



# **2027-2037 LONG TERM PLAN JOURNEY**

## **The big picture at-a-glance**

**TE HAERENGA O TE LONG TERM PLAN 2027-2037**  
**He paku titiro i te tirohanga whānui**

As at March 2026



Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti  
**GISBORNE**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Mō te pukapuka nei | About this booklet

This booklet provides an easy-to-read overview of the current environment and key factors influencing the 2027–2037 Long Term Plan (LTP), helping ensure everyone has a shared understanding of the context and key considerations for the LTP. Links to related documents and further information can be found at the back.

The contents are correct as at March 2026. The booklet will be updated as required throughout the development of the 2027–2037 LTP journey.

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## He aha te LTP? | What is the LTP?

The Long Term Plan (LTP) is Council's 10-year plan for services, infrastructure and investment in our region. It sets out what Council plans to deliver and invest in over the next decade, including:

- The services and infrastructure Council will provide.
- What projects and investments are planned.
- How much they will cost.
- How they will be funded.
- The level of service our community can expect.

Under the Local Government Act 2002, councils must have a Long Term Plan covering at least ten years and adopt a new plan every three years. This keeps the plan up to date and allows the community to provide input on Council's priorities.

Annual Plans are prepared in the years between LTPs.

The LTP is developed through planning, financial modelling, workshops, engagement and community consultation.

The LTP sits within a wider planning and reporting framework that helps ensure transparency, accountability and regular reporting back to the community.

The diagram below provides an overview of Council's planning and reporting framework and how the LTP fits within it.



## Audit and Assurance

Independent audit and reporting requirements help ensure Council's plans and performance are transparent to the community.

The LTP is audited by the Office of the Auditor-General to ensure information, assumptions and process meet legal requirements.

Two audits occur — one of the Consultation Document and one of the final LTP.

The Annual Report reports on Council's performance against the commitments set out in the LTP.

## Councillor roles

Under the Local Government Act 2002, elected members are responsible for:

- Setting Council's strategic direction.
- Balancing community outcomes with affordability.
- Making priorities and trade-offs clear for the community.
- Adopting the 2027-2037 LTP.

## Iwi participation

- The Local Government Act 2002 requires Council to create meaningful opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision making.
- The Resource Management Act 1991 recognises Māori interests in natural and physical resources and supports working in partnership with tangata whenua.
- Council will engage early with mana whenua, guided by Council's Tairāwhiti Piritahi: Fostering Māori Participation in Council Decision-Making Policy and Tūtakitanga tangata whenua.
- Iwi bring valuable perspectives that help shape strategic direction, priorities and long term outcomes for Tairāwhiti.
- This approach supports early, open dialogue and helps ensure iwi views and aspirations are understood and considered.

## Rautaki pou tarāwaho | Strategic framework

The strategic framework sets the direction for the LTP. It identifies what Council aims to achieve and the priorities that will guide decision-making, work programmes and investment.

### What is the strategic framework?

Developed through workshops, the strategic framework sets out:

- Our vision — what we aspire to achieve over the next ten years.
- Our purpose — Council's role in achieving that vision.
- Our mission — what we will do.
- Our community outcomes — the benefits for our community.
- Our strategic priorities\* — the areas we will focus on to achieve the vision.

*\*Strategic priorities also help inform Council's strategic risks.*

### Once approved by Council, the draft strategic framework:

- Provides the strategic direction for inclusion in the 2027-2037 LTP Consultation Document.
- Guides the key documents that form the LTP, as well as documents developed during those ten years: Annual Plans, strategies and Annual Reports.
- Helps inform performance measures and prioritise replace projects with work programmes for the draft 2027–2037 LTP Consultation Document.
- Provides the community with a clear picture of what Council aims to achieve and how services will contribute to community outcomes.

## Te uiui hapori me te kōrerorero Community engagement and consultation

The Local Government Act 2002 and best practice require councils to undertake early engagement and a minimum of four weeks formal consultation on any Long Term Plan.

### Timeline

Early engagement  
**JUNE / JULY 26**

Helping inform Council in developing the  
formal 2027- 2037 LTP consultation

Formal consultation  
**MARCH / APRIL 27**

Helping shape the final 2027-2037 LTP for  
adoption by Council in **June 2027**

## Te Mahere Ara o te LTP 2027-2037

### The 2027-2037 LTP Roadmap

#### Preparation



JUN 25 - JUN 26

1

- Programme management
- Draft Environmental Scan
- Asset condition & performance
- Councillor induction, culture & training
- Activity grouping review
- Activity and Asset management plan template and guide
- Communications and engagement planning, including engagement with iwi

#### Strategic Direction



JUL 25 - AUG 26

2

- Councillor workshops - Strategic Framework
- Early engagement with iwi and community to inform strategic direction and priority setting
- Draft Activity & Asset Management Plans
- Infrastructure strategy review
- Development contribution policy review
- Growth & forecasting assumptions
- Stocktake: Review/draft key strategies & policies
- Review assumptions & implications
- Develop Draft Regional Land/Public Transport Plans [RLTP/RPTP]

#### Investment Needed



AUG - SEP 26

3

- Budgets
- Review levels of service & performance measures
- Prioritisation criteria/tool
- Rates modelling

To help guide the LTP journey, we've developed a LTP Roadmap. This provides a clear view of the key phases from now through to adoption in June 2027 and how different workstreams progress and connect along the way.



*Please note: The roadmap timing is indicative and will continue to be refined as the programme progresses.*

## Ngā Mahere Whakahaere Mahinga me ngā Rawa

### Activity and Asset Management Plans

Activity and asset management plans are prepared across Council to outline how services and the assets that support them will be managed and funded over the long term.

Each activity area such as roading, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, parks and reserves, libraries or solid waste prepares an Activity Management Plan (AMP). These plans describe:

- The services provided to the community.
- The levels of service expected.
- Future demand and risks.
- The activities required to deliver those services.

Asset Management Plans focus on the physical assets that support Council services. They set out:

- The assets being managed (e.g. roads, pipes, buildings and parks infrastructure).
- The condition and performance of those assets.
- Renewal, maintenance and upgrade needs.
- The investment required to maintain or replace them.

Together, these plans help Council understand the services delivered across the organisation and the assets required to support them. This information informs the investment and prioritisation stages of the LTP.



## Rautaki Hanganga | Infrastructure Strategy

The Infrastructure Strategy sets the long-term direction for how Council will manage, maintain and fund its infrastructure assets.

As required under the Local Government Act 2002, councils must prepare an Infrastructure Strategy every three years as part of the LTP. The strategy looks ahead at least 30 years to help ensure Council's infrastructure remains reliable, resilient and affordable and is audited alongside the LTP.

It must cover Council-owned roads and footpaths and flood protection and control assets and may also include other infrastructure asset groups (excluding water services assets).

The Infrastructure Strategy is informed by the strategic direction and community outcomes set through the LTP.

The draft strategy will be finalised once the strategic direction is confirmed and Activity Management Plans (AMPs) for the 2027 LTP are completed.

Engagement on the strategy will occur through the LTP consultation process.

### Indicative timeline



# Ngā Tono Whakawhanake | Development Contributions

Development contributions are fees councils charge for new residential, commercial or industrial development. These fees help pay for the infrastructure needed to support growth, both now and in the future.

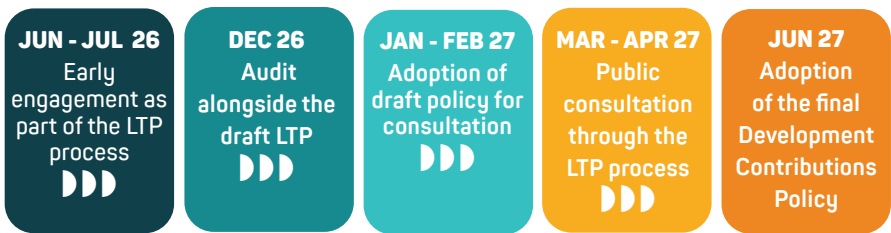
Development contributions are paid by “developers”. This can include people who subdivide land, build a new dwelling or commercial building, change the use of a building, or apply for a new service connection.

Under the Local Government Act 2002, councils must have a Development Contributions Policy (DCP) in their LTP in order to charge development contributions.

The DCP is normally reviewed every three years as part of the LTP process.

Due to Central Government planning to introduce development levies to replace development contributions in 2028, a full review of the DCP will not be undertaken for the 2027 LTP. Instead, a limited review is underway focusing on updated growth projections, project updates and recalculations and alignment with relevant settings.

## Indicative timeline



*NOTE: Updated growth projections will be available in May to inform wider LTP processes as well as updates to the DCP.*



## **Tairāwhiti 2050 - Te Poipoi Anamata o te Rohe (Mahere pūwāhi ā-rohe)**

### **Tairāwhiti 2050 – Shaping the Future of our Region (Regional spatial plan)**

Adopted by Council in 2020 following extensive community engagement, Tairāwhiti 2050 is the regional spatial plan.

Spatial plans guide how land use, infrastructure and services will develop over time. While they are not required by legislation, councils develop them under the Local Government Act 2002 to help coordinate long-term planning.

Tairāwhiti 2050 was co-developed by Council, tangata whenua, community organisations, agencies and the wider community to provide the region's shared vision and community outcomes for the next 30 years. In contrast, the LTP focuses on Council's priorities, services and investment over the next 10 years.

For the purposes of the LTP strategic framework workshops, Tairāwhiti 2050 is provided as background context to help ensure discussions align with the long-term direction already identified for the region.

*Note: Tairāwhiti 2050 remains the current regional spatial plan. Under the future resource management system, a new spatial plan will be developed to replace it.*

## **Rautaki Ahumoni | Financial Strategy**

The Financial Strategy outlines our overall approach to managing our finances and provides guidance when we make spending decisions. It sets our overall financial goal posts for the LTP, including sources of revenue to fund capital and operational costs and the impacts of our decisions on rates, debt, levels of service and investments.

This Strategy also guides Council's future funding decisions and, along with the Infrastructure Strategy, informs the capital and operational spending for the LTP.

## Our community outcomes

The eight desired community outcomes are:

### A driven and enabled community

Our whole community works together to achieve our dreams and aspirations.



### Resilient communities

Our economy, infrastructure and communities spring back from difficult situations. We care for and plan for future generations and act in partnership with our community.



### Vibrant city and townships

We live balanced and happy lives. Our city and townships are vibrant. We attract visitors from across Aotearoa and the world. Our rural townships have sustainable infrastructure and services and we all have bright futures.



### Connected and safe communities

Our communities and businesses prosper. We have a safe, efficient and integrated transport network. We invest in supplying safe walking, cycling and public transport, and we use new technologies to our advantage.



### We take sustainability seriously

We change the way we live and work in response to climate change. We work to lower carbon emissions and to improve our ecological footprint. We are more resilient, we end waste and we use our natural resources wisely.



### We celebrate our heritage

We are proud of and celebrate our Māori identity, culture, historic and natural heritage. We are all kaitiaki of our natural taonga which we protect for future generations.



### A diverse economy

We have world class facilities and services. Our people are in high value jobs and have a great standard of living. We have a strong economy which encourages entrepreneurship, innovation and we use emerging technologies.



### Delivering for and with Māori

Iwi are significant partners in Council's decision-making. Māori communities and economies are booming, supported by affordable housing, quality infrastructure and fulfilling employment opportunities.



## Our community wellbeings

Our community's wellbeing is made up of four areas which provide the foundation for developing Tairāwhiti 2050:



### Social wellbeing

Our communities have a deep sense of place and belonging. We are socially connected, recognise the importance of whakapapa and are committed to improving the education, health and safety outcomes of our people. Our communities are more resilient. Our townships have access to a network of fit-for purpose community facilities that reflect community need. We support affordable housing options and the sustainable management of urban growth.



### Cultural wellbeing

Communities and individuals experience vitality through kaitiakitanga, expressing their arts, heritage, history, identity and traditions. We work together to achieve common goals. Cultural activities are enabled by the activation of community spaces, our marae and place making.



### Environmental wellbeing

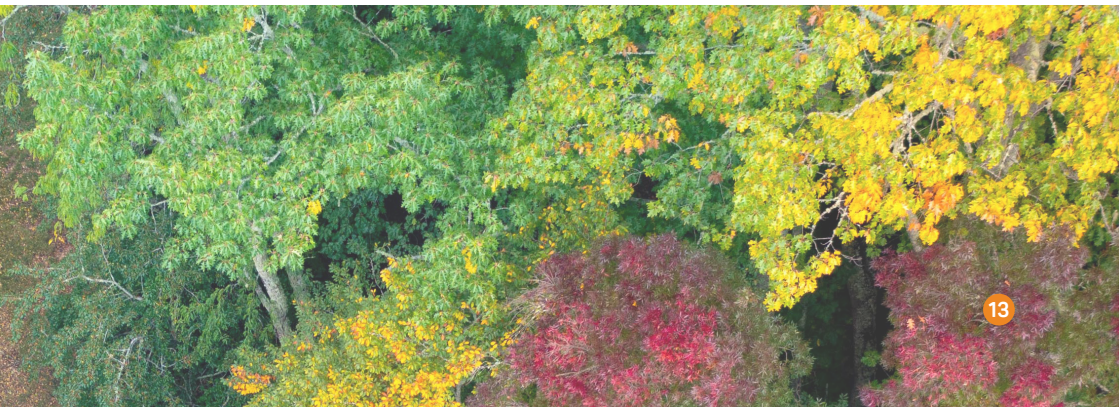
We maintain the health of our soils, air, fresh water and coastal environments. Our region's biodiversity is restored and protected. We improve land uses to ensure they are environmentally sustainable.



### Economic wellbeing

Our communities are financially secure and contribute to a growing regional economy. Infrastructure is provided to enable businesses to establish, thrive and create new employment opportunities. Our rural townships benefit directly from ongoing economic investment.

*NOTE: For detail, see Tairāwhiti 2050 page 6 onwards*



## Kōrero whakataki taiao whānui

### Environmental evidence base

#### Environmental Scan

Council prepares an Environmental Scan every three years to understand the environment in which it operates. It helps provide a clear picture of the trends, pressures and opportunities shaping Tairāwhiti so Council can plan with the bigger picture in mind.

The Environmental Scan:

- Provides an overview of the key internal and external factors that may affect Council over the next 10 years.
- Highlights trends, pressures and opportunities that could influence planning, budgets and levels of service.
- Examines regional, national and international influences that may shape Tairāwhiti.
- Supports and informs the development of the LTP.

The 2023 Environmental Scan provides the starting point for discussions as Council begins this LTP cycle for use as a baseline reference. It was developed to support and inform the strategic direction of and the prioritisation for the 2024–2027 Three Year Plan.

It uses a modified PESTLE analysis framework, examining five factors: political, social, economic, environmental and technological.

*Note: The draft 2026 Environmental Scan is being developed at a time of significant change including regional weather events, Central Government Reform, international conflict and fuel supply disruption. It will be completed in May 2026 and will incorporate the most recent data and information available at the time of analysis.*



## Our Tairāwhiti Bioregion – State of the Environment 2025

### Council's responsibilities

Under the Resource Management Act 1991, councils must monitor the state of the environment and publicly report the results at least every five years.

Council's State of the Environment 2025 report presents the results of environmental monitoring undertaken between 2018/2020 and 2025. The report helps identify environmental trends and areas that may require further investigation or action over the next decade.

### About the report

The report has three parts:

- Description of our natural ecosystems, topography, life-forms and natural features of Tairāwhiti and the environmental factors that shape the region's identity and wellbeing.
- Regional-scale (whole-of-bioregion) information separated into Rangi / Atmosphere, Whenua and Wai / Land and Water and Moana / Ocean. This covers rainfall, air quality, land cover, biodiversity, river and coastal water quality, recreational water quality, estuary health and long term shoreline changes.
- River catchments chapter providing monitoring results for our seven river catchments: Southern, Northern, Waiapu, Ūawa, Waimatā–Pakarae, Waipaoa and Motū.



## Ngā whakahoutanga a te Kāwana

### Central Government reforms

Central Government is undertaking a significant reform programme. Many of these reforms will have important implications for local government, including:

- Resource management reform — Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill to replace the Resource Management Act 1991.
- Narrowing the purpose and core functions of local government — Local Government Systems Improvements Bill.
- Emergency management reform — Emergency Management Bill.
- Proposed limits on council rates increases (i.e. rates capping).
- Development levies regime proposed to replace development contributions — Local Government (Infrastructure Funding and Financing) Amendment Bill.
- Simplifying local government (disestablishment of regional councils and replacement with boards of regional mayors, review of regional council functions).
- Review of national direction documents, including National Policy Statements and Environmental Standards.

The following summarises the key Central Government reforms that may impact Council and our role.

### Resource Management reform

Two new Acts are proposed to replace the Resource Management Act 1991:

- A Natural Environment Act, focused on managing environmental effects from the use of natural resources.
- A Planning Act, focused on enabling urban development and infrastructure.

The Natural Environment Bill and the Planning Bill were introduced to Parliament in December 2025 and are currently being considered by the Environment Select Committee.

### Why it matters

When the Natural Environment Act and Planning Act replace the Resource Management Act, councils will need to transition from existing district and regional plans to a new planning framework.

This will require significant policy, process and capability changes, including councils developing three new plans:

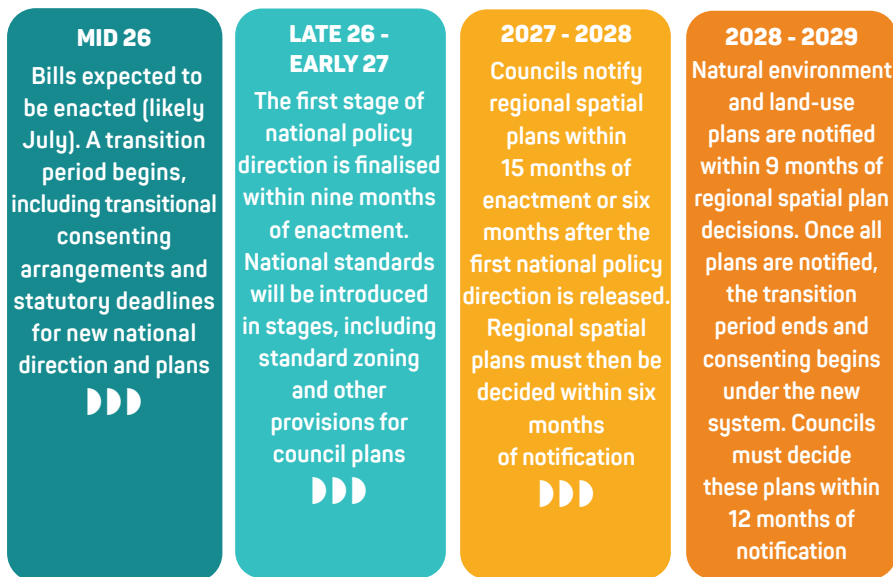
- A regional spatial plan.
- A natural environment plan.
- A land-use plan.

In the short to medium term this is likely to create uncertainty, additional workload and transition costs as the new system is implemented.

Some provisions in the Bills may also have financial implications for Council, particularly the proposed regulatory relief scheme.

Changes to provisions relating to Te Tiriti and mana whenua participation may also have implications for Council's relationships with iwi and hapū partners.

## Timeline



## Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill

The Government has introduced the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill, which proposes changes to the Local Government Act 2002 to refocus councils on core services such as roading, infrastructure, water and waste.

### Key proposals in the Bill include:

- Refocusing the statutory purpose of local government on core services, removing the four community wellbeings (social, economic, environmental and cultural) from the purpose statement.

- Requiring councils to prioritise core services when making financial decisions and setting rates.
- Introducing new financial performance measures and regular public reporting.
- Requiring councils to publicly disclose spending on contractors and consultants.
- Strengthening transparency and accountability requirements.
- Regulatory relief to reduce unnecessary compliance burdens.

## Timeline

**10 MAR 26**  
Second reading  
▶▶

**LATE MAR - EARLY APR 26**  
Third reading and completion  
of the parliamentary process

### Why it matters

If enacted, the Bill would narrow the statutory focus of councils to core services such as roading, infrastructure, water and waste. This may influence how councils prioritise spending and investment, with greater emphasis on core services and reducing investment in non-core activities.

New reporting and disclosure requirements would also increase transparency and accountability for councils.

### Emergency management reform (Emergency Management Bill)

Following the Inquiry into the North Island Severe Weather Events, the Government found the current emergency management system is not designed to respond effectively to large, widespread events affecting multiple regions. The inquiry also identified a major disconnect between communities and response agencies.

The proposed Emergency Management Bill will replace the Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002 and introduce changes to strengthen the national emergency management system.

Five key areas of reform include:

1. Give effect to a whole-of-society approach to emergency management.
2. Support and enable local government to deliver a consistent minimum standard of emergency management across New Zealand.
3. Professionalise and build the capability and capacity of the emergency management workforce.
4. Enable the different parts of the system to work better together.

5. Drive a strategic focus on implementation and investment to ensure delivery.

An Investment and Implementation Roadmap will be managed by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

## Timeline



## Why it matters

The reforms are expected to clarify roles and responsibilities within the emergency management system and introduce stronger training, accreditation and national standards.

For Tairāwhiti, the reforms are likely to strengthen the mandate of the Tairāwhiti Emergency Management Office (TEMO) and support more formal coordination with essential service providers, including clearer arrangements for information-sharing and restoration priorities.

## Rates capping

### What we know to date

On 1 December 2025, the Government agreed to progress a rates cap to help councils keep rates increases under control and reduce pressure on household budgets.

Rates capping would place a limit on how much councils can increase most rates each year.

A minimum increase is necessary so councils can continue to provide essential services like rubbish collection, council roads maintenance and the management of parks and libraries.

### What this means

- Councils would only be able to increase most rates by a set percentage each year, likely between 2% (minimum) and 4% (maximum).
- The cap would apply to most general and targeted rates unless specifically excluded.
- Councils could only increase rates above the maximum cap with approval from a regulator appointed by Central Government and only in exceptional circumstances (for example following a natural disaster, when councils would need to show how they will return to the target range).

- If councils need to raise revenue to pay for things outside of extreme circumstances, such as catching up on past underinvestment in infrastructure, they will need to apply to a regulator for approval. Councils would need to provide justification and explain how they will return to the target range over time.

## Timeline



*Note: Timing may change depending on the 2026 General Election.*

### Why it matters

If introduced, rates capping would limit how much councils can increase rates each year to meet rising costs, growth pressures or new regulatory requirements.

This could affect how councils fund infrastructure, maintain services and respond to rising costs.

Councils may need to prioritise spending, defer projects, reduce services or increase other charges



# Te Pōtinga Whenua 2026 | 2026 General Election

## Timeline

**1 OCTOBER 26**

Dissolution of Parliament. The current parliamentary term ends and the country prepares for the general election



**7 NOVEMBER 26**

Election Day



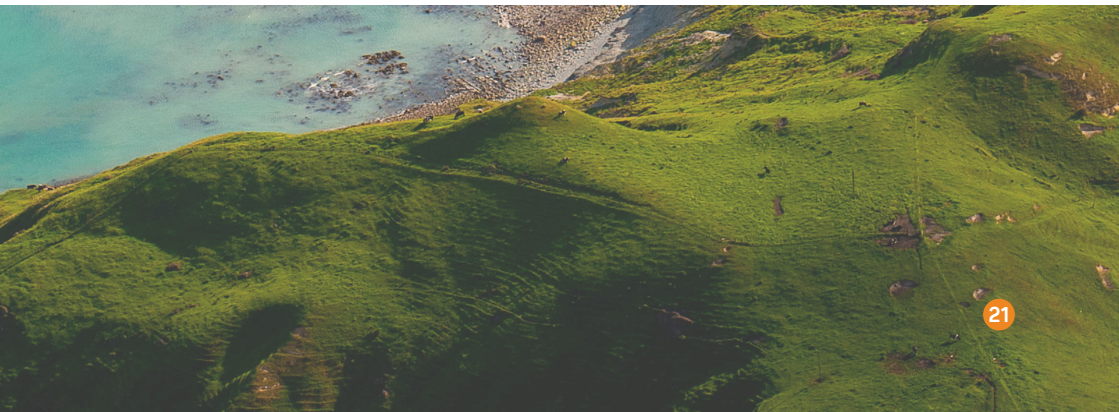
**27 NOVEMBER 26**

Official results for the 2026 General Election declared

## Why it matters

A general election can lead to changes in government, which may affect the legislation, policies and funding that guide how councils operate.

Changes in government priorities may influence national reforms, funding settings and regulations that affect local services and infrastructure. As a result, councils may need to update long term plans, budgets, work programmes and services to align with any new direction and expectations set by Central Government.



## Te Pakihi Ratonga Wai

### Water Services Business Unit (WSBU)

The region's Water Services Delivery Plan — Our Water, Our Way — was formally accepted by the Secretary for Local Government in October 2025 under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024.

From 1 July 2027, Council will move to a new water services delivery model that separates drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services from other Council operations.

A ring-fenced in-house Water Services Business Unit (WSBU) will manage water services governed by a dedicated 'Water Services Committee' to support partnership with mana whenua.

### Water Services Strategy and the LTP

The Water Services Strategy will be presented in a separate volume of the 2027–2037 Long Term Plan (Volume 2).

This reflects national ring-fencing requirements and separate audit and disclosure expectations for water services, while still keeping the WSBU fully connected to the rest of the LTP.

Ring-fencing will enable rates and charges for water services to be identified separately, distinct capital planning, clear depreciation and reserves tracking and transparent loan and debt allocation.

Publishing the strategy separately also supports transparent financial reporting and independent audit requirements for water services.

The strategy will align with other key LTP components including the Financial Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy (Three Waters), Asset Management Plans and the performance framework.

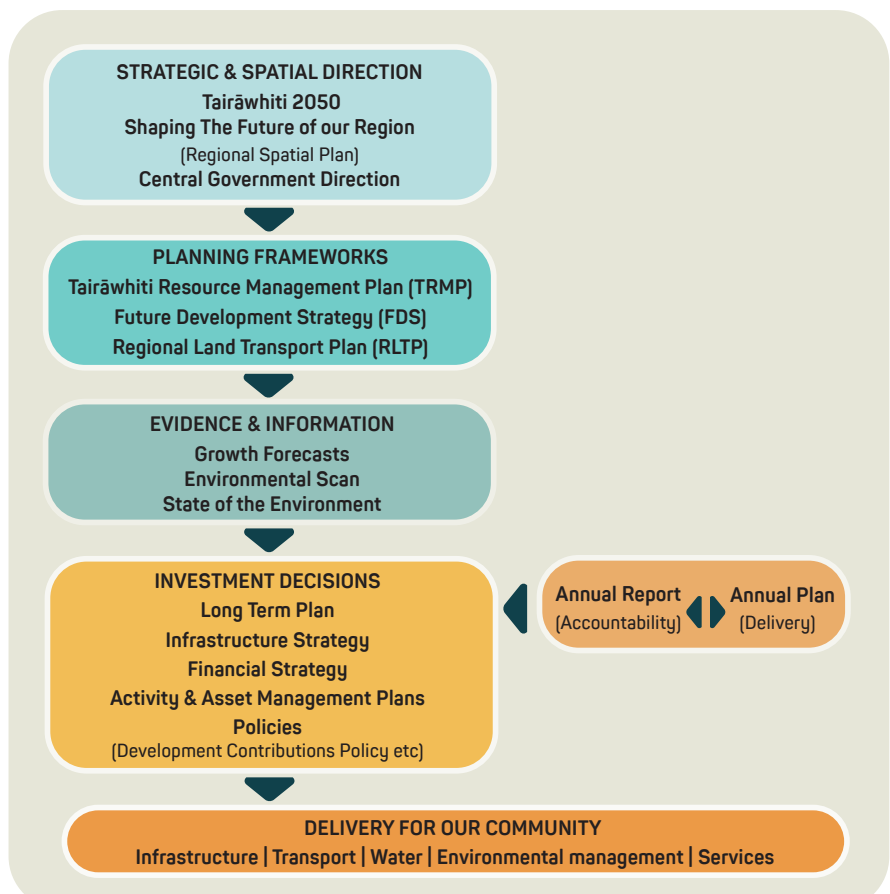
### Indicative timeline



Te hononga o ngā rautaki, ngā mahere me ngā ture a te Kaunihera

How Council’s strategies, plans and legislation fit together

This high-level diagram shows how key Council strategies, plans and statutory and legislative documents fit together to support the development of the LTP.



*Note: The diagram only shows key legislation, strategies and plans relevant to the LTP under the Local Government Act 2002. Other enabling statutes may apply depending on the policy or bylaw.*

For more information go to [Plans, Policies and Bylaws | Gisborne District Council](#)

## Ngā pukapuka tautoko me te whakamārama

### Supporting documents and information

Where to find more detailed information...

The following documents and resources provide further detail and supporting information relevant to the development of the 2027–2037 Long Term Plan and can generally be found on the GDC website.

#### Council strategic and planning documents

##### Tairāwhiti 2050 – Shaping the Future of our Region

[tairawhiti-2050-spatial-plan-shaping-the-future-of-our-region.pdf](#)

##### 2024–2027 Three Year Plan (adopted June 2024)

[2024-2027 Three Year Plan | Gisborne District Council](#)

[2024-2027-Three-Year-Plan-Vol.1-of-2.pdf](#)

[2024-2027-Three-Year-Plan-Vol.2-of-2.pdf](#)

##### Annual Plan

[2025-26 Annual Plan | Gisborne District Council](#)

[2025-26-Annual-Plan.pdf](#)

##### Annual Report

[2024/25 Annual Report | Gisborne District Council](#)

[2024-25-Annual-Report.pdf](#)

[2024-25-Annual-Report-Summary.pdf](#)

#### Council reports and briefings

[Sustainable Tairāwhiti - 5 March 2026](#)

*Note: See the Council Report 26-17 for the Introduction to the Infrastructure Strategy and Council Report 26-16 for the Introduction to Development Contributions and Development Levies*

#### Council programmes and initiatives

[Our Recovery | Gisborne District Council](#)

[Major projects | Gisborne District Council](#)

#### Council plans, policies and bylaws

[Plans, Policies and Bylaws | Gisborne District Council](#)

## Environmental information and research

### 2023 Environmental Scan

[2023-Environmental-scan.pdf](#)

*Note: 2026 Environmental Scan URL to be provided once published.*

### State of our Environment – 2020 Report

[State of our Environment | Gisborne District Council](#)

[state-of-our-Environment-2020-report.pdf](#)

[2020-soe-highlights.pdf](#)

*Note: State of the Environment 2025 URL to be provided at a later date*

### 2026 Growth Forecasts Update – Gisborne District and Gisborne Urban Reticulated

Prepared by Malcolm Thomas – Thomas Consulting

*Note: Updated growth projections expected April 2026*

## Water services information

[Local Water Done Well | Gisborne District Council](#)

[Water-Service-Delivery-Plan-Our-Water-Our-Way-LWDW.pdf](#)

[Interim Water Management - 24 February 2026](#)

*Note: See Council Report 26-67 Interim Water Management Committee Briefing: Local Waters Done Well*

## Central Government reform information

[COUNCIL - 29 January 2026](#)

*Note: See Council Report 26-10 Proposed Council Submissions on Government Initiatives. The table in paragraph 3 of Report 26-10 provides the URL links to further detailed information on Central Government reform initiatives, including:*

[Resource management reforms | Ministry for the Environment](#)

[Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill - New Zealand Parliament](#)

[Emergency Management Bill - National Emergency Management Agency](#)

[Consultation\\_on\\_a\\_rates\\_target\\_model.pdf](#)

## Additional references

[Trust Tairāwhiti – State of Wellbeing Tairāwhiti Report 2025](#)

*[Note: State of Wellbeing Tairāwhiti Report 2026 URL to be provided once published.]*

*Further resources and references used in preparing the 2026 Environmental Scan will be listed in full in the final document.*





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