

Whangarei District Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 5 June, 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 Marie Olsen
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid
Cr Paul Yovich

Not in Attendance

Cr Ken Couper
Cr Phoenix Ruka

Scribe D.Garner (Democracy Adviser)

Administrative matters

- Meeting livestreamed

1. Karakia/Prayer

Cr Deborah Harding opened the meeting with karakia.

2. Declarations of Interest / Take Whaipānga

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Apologies / Kore Tae Mai

Cr's Ken Couper, Phoenix Ruka (absent) and Paul Yovich (early departure).

Moved By Cr Carol Peters

Seconded By Cr Scott McKenzie

That the apologies be sustained.

Carried

4. Decision Reports / Whakatauripoata

4.1 2025-26 Annual Plan and Fees and Charges - Deliberations

Moved By His Worship the Mayor

Seconded By Cr Simon Reid

That the Council:

1. Notes and considers the 792 formal submissions received on the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan and the draft 2025-26 Fees and Charges consultations.
2. Will introduce a District-wide universal stormwater targeted rate of \$172.00 including Goods and Services Tax (GST) per separately used or inhabited parts of a rating unit.
3. Will set the Uniform Annual General Charge at \$901.00 including GST per separately used or inhabited parts (SUIP) of a rating unit as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP).
4. Will not proceed with the proposed temporary rates relief for farmed business-zoned land, consulted on in the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan.
5. Will increase general rates by 9.7% for the 2025-26 Annual Plan in recognition of the tough economic environment and the consequential financial hardships being faced by many ratepayers, noting that the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan included increasing general rates by an average of 10.7% as per the Financial Strategy approved in the 2024-34 LTP.
6. Notes that a 1% reduction in the general rates increase for 2025-26 will require ongoing operational cost reductions of approximately \$1 million so as not to deviate from the benchmarks set in the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. Staff propose that these cost reductions can be met by reducing operating budgets funded by general rates on a pro-rata basis
7. Will increase targeted rates for 2025-26 as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP:
 - a. Water rates of 5.7% (Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) plus 2.5%), which includes allowances for increased Central Government imposed levies and higher than expected costs as set out in the 2025-26 Annual Plan Consultation Document:

- i. An additional \$15.00 including GST, per SUIP, to the water supply charge, the availability water rate and the unmetered water rate to recover the Government imposed levy.
 - ii. An additional \$8.00 including GST, per SUIP residential wastewater connection and an additional \$5.00 including GST, per pan for non-residential connections to recover the Government imposed levy.
 - iii. Increased backflow preventer rates to recover higher than expected cost increases.
- b. Wastewater rates of 3.2% (LGCI).
- c. Flood protection rates for Hikurangi Flood Protection Scheme of 3.2% (LGCI).
- 8. Notes that growth will be allowed for in expected revenue from rates as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. This budget assumption is to account for growth in new rateable properties and allows for an additional 1.3% for general rates and stormwater, and 1% for water and wastewater.
- 9. Notes the submissions requesting \$3.5 million in Council support in 2025-26 towards the build of an indoor sports facility as part of stage 2 of the Ruakākā Recreation Centre development and the request be considered as part of the 2027-37 LTP.
- 10. Notes the request from Glenbervie School for an unspecified amount of funding in 2025-26 for a road safety barrier next to the school and that Staff will continue to engage with the school and the Ministry of Education.
- 11. Will increase the 2025-26 Fees and Charges as detailed within the Statement of Proposal.
- 12. Will approve the preparation of the final 2025-26 Annual Plan and the 2025-26 Fees and Charges scheduled for presentation for adoption to the June 2025 meeting of Council.

Amendment

Moved By Cr Gavin Benney
Seconded By Cr Scott McKenzie

That the Council:

1. Notes and considers the 792 formal submissions received on the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan and the draft 2025-26 Fees and Charges consultations.
2. Will introduce a District-wide universal stormwater targeted rate of \$172.00 including Goods and Services Tax (GST) per separately used or inhabited parts of a rating unit.
3. Will set the Uniform Annual General Charge at \$901.00 including GST per separately used or inhabited parts (SUIP) of a rating unit as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP).
4. Will not proceed with the proposed temporary rates relief for farmed business-zoned land, consulted on in the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan.
5. Will increase general rates by 9.7% for the 2025-26 Annual Plan in recognition of the tough economic environment and the consequential financial hardships being faced by many ratepayers, noting that the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan included increasing general rates by an average of 10.7% as per the Financial Strategy approved in the 2024-34 LTP.
6. Notes that a 1% reduction in the general rates increase for 2025-26 will require ongoing operational cost reductions of approximately \$1 million so as not to deviate from the benchmarks set in the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. Staff propose that these cost reductions can be met by reducing operating budgets funded by general rates on a pro-rata basis
7. Will increase targeted rates for 2025-26 as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP:
 - a. Water rates of 5.7% (Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) plus 2.5%), which includes allowances for increased Central Government imposed levies and higher than expected costs as set out in the 2025-26 Annual Plan Consultation Document:
 - i. An additional \$15.00 including GST, per SUIP, to the water supply charge, the availability water rate and the unmetered water rate to recover the Government imposed levy.
 - ii. An additional \$8.00 including GST, per SUIP residential wastewater connection and an additional \$5.00 including GST, per pan for non-residential connections to recover the Government imposed levy.

- iii. Increased backflow preventer rates to recover higher than expected cost increases.
 - b. Wastewater rates of 3.2% (LGCI).
 - c. Flood protection rates for Hikurangi Flood Protection Scheme of 3.2% (LGCI).
8. Notes that growth will be allowed for in expected revenue from rates as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. This budget assumption is to account for growth in new rateable properties and allows for an additional 1.3% for general rates and stormwater, and 1% for water and wastewater.
 9. Notes the submissions requesting \$3.5 million in Council support in 2025-26 towards the build of an indoor sports facility as part of stage 2 of the Ruakākā Recreation Centre development and the request be considered as part of the 2027-37 LTP.
 10. Commits \$30,000 for a road safety barrier alongside the Glenbervie School.
 11. Will increase the 2025-26 Fees and Charges as detailed within the Statement of Proposal.
 12. Will approve the preparation of the final 2025-26 Annual Plan and the 2025-26 Fees and Charges scheduled for presentation for adoption to the June 2025 meeting of Council.
 13. That Council commits \$400,000 plus GST as a community grant to the Hikurangi Business Association for the replacement of the footpath in King Street Hikurangi, on the western side of the main road from the Four Square to Union Street, subject to conditions that will be worked through with staff alongside Cr Simon Reid, Cr Scott McKenzie and Cr Gavin Benney by 26 June 2025.

Cr Paul Yovich left the meeting at 9:47am during Item 4.1.

On the amendment being put Cr Simon Reid called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
His Worship the Mayor		X	
Cr Gavin Benney	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Jayne Golightly	X		
Cr Phil Halse	X		

Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Patrick Holmes	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Results	8	3	0

The amendment was Carried (8 to 3)

Amendment

Moved By Cr Phil Halse

Seconded By Cr Jayne Golightly

That the Council:

1. Notes and considers the 792 formal submissions received on the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan and the draft 2025-26 Fees and Charges consultations.
2. Will introduce a District-wide universal stormwater targeted rate of \$172.00 including Goods and Services Tax (GST) per separately used or inhabited parts of a rating unit.
3. Will set the Uniform Annual General Charge at \$901.00 including GST per separately used or inhabited parts (SUIP) of a rating unit as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP).
4. Will not proceed with the proposed temporary rates relief for farmed business-zoned land, consulted on in the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan.
5. Will increase general rates by 9.7% for the 2025-26 Annual Plan in recognition of the tough economic environment and the consequential financial hardships being faced by many ratepayers, noting that the draft 2025-26 Annual Plan included increasing general rates by an average of 10.7% as per the Financial Strategy approved in the 2024-34 LTP.
6. Notes that a 1% reduction in the general rates increase for 2025-26 will require ongoing operational cost reductions of approximately \$1 million so as not to deviate from the benchmarks set in the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. Staff propose that these cost reductions can be met by reducing operating budgets funded by general rates on a pro-rata basis

7. Will increase targeted rates for 2025-26 as per the Financial Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP:
 - a. Water rates of 5.7% (Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) plus 2.5%), which includes allowances for increased Central Government imposed levies and higher than expected costs as set out in the 2025-26 Annual Plan Consultation Document:
 - i. An additional \$15.00 including GST, per SUIP, to the water supply charge, the availability water rate and the unmetered water rate to recover the Government imposed levy.
 - ii. An additional \$8.00 including GST, per SUIP residential wastewater connection and an additional \$5.00 including GST, per pan for non-residential connections to recover the Government imposed levy.
 - iii. Increased backflow preventer rates to recover higher than expected cost increases.
 - b. Wastewater rates of 3.2% (LGCI).
 - c. Flood protection rates for Hikurangi Flood Protection Scheme
8. Strategy for the 2024-34 LTP. This budget assumption is to account for growth in new rateable properties and allows for an additional 1.3% for general rates and stormwater, and 1% for water and wastewater.
9. Notes the submissions requesting \$3.5 million in Council support in 2025-26 towards the build of an indoor sports facility as part of stage 2 of the Ruakākā Recreation Centre development and the request be considered as part of the 2027-37 LTP.
10. Commits \$30,000 for a road safety barrier alongside the Glenbervie School.
11. Will increase the 2025-26 Fees and Charges as detailed within the Statement of Proposal.
12. Will approve the preparation of the final 2025-26 Annual Plan and the 2025-26 Fees and Charges scheduled for presentation for adoption to the June 2025 meeting of Council.
13. That Council commits \$400,000 plus GST as a community grant to the Hikurangi Business Association for the replacement of the footpath in King Street Hikurangi, on the western side of the main road from the Four Square to Union Street, subject to conditions that will be worked through with staff alongside Cr Simon Reid, Cr Scott McKenzie and Cr Gavin Benney by 26 June 2025.

14. That Whangarei District Council grants a rates postponement of \$300,000 for a period of two years to the property owners of HKRS Holdings.

On the amendment being put Cr Phil Halse called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
His Worship the Mayor	X		
Cr Gavin Benney	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Jayne Golightly	X		
Cr Phil Halse	X		
Cr Deborah Harding			X
Cr Patrick Holmes		X	
Cr Scott McKenzie			X
Cr Marie Olsen	X		
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid	X		

Results

The amendment was Carried (8 to 1)

The substantive motion was taken in parts.

On the substantive motion being put, Cr Scott McKenzie called for a division on recommendations 1 to 14 excluding recommendations 10 and 13:

	For	Against	Abstain
His Worship the Mayor	X		
Cr Gavin Benney			X
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Jayne Golightly		X	
Cr Phil Halse		X	
Cr Deborah Harding			X
Cr Patrick Holmes		X	
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Results	4	5	2

The substantive motion (recommendations 1 to 14 excluding recommendations 10 and 13) was Lost (4 to 5)

Cr Scott McKenzie called for a division on recommendations 10 and 13:

	For	Against	Abstain
His Worship the Mayor		X	
Cr Gavin Benney	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Jayne Golightly	X		
Cr Phil Halse	X		
Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Patrick Holmes	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Results	8	3	0

Recommendations 10 and 13 of the substantive motion were Carried (8 to 3)

A break was taken from 10:59am to 11:19am following Item 4.1.

5. Public Excluded Business / Rāhui Tangata

There was no business conducted in public excluded.

6. Closure of Meeting / Te katinga o te Hui

The meeting concluded at 11:21am.

Confirmed this 26th day of June 2025

His Worship the Mayor (Chairperson)