations into the four key workstreams have been undertaken:

- 1) Treatment Plant (including biosolids processing)
- 2) Ocean Outfall
- 3) Alternative Discharge Options
- 4) Interim Solution – to create interim discharge capacity to allow land development to recommence lawfully.

In addition to these workstreams, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board Incorporated (PTITB) have led the application of the cultural principles and values framework across all of these workstreams. This paper summarises progress on these investigations which will inform the business case.

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

3.1 Project Progress Update

Ruakaka WWTP Upgrade Project	Duration	Completion	Status
------------------------------	----------	------------	--------

Wastewater Treatment Plant	68 Mths	Nov - 2030	
Scoping & Procurement	6 Mths	Apr - 2025	Completed
Preliminary Design	9 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Business Case	5 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Land Acquisition/Lease (Risk)	13 Mths	Apr - 2026	On Track
Detail Design	11 Mths	Oct - 2026	Not Started
Construction Procurement	6 Mths	Feb - 2027	Not Started
Construction	28 Mths	May - 2029	Not Started
Proving Period	12 Mths	Apr - 2029	Not Started
Ocean Outfall	60 Mths	Apr - 2030	
Scoping & Procurement	6 Mths	Apr - 2025	Completed
Preliminary Design	9 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Business Case	5 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Consents / Concessions (Risk)	14 Mths	Jul - 2026	Not Started
Design & Construct Procurement	6 Mths	Jul - 2026	Not Started
Detail Design	6 Mths	Jul - 2027	Not Started
Construction	24 Mths	May - 2029	Not Started
Proving Period	4 Mths	Sep - 2029	Not Started
Alternative Discharge Options	58 Mths	Oct - 2029	
Scoping & Procurement	6 Mths	Apr - 2025	Completed
Preliminary Design	9 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Business Case	5 Mths	Nov - 2025	On Track
Consents / Concessions / Easements	16 Mths	Nov - 2026	Not Started
Detail Design	8 Mths	Apr - 2027	Not Started
Construction Procurement	5 Mths	Jul - 2027	Not Started
Construction	20 Mths	Feb - 2029	Not Started
Proving Period	6 Mths	Aug - 2029	Not Started
Interim Solution	17 Mths	Sep - 2026	
Consents / Concessions / Easements	5 Mths	Sept - 2025	Not Started

Detail Design	3 Mths	Nov - 2025	Not Started
Construction Procurement	3 Mths	Feb - 2026	Not Started
Construction	4 Mths	July – 2026	Not Started
Proving Period	2 Mths	Sept – 2026	Not Started
Key Decision Milestones		Expected Due	
Professional Services Awards	CE	Apr - 2025	Completed
Options Approval	Business Owner	Jun - 2025	Completed
Business Case Approval	GM	Nov - 2025	On Track
Land Buy/Lease Approval WWTP	Council	Feb - 2026	On Track
Procurement Plan D&B Ocean Outfall	Council	Nov - 2025	Not Started
Consents Pre-Approval Ocean Outfall	GM	Apr - 2026	Not Started
Consents Pre-Approval Alternative	GM	May - 2026	Not Started
Ocean Outfall / Alternative Approval	Council?	May - 2026	Not Started
WWTP Construction Procurement Plan	Council	Jul - 2026	Not Started
Procurement Plan Alternative	Council	Nov - 2026	Not Started
WWTP Construction Contract Approval	Council	Feb - 2027	Not Started
Alternative Construction Approval	Council	Jul - 2027	Not Started

3.2 Workstream Detail:

Treatment Plant Update:

Preferred Location – Rama Road:

Investigations have been undertaken to identify a preferred location for the treatment plant. This has now been identified as being the existing WDC owned Rama Road site and officers are progressing with more detailed assessments to confirm site suitability which will include geotechnical and topography analysis.

The use of the Rama Road site does present a challenge as it is currently used for discharging treated wastewater from the existing plant. Investigations are underway as to how to manage the transition and identify alternative areas for discharge while the new plant is being constructed.

Preferred Plant Technology: Multi-stage Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) reactor and Membrane Tanks

A preferred methodology has been identified as being a BNR and membrane tank plant configured to remove nutrients. This is preferred as it produces consistently high-quality treated wastewater with the additional benefit of being a compact technology with lower construction costs in what is likely to be a challenging site (including deep sandy ground conditions.)

This part of the project is currently undertaking preliminary design that looks in more detail at the equipment, layout, scope, construction, risks and more accurate expected costs.

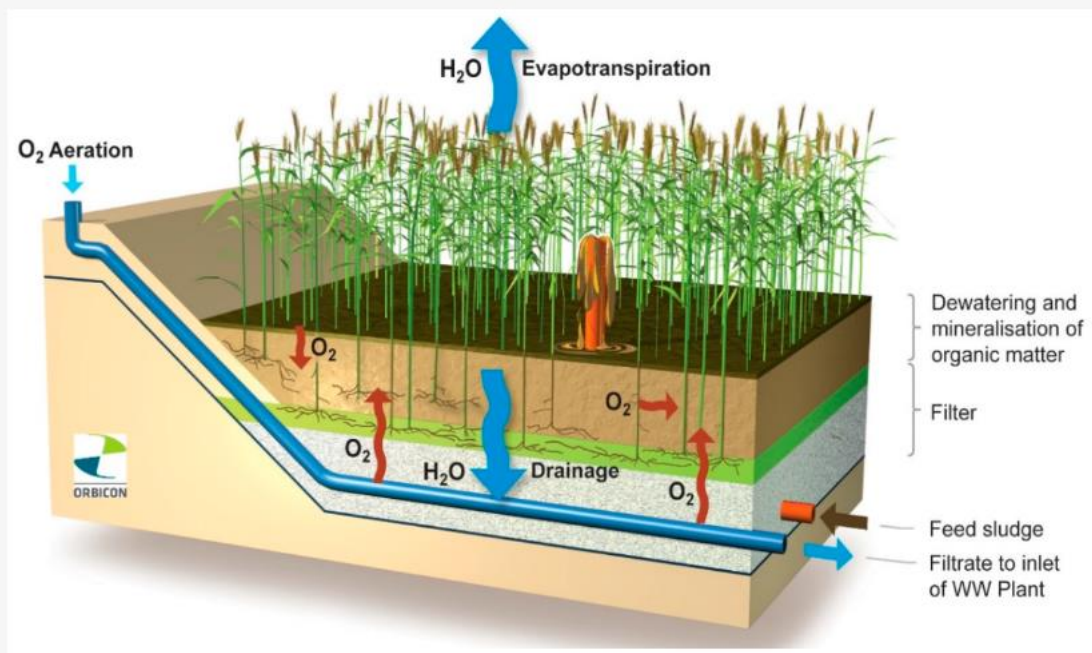
Preferred Sludge Treatment Method: Reed Bed

The team have identified sludge reed beds as a suitable sludge treatment method. This technology is used widely in Europe and Australia. It has been researched by NIWA with pilot trials in Hastings and Hamilton, although it is not currently used in New Zealand. In the next few months, WDC will be initiating a pilot scale trial which will inform the selection of native plants. The method uses plants to assist in the dewatering and stabilisation of waste sludge over a period of 8 to 10 years.

The long treatment process ensures that pathogenic bacteria have died off, making it safe for reuse. It forms a soil like material with little or no odour and is suitable for beneficial reuse (eg forestry, horticulture or land rehabilitation).



Figure 1. Schematic cross-section of a sludge treatment reed bed (STRB) system indicating the sludge layer, the porous media layer, the feeding pipes, and the drainage network (courtesy of Orbicon).



The reed beds sit in lined basins to avoid any contamination of soil or water. Excess liquid is returned to the treatment plant. The beds are proposed to be accommodated at the Rama Road site.

Summary:

In extreme flow situations e.g. a heavy rainfall event, excess flows entering the inlet works will be diverted to one of the existing treatment ponds which will be retained for emergency storage, before returning the wastewater to the Rama Road site. This emergency storage could also be used for operations and maintenance activities as required.

The BNR and membrane tank has several significant benefits over other treatment methods:

- Most efficient aeration system to provide air for treatment
- Consistently high-quality effluent with very low organic and nutrient content
- Disinfected effluent with < 1 E coli.
- Effluent can be used for many reuse applications in the future
- Compact plant which lowers tank sizes and construction costs, particularly on foundation works on the sandy soils of the site.
- Automated plant with low operator attendance
- Membrane filtration minimises the discharge of microplastics to the ocean, although they are retained in the biosolids.

The sludge reed beds is a methodology that offers several significant benefits:

- Very simple technology using gravity filtration and nature-based system
- Low carbon emissions - the solution does not produce methane, unlike many other methods for biosolids and minimises transport of material
- Low energy use – the only energy requirements are for returning the filtered water from the reed bed back to the treatment plant
- No chemical treatment needed for the sludge

- Low operator time - the only time needed for the reed beds is for minor weeding and deciding which beds to feed.
- Degrades 40-50% of the material put into the treatment plant.
- Meets class A1 for biosolids for reuse.
- Minimal sludge disposal management as sludge removed from site after 8-10 years, and periodically thereafter.

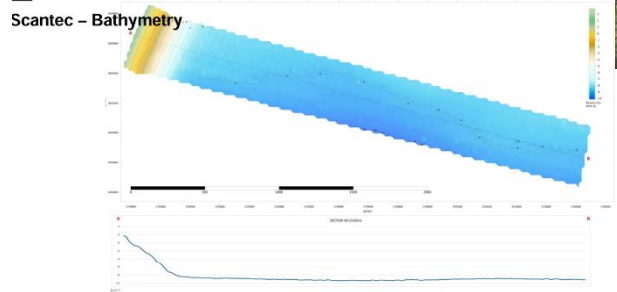
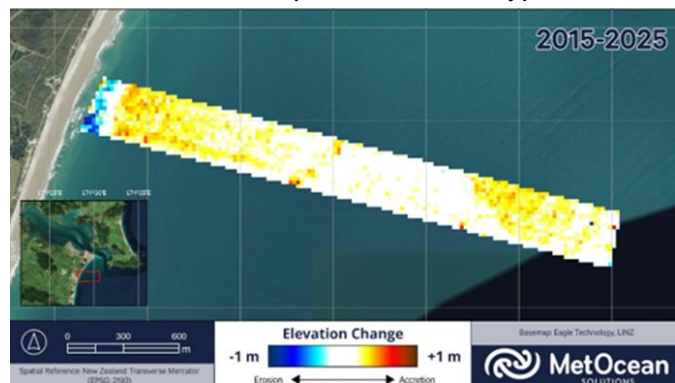
Ocean Outfall

The ocean outfall aspect of the project is already consented and as such a significant amount of environmental investigation work and an initial high-level design was done. Although this is already consented, some parts of the community and hapū still hold an opposition to this option. However, due to time past and for completeness this work was reassessed, gap analysis completed and a more detailed consideration of construction methods was undertaken to confirm the findings remained valid.

Investigations completed:

The recent package of investigations included:

- Contractor discussions – to establish the level of interest and that there were no major concerns or obstacles identified by possible contractors with experience in this type of work.
- Oceanography - Coastal processes (water levels, wind effects, wave processes, coastal currents, nearshore seabed morphology and beach storm erosion). The detailed information provided clarity around how far the drilled section needed to go beyond the foreshore and how deep the trenched section needed to be to avoid erosion. It also provides data on suitable working windows that the contractor can expect during construction.
- Geotechnical investigations – Identified sand down to at least 30m; groundwater level is at 2m below ground level. The geotechnical investigations also identified the ground material is very consistent, reducing the risks facing trenchless technology.
- Terrestrial – Borehole and CPT's, lab testing completed
- Marine – Bathymetry and geophysical scanning identified that the safe zone to complete the trenchless section is quite close to the shore, with consistent materials. This reduces risks around the use of a trenchless option.
- Contaminated land testing – Confirmed that ground conditions are unlikely to present a risk to human health during shallow works disturbance during construction.
- Topographical survey – Identified that there is enough high to allow gravity feed for the pipeline for general operation and then just flushing approximately once a day with a pumped and higher velocity to keep the pipe clean.
- Pipeline string assembly locations – identified that multiple options exist.



- Trenchless Technology options – multiple installation methodologies are feasible which should result in a cost-effective solution.
- Design philosophy –Gravity line that is flushed daily using a pump. A storage facility is required to do this pumping. This would be installed straight after the land contact facility.

The outcome of the investigations identified no obstacles to the construction of the ocean outfall pipeline as consented. The pipeline will be 3m under sand, anchored to the seabed with large concrete blocks and with approximately 16 diffusers around 3km out to sea.

The findings of these investigations are, in some cases, more positive than expected. The detailed work on both the ground and seabed profiles show better conditions than expected with relatively low levels of risk facing the construction process.

The next step is to complete the business case and concept design.

Alternative Discharge Options

Conditions of the existing resource consent was imposed to address the community and cultural preference for wastewater not to be discharged directly into the sea. The conditions require consideration of alternative discharge options for the disposal of treated wastewater to identify a more acceptable alternative, that may also be lower cost both for the users of the wastewater system and in terms of construction.

WSP Limited were contracted to undertake the assessment of alternative discharge options, starting with a definition of the programme of requirements followed by review of existing relevant project documentation and a gap analysis.

Based on available literature and previous optioneering studies, a longlist of options was developed, followed by a detailed assessment of each. This assessment lead to a shortlist of viable options. These are presented here and will be presented to the community for feedback later in September. Following this, all options will be evaluated to identify the preferred option/s in terms of their technical, environmental and cultural characteristics.

Figure 3 illustrates a cultural concept which will form a key part of the preferred alternative discharge option.

Evaluation will also include cost and carbon footprint before the business case is finalized to allow Council to make an informed choice between ocean outfall or alternative discharge as the most suitable option.



Figure 3 - Te Arawa Concept - Rotorua Lakes District Council – (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvULxgXai2w>)

Investigations undertaken:

Flow Rates: The design of the WWTP will be phased as the population grows, however as outlined in “Whangārei District Council Ruakākā WWTP Upgrade – Flow and Load Estimates, PR023048, Draft February 2025”, the land application needs to accommodate the maximum 2084 Holiday Peak wet weather flow of 319 l/s which is three times the holiday peak daily dry weather flow. Investigations looked at each option to identify its flow rate capacity.

Contaminant Loads: There is currently no resource consent for any alternative discharge system. The design will be based on the medians provided in the resource consent for the ocean outfall. However, due to these standards applying to open coastal water, standards for ammoniacal nitrogen and total phosphorus are not given in the consent. Discussions with WDC’s technical specialist confirmed that a maximum concentration of 2 mg/L of ammoniacal nitrogen (NH₄-N) and 9 mg/L of phosphorus (TP) in the treated wastewater should be used in the options assessment phase. Phosphorus is relatively simple and cost

effective to remove at the treatment plant and TP is likely to be a significant parameter for any wetland style land contact bed.

The wastewater will be treated to a very high quality at the new treatment plant. This means odour release from any of the options is likely to be negligible.

Receiving Water Quality:

An option which requires resource consent to discharge to surface water must meet the water and sediment quality standards in Policy H.3 of the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland (Appeals Version, February 2024) (Proposed Regional Plan) [Ref. 42]. The water quality standards are default values which were developed to recognise and protect aquatic ecology, human health, and natural character of different types of waterbodies.

Ammoniacal nitrogen was identified as the key limiting parameter for all the discharge to surface water options (estuary, coastal, tidal, groundwater, rivers, streams and drains), for this reason it is the key focus of the water quality standards.

Further investigation looked at the impacts of the investigation findings above on the three key receiving environments and the options identified were evaluated accordingly.

Options Shortlist

There are currently four viable alternative discharge options that have been shortlisted from the long list options and multi-criteria analysis process. Investigations and concept designs are currently underway for each of these options, this detail will be used to inform the business case. Further investigation into sustainable ammoniacal nitrogen levels is a key focus of this work.

Option	Summary	Status	Issues
3A	Land contact at WDC owned land parcel(s) at McCathie Road discharge to Ruakākā River.	Viable	Considered late in the options assessment – similar technical aspects to Option 3, without land access challenges.
7	Land contact at WDC owned land parcel at Bream Bay College with discharge to Ruakākā River.	Viable	Viable in technical terms. Position from community and school is not yet known.
8	Discharge to Channel Infrastructure (Marsden Point Refinery) stormwater detention pond to harbour outfall diffuser.	Viable	Channel Infrastructure open to further conversations. Capacity limitations on infrastructure will require upgrade and consent amendments. Modelling for Mair Bank dilution levels.
II	Land contact at Rama Road WWTP site with discharge to Ruakākā River via pipeline.	Viable	The land contact feature can be situated near the WWTP and the water thereafter to the Ruakākā River.

Interim Solution

Preferred location – Zones 6B and 7:

The initial scope of increasing flows to Rama Rd was stopped as it would require mitigation measures which could not be implemented onsite (i.e., interception drains). Several discharge options were then modelled, with the preferred option being disposal of the additional treated wastewater from the existing treatment plant to Zones 6B & 7. Most effects assessments have been submitted by the Consultants for internal staff review and feedback. Due to Rama Road not being a viable option, rescoping to find a suitable option has delayed submitting the consent and concession application by three weeks.

Environmental impact:

The vegetation in the area is classified as having an abundance of pest plant with low ecological value. The site has some Kanuka but this is being adversely affected by the extensive pest plant infestations.

Impacts on on-site vegetation are likely to include some minor clearance for pipe laying. However, there will also be improvements as affected areas will be replanted in appropriate natives, replacing extensive exotic weed infestations. Department of Conservation have advised the team to ensure that the effects management hierarchy of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 is followed with regard to the avoidance of effects on indigenous biodiversity. Options for community involvement in the revegetation activity are being explored.



Fencing:

It is likely that the project will include some fencing of discharge areas due to the risk to public health. However, there is no evidence of public use of the areas other than the pipeline track itself, which will remain open to the public. Any discharge areas will have a 30m buffer to protect the public from any risk of spray drift and to prevent damage to infrastructure. In addition, discharge will be stopped during high wind conditions.

Wildlife:

Measures to protect local wildlife (eg seabirds nesting areas and lizard habitat) are likely to form part of the various authorisation applications. Officers have been working with consultants and with DoC to ensure these measures are appropriate. Previous studies into lizard habitat undertaken a couple of years ago have been used as a reference. However, it is likely that a condition of the concession would be that an active flora and fauna management plan is put in place, in partnership with Patuharakeke.

Interim Solution Public Engagement:

A public engagement session was held on 19 July at the Ruakākā Recreation Centre. 14 members of the community attended and had extensive conversations with officers present. This built on an earlier survey of the community, engagement with adjacent property owners and key stakeholder groups and agencies. The Community Liaison Group were invited to the engagement session. Although none were able to attend, they have been advised of the material that was presented and the feedback received. No significant obstacles were

identified and care has been taken to ensure the authorisation applications address any issues that were raised during pre-engagement.

3.3 Overall Project Engagement

Updates are being published in the Bream Bay News, on the Council project page and on social media. Engagement with key stakeholders for the specific workstreams has been an integral part of the investigations phases and will continue as appropriate.

Patuharakeke hosted a hui on 19 August to update attendees on the project progress. Around 30 people attended from Patuharakeke and also from Bream Bay's Coastal Care Trust. Participants were provided information on all four workstreams, along with more general information and details of the Maori principles guiding Patuharakeke's involvement. A question-and-answer session allowed time for further conversations around issues that were of interest to participants.

Engagement has been initiated with Bream Bay College to advise them of the investigations that are underway and to invite them to the planned 18 September Community Information session. This will also be promoted more broadly in the Bream Bay News and online to encourage as much participation as possible.

3.4 Next Steps

Investigations will continue to refine the options identified to date. .

The Business Case is scheduled for completion in late October or early November.

4 Financial/budget considerations / Ngā pānga pūtea/tahua

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The table included below provides an update on pend to date against overall project budget. It provides an update on the project which was funded in the 2024-34 LTP.

Project Description	Total Actual to June 2025	Yr2 (2025/26) Budget	Budget – Yr3 – Yr7	Total project Budget
Ruakaka WWTP & Disposal System	\$192,292	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ruakaka WWTP - Effluent Disposal	\$728,906	\$1,366,264	\$65,061,903	\$66,364,764
Ruakaka WWTP - Upgrade Design & Consent	\$912,184	\$3,070,075	\$22,958,518	\$26,129,175
Totals	\$1,833,385	\$4,436,399	\$88,020,421	\$92,493,939

5 Significance and engagement / Te Hira me te Arawhiti

The matters of this Agenda do not trigger the significance criteria outlined in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, and the public will be informed via agenda publication on the website.