

AGENDA/KAUPAPA



P O Box 747, Gisborne, Ph 06 867 2049 Fax 06 867 8076
Email service@gdc.govt.nz Web www.gdc.govt.nz

MEMBERSHIP: Her Worship the Mayor Rehette Stoltz, Deputy Mayor Josh Wharehinga, Colin Alder, Andy Cranston, Larry Foster, Debbie Gregory, Ani Pahuru-Huriwai, Rawinia Parata, Aubrey Ria, Tony Robinson, Rob Telfer, Teddy Thompson, Rhonda Tibble and Nick Tupara

COUNCIL/TE KAUNIHERA

DATE: Tuesday 11 June 2024

TIME: 1:00PM

AT: Te Ruma Kaunihera (Council Meeting Room), Awarua, Fitzherbert Street, Gisborne

AGENDA – OPEN SECTION

1. Apologies.....	3
2. Declarations of Interest.....	3
3. Leave of Absence	3
4. Acknowledgements and Tributes.....	3
5. Public Input and Petitions	3
6. Extraordinary Business.....	3
7. Notices of Motion	3
8. Adjourned Business.....	3
9. Reports of the Chief Executive and Staff for DECISION	4
9.1. 24-95 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Overview Report	4
10. Reports of the Chief Executive and Staff for INFORMATION	89
10.1. 24-169 Supplementary to Report 24-159 Three Year Plan Consultation	89
11. Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Elected Members Reports for INFORMATION.....	97
11.1. 24-159 Three Year Plan Consultation.....	97
12. Public Excluded Business.....	101

Council

Chairperson:	Mayor Rehette Stoltz
Deputy Chairperson:	Deputy Mayor Josh Wharehinga
Membership:	Mayor and all Councillors
Quorum:	Half of the members when the number is even and a majority when the number is uneven
Meeting Frequency:	Six weekly (or as required)

Terms of Reference:

The Council's terms of reference include the following powers which have not been delegated to committees, subcommittees, officers or any other subordinate decision-making body, and any other powers that are not legally able to be delegated:

1. The power to make a rate.
2. The power to make a bylaw.
3. The power to borrow money, or purchase or dispose of assets, other than in accordance with the Long Term Plan.
4. The power to adopt a Long Term Plan, Annual Plan, or Annual Report.
5. The power to appoint a Chief Executive.
6. The power to adopt policies required to be adopted and consulted on under the Local Government Act 2002 in association with the Long Term Plan or developed for the purpose of the Local Governance Statement.
7. The power to adopt a remuneration and employment policy.
8. Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations for the 2019–2022 Triennium.
9. The power to approve or amend the Council's Standing Orders.
10. The power to approve or amend the Code of Conduct for elected members.
11. The power to appoint and discharge members of Committees.
12. The power to establish a joint committee with another local authority or other public body.
13. The power to make the final decision on a recommendation from the Ombudsman where it is proposed that Council not accept the recommendation.

14. The power to make any resolutions that must be made by a local authority under the Local Electoral Act 2001, including the appointment of an electoral officer.
15. Consider any matters referred to it from any of the Committees.
16. Authorise all expenditure not delegated to staff or other Committees.

Council's terms of reference also includes oversight of the organisation's compliance with health and safety obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

Note: For 1-7 see clause 32(1) Schedule 7 Local Government Act 2002 and for 8-13 see clauses 15, 27, 30 Schedule 7 of Local Government Act 2002

9. Reports of the Chief Executive and Staff for DECISION



24-95

Title: 24-95 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Overview Report

Section: Finance & Affordability

Prepared by: Tim Muir – Senior Planning & Performance Advisor

Meeting Date: Tuesday 11 June 2024

Legal: No

Financial: No

Significance: **High**

Report to COUNCIL/TE KAUNIHERA for decision

PURPOSE - TE TAKE MA

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a breakdown of the key themes and topics from the submissions received from the community throughout the formal consultation period for the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP).

SUMMARY - HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

The formal submission period for the 3YP ran from 20 March to 19 April. During this period, Council received a total of 173 formal submissions, containing approximately 582 individual submission points.

The feedback on the options presented in the 3YP Consultation Document indicates that the majority of submitters agree with the six preferred rate increase options presented for our water, roads, land drainage, large wood debris, townships and with our plans for future-proofing our waste disposal.

Council also consulted on the Draft Fees and Charges for 2024/25, Draft Rate Remission and Postponement Policy, Draft Revenue and Financing Policy and the Draft Development Contributions Policy, receiving a total of 29 submissions on these.

Five accompanying reports, contributed by staff across the organisation, provide an analysis of submission feedback and key themes relevant to each area. These reports present responses and recommendations for Council to consider.

The recommendations presented within these reports, will result in minor planning and financial changes to the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan, if approved by Council.

The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS - NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. Instructs staff to prepare a 2024-2027 Three Year Plan for adoption at Council's meeting on 27 June 2024, incorporating any amendments resulting from resolutions made during the Council deliberations process.

Authorised by:

Pauline Foreman - Chief Financial Officer

Keywords: Three Year Plan, Public Hearings, submitters, submissions, recommendation, consultation, channels, analysis

BACKGROUND - HE WHAKAMĀRAMA

1. These deliberations conclude the formal consultation process for the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP).
2. Formal consultation on our 3YP Consultation Document (CD) ran from 20 March to 19 April. The CD outlined our proposed work programme for the next three years, focusing on fixing critical infrastructure and maintaining essential services.
3. To support the formal submission period, staff undertook a range of community consultation activities, including sending letters to ratepayers, hosting community events and hui, running radio and newspaper ads and launching a social media campaign.
4. This process resulted in 173 formal submissions. Additionally, 42 of those submitters requested to speak at the 3YP Hearings held on 15 and 16 May. Informal feedback was also provided at community hui, events, and on social media.
5. Many submitters provided specific comments on Council options, activities, and services. Staff have therefore divided all submissions into individual points which have been assigned to relevant areas across Council for a response. This approach allowed the appropriate Council staff to respond to feedback relevant to their area of expertise, and to identify key themes before providing recommendations for Council to consider.
6. This process resulted in 582 individual submission points being assigned to various Activity Managers across the organisation. Given the complexity of analysing and categorising submissions into individual points and themes, some themes have been addressed across multiple reports. Where this has occurred, it is noted within the summary of the relevant Hub reports.
7. Council's vision for our region is centered on:
 - Oranga Wai – Healthy water
 - Oragna tangata – Healthy people
 - Oranga whenua – Healthy land
 - Oranga mo apopo – Healthy future
8. Council's strategic priorities include resilient waters, building resilient transport, and enabling effective regulatory functions. The draft 3YP recognised that we will not achieve all of our goals within next three years, but this is the first phase in rebuilding our foundations.
9. To support Council's vision, our focus over the next three years involves critical recovery and resilience work to improve water infrastructure, enhance flood protection, increase regulatory functions, rebuild road networks, and advance sustainable waste management. Staff responses have been developed to align with this vision, ensuring our plans are sustainable, resilient, and responsive to community needs.

DISCUSSION and OPTIONS - WHAKAWHITINGA KŌRERO me ngā KŌWHIRINGA

Feedback on our six preferred options

10. As part of the consultation, the community was asked to provide feedback on options related to the following:
- 1. **Our water** - our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater.
Should we spend \$43 million over 3 years (*preferred*) or spend more (53 million) and do more?
 - 2. **Our roads** - maintaining our roads.
Should we spend \$84 million over 3 years (*preferred*) or spend more (125 million) and do more?
 - 3. **Land drainage** – maintaining our network
Should we spend \$4.1 million over 3 years (*preferred*) or spend more (6.2 million) and do more?
 - 4. **Large wood debris** – removing large wood debris.
Should we spend \$2.7 million over 3 years (*preferred*) or spend more (5.3 million) and do more?
 - 5. **Our townships** - investing in our townships.
Should we spend \$4 million over 3 years (*preferred*) or spend more (6.2 million) and do more?
 - 6. **Future proofing waste disposal**
Do you agree with our plans to future-proof our waste disposal?
11. The options for each (excluding waste disposal) outlined what could be delivered with our current proposed rate increases and budget, versus what could be achieved with more money over the three years.
12. The community was asked whether they agreed or disagreed with our preferred options. Overall, all of Council's preferred options received more support than the alternatives with the strongest being for Council's plans to future-proof our waste disposal.

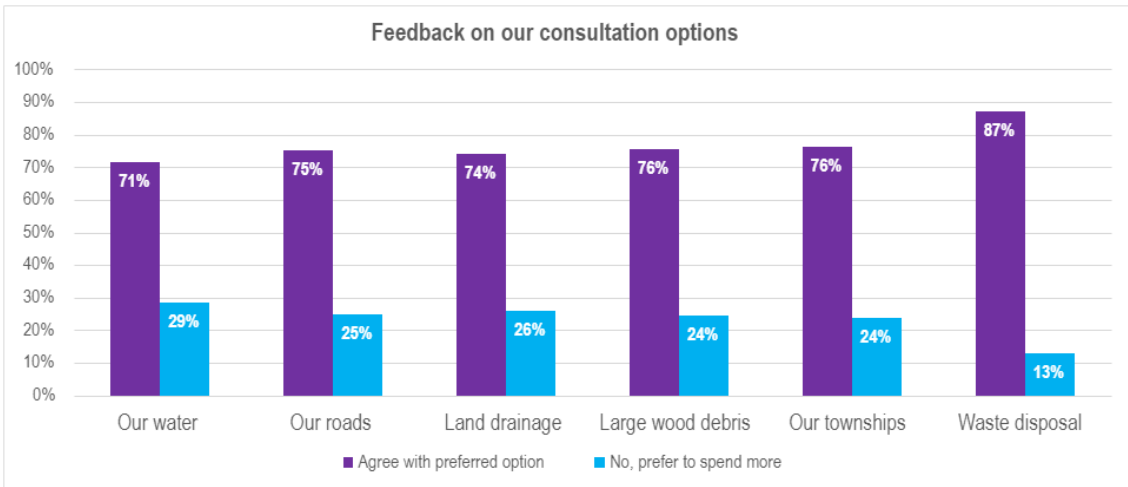


Table 1: Feedback on our consultation options

Feedback from CD Comments and Other Submissions

13. The majority of submissions indicated support for Councils preferred options. However, submitters were also given the opportunity to leave comments along with their preferences.
14. Comments on the CD options, as well as comments from written submissions, resulted in 582 individual submission points. These points have been grouped by area and discussed in terms of the main themes and sentiments identified within the feedback. These have been reported across five different Hub reports:
 - The Community Lifelines report (**Attachment 1**) discusses 216 points, with most points relating to the following key areas/topics:
 - Rooding Infrastructure (90)
 - Water Infrastructure (45)
 - Wood Debris (32)
 - Accountability and Transparency (24)
 - Transport (8)
 - The Finance and Affordability report (**Attachment 2**) discusses 189 points, with most points relating to the following key areas/topics:
 - Forestry Rate (75)
 - Budget and Cost Management (48)
 - Affordability (rates) 31
 - Accountability and Transparency (18)
 - External Funding (12)
 - The Liveable Communities report (**Attachment 3**) discusses 88 points, with most points relating to the following key areas/topics:
 - Solid Waste Management (47)
 - Recreation/Public Spaces (31)
 - Supporting Local (4)
 - Catchments (4)
 - The Engagement and Māori Partnership report (**Attachment 4**) discusses 68 points, with most points relating to the following key areas/topics:
 - Coastal, Townships and Rural Equity (30)
 - Engagement, Communication and Consultation (29)
 - Collaboration with Iwi/hapū (9)
 - The Sustainable Futures report (**Attachment 5**) discusses 43 points, with most points relating to the following key areas/topics:
 - Environmental (28)
 - Heavy Vehicles (12)

15. The sentiments captured through the submission points also highlighted some key issues and concerns, relevant across multiple Hubs and areas/topics noted above. These broader issues are discussed below.

Impacts of Forestry and Large Wood Debris

16. The impacts of the forestry industry, particularly concerning large wood debris, was identified as a key concern in the submissions received from the community. A total of 119 individual submission points were received relating to forestry, wood debris and heavy vehicles.
17. Despite the CD options results indicating that most submitters agreed with Council's preferred option for managing large wood debris, a significant number of submitters expressed disapproval over their rates being used to fund the clean-up and management of wood debris.
18. This issue is complex, involving monitoring and enforcement, as well as financial, environmental, and infrastructure impacts. Therefore, detailed commentary on the issue has been covered across multiple Hub reports attached (including Community Lifelines, Finance & Affordability, and Sustainable Futures reports).
19. Feedback we received suggests that many in the community believe the forestry industry should be primarily responsible for funding wood debris management and clean-up, due to their contribution to the issue. Additionally, they should be paying more towards road repair and upgrade costs due to the impact of heavy vehicles on our network. Increased monitoring and enforcement processes have also been suggested, with some noting that stricter fines should be introduced to encourage better practices within the industry.
20. A submission was also received on behalf of a group of 30 forestry owners, which indicated that they do not support a forestry targeted rate increase to cover additional road upgrade and wood debris removal costs.

Affordability of Rates

21. Many submitters also highlighted concerns about the overall affordability of rates and the financial burden of proposed increases on individuals, households and businesses. The Finance & Affordability Hub report (**Attachment 2**) primarily addresses this issue and the 31 submission points which were entirely concerned with affordability; however, it is noted that affordability has been mentioned across multiple areas and topics, in both formal and informal community feedback.
22. While most submitters supported Council's preferred options for rate increases, as presented in the CD, many noted that even these preferred increases would be difficult for them to afford due to the impacts of inflation, interest rates, and the general cost of living.

23. The need for Council to focus on recovery and prioritise fixing critical infrastructure over the next three years was well understood by most submitters. However, due to the financial pressures many in the community are currently facing, feedback suggests that this work needs to be done in a way that does not financially burden the community. Suggestions put forward include investigating options to secure more external funding and cutting back on consultancy costs.

Accountability and Transparency

24. Greater accountability and increased transparency around budgets, planning and prioritisation were also raised as clear concerns by submitters across a range of areas. The majority of feedback on this has been addressed within the Finance & Affordability Hub report (**Attachment 2**) and the Community Lifelines Hub report (**Attachment 1**).
25. Multiple submissions questioned the decisions Council is making to help cut costs and increase efficiency, with some raising concerns about a lack of transparency or explanation regarding efforts to reduce costs.
26. Regarding infrastructure projects, multiple submitters expressed that they wanted more clarity around how these were prioritised and whether long-term solutions to problems, especially concerning our roading network, were being investigated. Feedback suggested that more needs to be done to guarantee that projects are completed to the required standards and within budget, to help ensure value for ratepayer money.
27. Submitters believe that improved transparency in communication would help them feel heard and keep them better informed about Council's plans, particularly as they relate to future and long-term planning.

Summary of Hearings Feedback

28. Forty-two submitters requested to be heard at the 3YP public Hearings on 15 and 16 May.
29. Those who spoke mainly referenced our six options for the Three-Year Plan, while others supported the design and build for the indoor multi-purpose centre, the Taruheru Trail and Gisborne city's revitalisation. Climate change issues and waste disposal management were also spoken to.
30. Several individuals and organisations who also spoke, including the forestry sector and farmers also commented further on our Draft Fees and Charges 2024/25, Draft Revenue and Financing Policy and Draft Financial Strategy 2024-2027.

Additional Informal Community Summary Feedback

31. A total of 31 community meetings took place across the region, attended by Councillors and staff. These meetings were held throughout the consultation period and included urban, rural, and coastal meetings, as well as pop-ups at markets, events, and gatherings with local community groups. These formats provided direct question-and-answer opportunities for the community and a chance to capture any concerns or general feedback.

32. As has been noted above and observed in many of the formal submissions, the community desires more inclusive decision-making processes, increased transparency, and a focus on sustainable development from Council.
33. Many residents would like there to be more collaboration opportunities and meaningful partnership with Council, to achieve the best outcomes for communities and the future of Tairāwhiti.
34. The key concerns raised included affordability of rates, accountability and transparency, and the impact of the forestry industry. Additionally, concerns were noted regarding infrastructure maintenance, roading, waste management, economic development, road safety, community engagement, local empowerment, and resilience planning.

ASSESSMENT of SIGNIFICANCE - AROTAKENGA o NGĀ HIRANGA

Consideration of consistency with and impact on the Regional Land Transport Plan and its implementation

Overall Process: **Low** Significance

This Report: **Low** Significance

Impacts on Council's delivery of its Financial Strategy and Long Term Plan

Overall Process: **High** Significance

This Report: **High** Significance

Inconsistency with Council's current strategy and policy

Overall Process: **High** Significance

This Report: **High** Significance

The effects on all or a large part of the Gisborne district

Overall Process: **High** Significance

This Report: **High** Significance

The effects on individuals or specific communities

Overall Process: **High** Significance

This Report: **Medium** Significance

The level or history of public interest in the matter or issue

Overall Process: **High** Significance

This Report: **High** Significance

35. The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **High** significance in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

TANGATA WHENUA/MĀORI ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA TANGATA WHENUA

36. Through the consultation period, Council hosted multiple community conversations and events in rural townships for specific engagement with townships, Iwi and hapū.
37. Iwi organisations were formally invited in writing to participate in the Three-Year Plan consultation discussion.
38. Multiple submitters called for better engagement and consultation processes, especially for Māori and rural communities. Feedback also emphasised the importance of involving Iwi and hapū in decision-making processes and ensuring their cultural heritage, knowledge and values are considered and respected across Council projects. This feedback has been considered and responded to in the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub report (**Attachment 4**).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA HAPORI

39. Community engagement and consultation are integral to Council's long-term planning.
40. The Three-Year Plan engagement plan and calendar of events provided opportunities for community consultation and engagement across the district, with Council attendance at events already planned by the community or through Council arranged community conversation sessions and events.

CLIMATE CHANGE – Impacts / Implications - NGĀ REREKĒTANGA ĀHUARANGI – ngā whakaaweawe / ngā ritenga

41. Council received 28 submission points on Environmental issues, with the majority relating to climate change and long-term environmental planning. These points have been addressed in the Sustainable Futures Hub report (**Attachment 5**).
42. Feedback highlights the need for new and improved approaches to climate change adaptation, environmental stewardship, and infrastructure management. Feedback also highlights concerns about the long-term viability of current infrastructure, given the impacts of climate change and the region's geology.
43. Some submitters supported walking and cycling projects because they are environmentally friendly transport options that promote good health and well-being in our community. These points have been addressed in the Community Lifelines Hub report (**Attachment 1**).
44. Environmental and infrastructure implications of climate change remain a significant issue for Council, particularly given the region's vulnerability to natural hazards and sea level rise. The implications of climate change have been identified within the environmental factors of the 2023 Environmental Scan, which has helped to inform the 3YP.

CONSIDERATIONS - HEI WHAKAARO

Financial/Budget

45. The draft 3YP includes budget estimates for the next three years. The Plan determines how much money should be collected via rates and how much funding should be allocated to particular activities.
46. The costs associated with the preparation and production of the 3YP have been budgeted for and are in line with our current Financial Strategy.
47. Consultation on the Draft Fees and Charges for 2024/25, Draft Revenue and Financing Policy, and the Draft Rate Remission and Postponement Policy was undertaken concurrently with the 3YP. Feedback on each has been discussed separately within the Finance and Affordability Hub report (**Attachment 1**).

Legal

48. This report provides assurance that Council's obligation to use the special consultative procedure in adopting the Long-Term Plan (LGA s93(2)) has been undertaken in the preparation of all the deliberation reports.
49. The Department of Internal Affairs agreed to suspend the statutory requirement for a 10-year Long-Term Plan for Gisborne District Council and seven other councils, allowing them to adopt a three-year unaudited plan focused on recovery.
50. Following the repeal of legislation related to the Three Waters Services Reform, three waters services will continue to be included in the Three-Year Plan, with Council remaining responsible for their delivery.

POLICY and PLANNING IMPLICATIONS - KAUPAPA HERE me ngā RITENGA WHAKAMAHERE

51. The 3YP will determine Council's strategic direction for the next three years.
52. The Plan also links a variety of policies, plans and strategies. Any significant changes to the draft 3YP may result in additional review work being required for these related strategies, policies, or plans.
53. Council's next 10-year, Long Term Plan will be developed in 2027.

RISKS - NGĀ TŪRARU

54. There are no major risks associated with the recommendations made in the five accompanying Hub reports.
55. The 3YP is based on assumptions and what was known or probable at the time of forecasting the budgets. Some of the more critical risk assumptions within the Plan were:
 - a. Waka Kotahi Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) for our local roads may change, or the level of investment program we had planned for is less or different than what we expected.
 - b. Interest rates are higher than we forecast.
 - c. Inflation and other costs are higher than we expected.
 - d. Income from grants is lower than we expected.

56. If we do not receive grants or income as expected, then the projects that are set out within the 3YP could take longer to deliver or may need to be reprioritised.

NEXT STEPS - NGĀ MAHI E WHAI AKE

Date	Action/Milestone	Comments
27 June	Adoption of the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Together with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fees and Charges 2024/25.• Rate Remission and Postponement Policy.• Revenue and Financing Policy.• Development Contributions Policy.	Draft Three Year Plan will include any changes following Deliberations.
July 2024	Decision letters sent	To all submitters.
August 2024	Decision to all ratepayers in Rates Instalment 1.	

ATTACHMENTS - NGĀ TĀPIRITANGA

1. Attachment 1 - Community Lifelines - Deliberations Report [**24-95.1** - 20 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Finance and Affordability - Deliberations Report [**24-95.2** - 26 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Liveable Communities - Deliberations Report [**24-95.3** - 10 pages]
4. Attachment 4 - Engagement and Maori Partnership - Deliberations Report [**24-95.4** - 9 pages]
5. Attachment 5 - Sustainable Futures - Deliberations Report [**24-95.5** - 9 pages]

Community Lifelines Hub

2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP) submissions and responses relating to the Community Lifelines Hub.

SUMMARY

The Community Lifelines Hub plans for and manages Council's capital and infrastructure assets, ensuring the maintenance of essential services such as drinking water, storm water, wastewater, flood control, roads, and transport. During the 3YP consultation period, 216 submission points were received related to Community Lifelines.

We sought feedback on several options, including our waters, roads, large wood debris, and land drainage. The majority of the feedback indicated that the community preferred our recommended rates increases in these areas.

The following areas received the highest number of submission points, which can be categorised under the following main themes:

- **Focus Area:** Roading Infrastructure (90)
 - **Key Theme:** Maintenance/Renewals
 - **Key Theme:** New Developments
- **Focus Area:** Water Infrastructure (45)
 - **Key Theme:** Maintenance/Renewals
 - **Key Theme:** New Developments
- **Focus Area:** Management of Wood Debris (32)
 - **Key Theme:** Response and Risk Mitigation
 - **Key Theme:** Accountability, Forestry Practices, and environmental impact
- **Focus Area:** Accountability and Transparency (24)
 - **Key Theme:** Planning/Prioritisation
 - **Key Theme:** Management of Contractors
 - **Key Theme:** Communication and Responsiveness
- **Focus Area:** Transport (8)
 - **Key Theme:** Traffic control
 - **Key Theme:** Active Travel and Shared Paths

Additional points were made regarding how we engage with the community on future plans for our roading and water networks, how we prioritise repairs and fixes, supporting local contractors and businesses, and securing additional funding support to help us rebuild our roading network.

Staff have analysed these submission points and made recommendations based on this feedback for Councillors to consider.

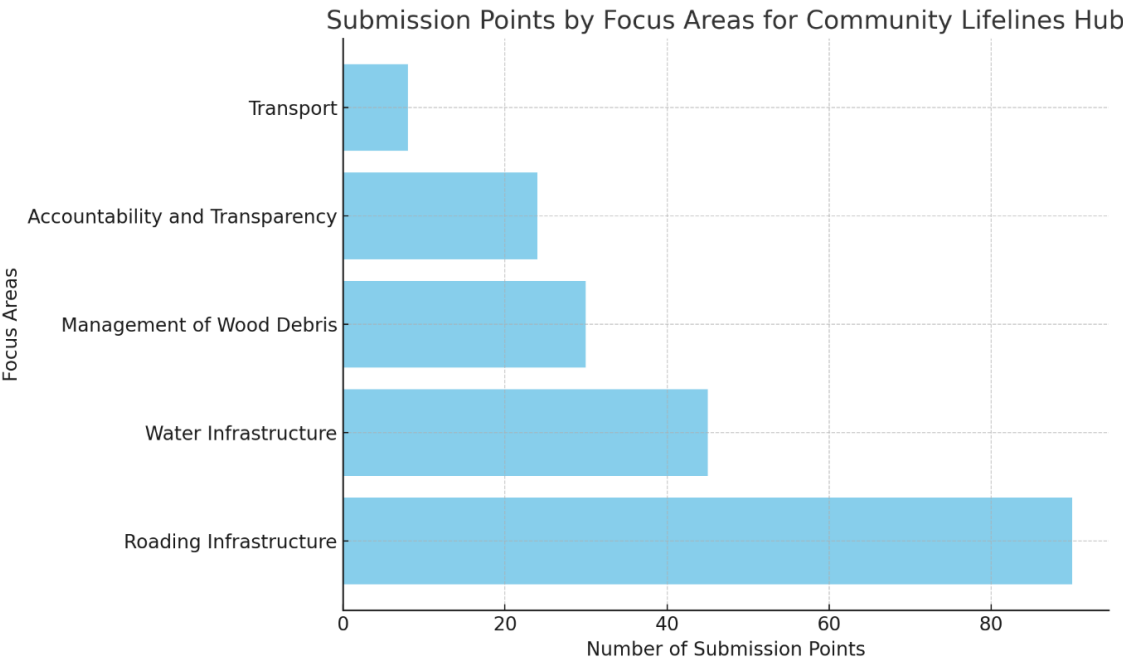
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. Maintains the status quo for all Activity Areas under Community Lifelines, as per the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Budget Estimates, including for:
 - Roading and Transport.
 - Water - including drinking water, stormwater, wastewater, flood control.
 - Wood Debris Management.

BACKGROUND

- 1. We received a total of 216 submission points relating to the Community Lifelines Hub. As some of these points also relate to affordability, which is covered in the Finance & Affordability Hub report, and infrastructure asset management, which is addressed under Sustainable Futures, some points have been included in the tallies and analysis of other reports. Where possible, these points have been separated based on whether they are operational or not, to avoid duplication.
- 2. Submission points have been grouped under the key focus areas and themes relating to the Community Lifelines Hub.



SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS and RESPONSES

- 3. As part of our consultation, we asked our community for feedback on multiple options, including those related to Waters, Roads, Land Drainage, Large Wood Debris, and Waste Disposal. The majority of the feedback we received indicated that the community supports our recommended rates increases in all of the above areas.

1. Roding (90)

Theme: Maintenance/Renewals	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback suggests that having a stable roading network and reliable infrastructure is crucial and for most, is at the top of their list of priorities for this Three Year Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important to the submitters is that Council prioritises rebuilding and renewing roading infrastructure that was severely damaged during Cyclone Gabrielle. • Submitters have urged that Council stop using ineffective repair methods and instead adopt robust, long-term solutions, such as properly fixing potholes by ensuring they are dug out and filled correctly. Continuous patchwork is considered by the community to be a waste of resources and a clear source of frustration. • Submitters have also called for better maintenance and upgrades of infrastructure in rural and coastal areas, particularly roads, and drainage. Feedback highlights the importance of prioritising repairs for areas affected by severe weather events and ensuring long-term solutions to prevent recurring issues. • Concern around the safety of school children has been raised, due to the condition of bus routes, particularly near Ngatapa School. • Some submitters highlighted the importance of fixing critical infrastructure like Burgess Bridge, which is considered essential for some local businesses and overall community connectivity. • Feedback also suggests that reliable roading infrastructure is crucial for promoting employment and economic growth in the region. Poor road conditions deter tourism and hinder the potential for economic development. • Suggestions have been made to reduce weight limits for heavy trucks to minimise road damage. • Submitters call for Council to commit to funding the realignment of Anaura Bay Road to the east as a long-term solution. This approach aims to stabilise the frequent slip area, improve safety, reduce maintenance costs, and support the local economy and culture. • A suggestion to seal the Tatapouri Carpark was made, highlighting its importance for tourism and the local economy.
Response	<p>Recovery for roading that was damaged due to Cyclone Gabrielle and other severe weather events is our top priority for the next three years. We will be making the best use of government funding; however, this is not enough to address all the damage on the network or build future resilience. We will work meaningfully with the community to determine the level of service that can be achieved within this constrained funding environment. Due to the scale and complexity of the problem, this will involve more partnerships and co-designed solutions. Safety and economic prosperity are given high priority in this process.</p> <p>Council has lodged its transport funding bid to NZTA for approval, and once we receive confirmation of our budgets, we will be able to share this with the community.</p> <p>The Government Policy Statement for Land Transport has reprioritised the allocation of funding to maintenance activities, but road safety initiatives have been deprioritised.</p>

	<p>Inflation continues to reduce the budgets that we receive as we are heavily reliant on petroleum and transport to deliver our programme. Our goal is to reduce traffic management costs to balance impacts which are not in our control.</p> <p>Feedback from the community has been shared with our contractors and will be raised at contract management meetings.</p> <p>The Strategic Network Resilience Programme Business Case will examine a range of resilience interventions to develop a high-level prioritised investment programme, which may include looking at things like reducing weight limits for heavy vehicles. Some of the outcomes of this review may be very unpopular.</p> <p>Staff have endeavoured to balance maintenance needs and the pressing Cyclone Gabrielle recovery with the district's ability to fund both programmes.</p> <p>The tar sealing of Tatapouri Carpark has been identified as a significant concern for local tourism and community benefit. This carpark supports key local attractions and contributes to the regional economy, and it will be considered alongside other critical infrastructure projects.</p> <p>It is recommended that we accept our preferred option to maintain our existing budget to meet the rising costs of inflation.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Roads</p> <p>This option allocates \$84 million over 3 years.</p> <p>Road maintenance will continue to be challenging; however, we will prioritise school bus and freight routes for stock trucks. We will plan and model for a resilient, safe, and affordable network. Tauwhareparae Road will be reopened, and we will continue with the staged reinstatement of cyclone-damaged roads and bridges over 5 years.</p> <p>This option also acknowledges that Council will support the tar sealing of Tatapouri Carpark if external funding becomes available.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Spend even more, do more</p> <p>This option increases the budget to \$125 million over 3 years. In addition to the work listed above, this option will allow us to increase our level of service on fixing potholes, maintaining roads, and clearing drains.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>The focus is on the recovery programme, and Option 2 is dependent on gaining additional NZTA funding above Option 1. This has not been signaled as part of our existing regional land transport bid, which reflects Option 1, and additional NZTA funding is unlikely to be available. We anticipate our NZTA Transport bid for maintenance activities will be known by mid-June.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Roads.</p> <p>The preferred option is to allocate \$84 million over three years to maintain our existing budget to meet rising costs of inflation, prioritise critical infrastructure, and ensure the most urgent road maintenance needs are met. Council will also continue to seek additional funding to expand our capabilities without imposing a significant financial burden on ratepayers.</p>	

Theme: New Developments	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters support further investment in walking and cycling routes across the Tairāwhiti region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically, extending the Taruheru cycleway from Mitre 10 to the Botanical Gardens, as well as implementing speed reduction projects around schools and townships, is recommended. Innovative solutions, such as certifying and constructing flying foxes for temporary access to isolated areas have been suggested. Some submitters also urged Council to invest in a set of portable or temporary bridge units to be stored in Gisborne as a contingency for future weather events.
Response	<p>Council recognises the community's support for further investment in walking and cycling routes, as well as innovative solutions for temporary access and emergency preparedness. Our roading network covers vast, sparsely populated areas, and budgets are constrained to what ratepayers can afford, making it challenging to meet all demands.</p> <p>Although projects are 68% funded by NZTA, we struggle to provide the local share required to unlock this funding. Additionally, the current government's appetite for walking, cycling, and speed reduction projects is low. Despite these challenges, we have included supporting projects in our documents to show our commitment in case there is a change, or another funding source becomes available.</p> <p>Given the budget constraints, innovation continues to be a high priority for Council. Finding ways to innovate and recycle has many benefits for our region and environment. However, flying foxes have significant health and safety risks associated with them, and NZTA has stockpiles of temporary bridges for councils to access in times of need. These are distributed according to traffic volumes, and many of our bridges would not qualify under the existing NZTA rules for Bailey bridges.</p> <p>Due to the demand for Bailey bridges, NZTA is investigating whether there are other alternatives that can be sourced.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Roads</p> <p>Maintain our existing budgets to meet the rising costs of inflation. This option allows us to focus on essential maintenance and resilience activities within the current financial constraints.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Spend more, do more</p> <p>Increase funding to accelerate improvements and expand infrastructure. This option would require additional rates and is unlikely to be supported by NZTA external funding as it is contrary to the Government Policy Statement (GPS) for Land Transport, which prioritises recovery and resilience activities over walking, cycling, and township improvements.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>The Government Policy Statement (GPS) for Land Transport has reprioritised recovery and resilience activities above walking and cycling, Road to Zero, and township improvements.</p> <p>While we could rate for more improvements, it is very unlikely that this would be supported by NZTA external funding, as it contradicts the GPS.</p> <p>We anticipate our NZTA transport bid for improvement activities will be known by mid-July.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Roads.</p>	

2. Water (45)

Theme: Maintenance/Renewals	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback indicates the critical need for robust water infrastructure maintenance, renewal, and development. There is a strong call for regular maintenance to prevent flooding and ensure reliable supply, alongside urgent upgrades to ageing systems to accommodate growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters highlighted the need for improved drain maintenance, especially those which haven't been serviced for over 20 years. • Improvements to how Council manages the wastewater network were also provided, with multiple submitters noting that reducing wastewater overflows to avoid polluting our rivers, streams and beaches is of high importance to the community. • Support was given by multiple submitters for continued work on upgrading our wastewater treatment plants, particularly the one in Te Karaka, to meet community needs. • Suggestions were made that Council should take measures to enhance the resilience of our water supply, such as doubling delivery plants for added security.
Response	<p>Wastewater</p> <p>The DrainWise programme's budget has been increased in this 3-year Recovery Plan, with \$13.2 million allocated over three years. The programme's continued focus is on reducing wastewater overflows through the reduction of stormwater inflow, where stormwater is either directed into or tops gully traps, and infiltration from groundwater getting into old wastewater pipes. This programme is actioned through on-property inspections for inflow and infiltration (repairing gully traps and removing downpipes from gully traps), wastewater pipeline renewals and lining (addressing aged infrastructure), stormwater renewals and upgrades (to improve conveyance and aging infrastructure), and public drains on private property projects (addressing localised flooding which is topping wastewater gully traps by redirecting to the public stormwater network). Maintenance programmes on the wastewater network, to help ensure pipes and pump stations are maintained in good working order, is an ongoing focus through our contractor.</p> <p>Tairāwhiti's wastewater treatment facilities continue to be a focus with budget allowed for infrastructure upgrades for Gisborne and Te Karaka.</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>The 3YP is focused on recovery with \$7 million budgeted for pipeline and water source resilience investigations and projects as we work to build resilience and water security in our network and treatment plants. Additional budget is also allocated to continue network and treatment plant renewals.</p> <p>Urban Stormwater</p> <p>Budget is allocated for stormwater improvement and resilience projects for our urban network.</p>

OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Waters</p> <p>This option allocates \$43 million over 3 years, with a rates increase of 1.5% and an impact on debt of \$13 million. This budget will allow us to increase repairs and renew the infrastructure network of pipes, pump stations, and treatment plants to enhance resilience. We will continue with our DrainWise programme and increase our backup supply of replacement pipes for immediate fixes across our networks.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Spend More, Do More</p> <p>This option increases the budget to \$53 million over 3 years, with a rates increase of 2.3% and an impact on debt of \$23 million. This budget will enable us to plan and model for alternative water supply sites, increase the work required to reduce the number of emergency wastewater overflows into our waterways, and make our water supply more resilient, quicker.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>While the evidence and need for Option 2 are compelling, staff need to focus on delivering a comprehensive plan for providing wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water services. This plan must be acceptable to both Council and the Government, ensuring it meets all regulatory and funding requirements.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Waters.</p> <p>The preferred option is to allocate \$43 million over three years to maintain our existing budget, focusing on enhancing the resilience and reliability of our water infrastructure. This approach balances the urgent need for infrastructure improvements with the financial constraints and ensures that we can manage essential maintenance and resilience activities within the current budget while continuing to support potential water infrastructure projects as funding becomes available.</p>	

Theme: New Developments	
Submission Feedback	<p>Some submitters provided suggestions on new water infrastructure projects to support community growth and resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions include investing in new infrastructure to support population growth and development, particularly in areas like Taruheru. • Other suggestions also include expanding and improving drainage systems to handle increased rainfall and mitigate flood risks. • Feedback suggests that promoting the use of water tanks through discounts and rates rebates, especially for areas still reliant on tank water, could be a new way to help alleviate pressure on our water systems, and increase resilience.
Response	<p>Urban Stormwater</p> <p>Budget is allocated for stormwater improvement and resilience projects for our urban network. Projects to accommodate development would be done in conjunction with developers and development contributions.</p> <p>Water Tanks</p> <p>Subsidising water tanks is not currently in the programme however this could form part of a future demand management strategy.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Waters
Option 2:	Spend even more, do more
Reasoning for preferred option	While the evidence and need for Option 2 are compelling, staff need to focus on delivering a comprehensive plan for providing wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water services. This plan must be acceptable to both Council and the Government, ensuring it meets all regulatory and funding requirements.
RECOMMENDATION: Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Our Waters.	

3. Management of Wood Debris (32)

Theme: Response and Risk Mitigation	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback indicates a strong concern for the management of woody debris, emphasising the need for effective strategies to respond to and manage risks. Submitters highlighted a pressing need for the immediate removal of wood debris stuck under bridges to prevent further buildup and damage to infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback stresses the importance of implementing robust management practices to safeguard lives and property. • Feedback suggests that placing high-loaders at critical bridges during adverse weather events could help manage debris in real-time. • Establishing contingency plans to manage debris during severe weather events is considered to be of high importance to multiple submitters.
Response	<p>Council acknowledges the community's concerns and the importance of managing woody debris effectively to mitigate risks and protect infrastructure.</p> <p>We are concentrating our efforts in critical catchments such as Waimata, Hikuwai/Uawa, Te Arai, Waiapu, and Waipaoa, as well as important beachfronts including Midway, Waikanae, Kaiti, Uawa, and Whangara.</p> <p>These areas are identified as high priority due to their vulnerability and the potential impact of debris on vital infrastructure and community spaces.</p> <p>Current Actions and Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority Areas: We are targeting areas at high risk of damaging Council assets, such as bridges and water supply infrastructure, with a focus on locations like Waingake. • Progress: It is estimated that around 1.4 million tonnes of woody debris are within our water catchments, with over 379,516 tonnes removed from high-risk areas so far. The total cost of removal is likely to exceed \$150 million. • Staff estimate that forestry companies have also removed around 300,000T. • Funding: Central government has provided \$54 million, which is being used to clear priority areas such as our upper catchments. However, a further \$100 million is required to complete the work. <p>Ongoing and future direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling: We will undertake more modelling to understand the likely impacts of events, and to assist with our planning and prioritisation approach to Large Wood Debris. • Standard Operating Procedures: We will develop standard operating procedures to manage wood debris effectively during events. • Prioritisation Approach: A prioritisation approach will be developed to manage future events and clean-ups. This will include our approach to clean ups on our beaches, as outlined in our previous report 23-260 Woody Debris on Beaches – Proposed Council Position. • Ongoing Clean-ups: We are committed to continuous clean-up efforts to manage and mitigate debris-related risks. • Enforcement: Council is actively prosecuting offenders and increasing resources to enhance monitoring and compliance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Allocation: We have allocated \$2.7 million over three years to address the most critical areas, prioritising the protection of key infrastructure and community safety. • Improved Response Strategies: We will continue to improve our response strategies to ensure the protection of infrastructure and natural environments from potential damages caused by future severe weather events. • Community Safety: The safety of our community remains a top priority, and all measures will be directed towards safeguarding lives and property from the risks posed by large woody debris.
Options Analysis	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Large Wood Debris</p> <p>This option allocates \$2.7 million over three years, allowing us to continue prioritising the clearing of large wood debris threatening critical infrastructure. This approach uses the government's funding and additional rate funding.</p> <p>As part of this, Council will also undertake additional modelling to help with planning and prioritisation and will develop Standard Operating Procedures for triggers of Large Wood Debris management during future events.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Spend More, Do It Faster</p> <p>This option increases the budget to \$5.3 million over three years, which would expedite the clearing process of large wood debris. It includes continuing to use the government's cyclone support funding, prioritising debris impacting and threatening waterways, beaches, and critical infrastructure.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>Option 1 is preferred to ensure a sustainable rates increase for the community. We will continue to seek additional central government funding to expedite the work without imposing a significant financial burden on ratepayers.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Large Wood Debris.</p> <p>Allocates \$2.7 million over three years to manage the most critical areas of woody debris, ensuring the protection of key infrastructure and community safety, while maintaining a sustainable rates increase. Continue to seek additional central government funding to expedite debris management efforts.</p>	

Theme: Accountability and Forestry Practices	
Submission Feedback	<p>Multiple submitters highlighted the importance of accountability and thoroughly investigating forestry practices to prevent such wide-scale damage from occurring in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback suggests that forestry companies need to be held accountable for the debris left on hillsides and in waterways, and more should be done to enforce harvesting and ensuring forestry companies are following through on their responsibilities after logging operations. • Submitters have urged for a comprehensive review of current forestry practices to reduce the ongoing impact of wood debris. This includes ensuring that cut trees are treated and slash is burned in forests before it gets the chance to enter waterways. • As part of holding forestry companies accountable, submitters have suggested Council introduce heavy fines for non-compliance. • Continuous accumulation of woody debris is seen as posing a significant threat to the environment and overall well-being of our region. • Some submitters have suggested that there could be an opportunity to turn woody debris management into an economic advantage by exploring use options and through carbon removal credits.
Response	<p>Council recognises the critical need to hold forestry companies accountable for their practices to mitigate the impact of wood debris on our environment and infrastructure.</p> <p>Since 2018, several forestry companies have been successfully prosecuted by the Council for inadequate harvesting and management practices. In the aftermath of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, Council has increased its resources within the forestry monitoring, compliance, and enforcement team.</p> <p>Council launched an extensive investigation into forestry operations following the cyclones. To date, 74 ground inspections have been conducted across 47 forests, supplemented by 7 general aerial inspections. This effort has resulted in the issuance of 32 field sheets. Currently, Council is pursuing two enforcement orders and has issued multiple abatement notices related to forestry.</p> <p>Council has improved its forward works plan, focusing on land use and catchment plans to mitigate future negative impacts of poor forestry practices and woody debris, particularly concerning infrastructure damage and erosion of our waterways.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	Maintain status quo - maintain the planned increase in our monitoring and compliance function for forestry practice.
Option 2:	Further increase our resourcing for even greater monitoring and compliance actions. This will incur a further increase in rates, estimated to be in the around \$800k per year.
Reasoning for preferred option	Given the current economic climate, the community is unlikely to support further rates increases to manage forestry compliance. Maintaining our current resourcing allows us to continue enforcing compliance without imposing additional financial burdens on ratepayers.
RECOMMENDATION: Adopt option 1 – Maintain status quo: Maintains the planned increase in our monitoring and compliance function for forestry practices to ensure accountability and mitigate the impact of wood debris while avoiding further rates increases. Continue to enhance our land use and catchment plans to prevent future issues related to poor forestry practices.	

4. Accountability and Transparency of Infrastructure Works (24)

Theme: Planning/Prioritisation	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback indicates that the community seeks clarity on how decisions are made regarding infrastructure projects and their prioritisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback highlights the community's desire for Council to develop and communicate clear, long-term plans addressing future challenges, including climate change impacts and infrastructure resilience.
Response	<p>We acknowledge the suggestions made by the community and will endeavour to do more over the next three years to clearly communicate and engage with the community, particularly in relation to how we prioritise infrastructure projects. This will continue as we begin developing our next Long Term Plan.</p> <p>Funding decisions regarding transport infrastructure projects will be known in July. Once these are confirmed, staff will communicate this information to the community.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo – Continues to communicate and engage with the community on significant infrastructure decisions. Once funding decisions are confirmed in July, provide a comprehensive update to the community detailing the prioritisation of infrastructure projects, the rationale behind these decisions, and how they align with long-term plans for climate change impacts and infrastructure resilience.</p>	

Theme: Management of Contractors	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters have suggested that Council needs to undertake stricter monitoring and evaluation of contractor performance to ensure efficient use of rate payer money and higher standards of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback suggests that more needs to be done to guarantee that projects are completed to the required standards and within budget, preventing unnecessary expenditure and ensuring value for ratepayer money.
Response	<p>Council recognises the importance of strict monitoring and evaluation of contractor performance to ensure the efficient use of ratepayer money and maintain high standards of work.</p> <p>Contractor operational performance will be a primary focus during the recovery years, and we are improving our approach to ensure contractors are held to the highest standards of quality and efficiency, ensuring that projects are completed on time and within budget.</p> <p>Council's procurement policy is guided by section 14 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). The LGA sets out the principles and requirements that govern how local authorities should conduct their business, including procurement activities. Council's procurement policy aligns with these principles to ensure regional value and effective resource management.</p> <p>Our key procurement principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability: Ensuring responsible use of public funds. Openness: Maintaining transparency in all activities. Lawfulness: Complying with all legal requirements. Fairness: Acting impartially and treating all parties fairly. Integrity: Upholding high ethical standards. <p>The core objectives of our procurement policy focus on effective resource use, creating jobs, building local workforce capability, and promoting environmental sustainability. We also aim to foster the cultural heritage of Tairāwhiti, promote te reo Māori, and support Māori development, ensuring transparency and integrity in all procurement processes.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo - Our current monitoring and evaluation practices are already aligned with Government Procurement best practices. This approach ensures we follow industry standards and apply competitive market forces, promoting fairness and transparency. Maintaining the current plan allows us to continue enforcing compliance effectively without imposing additional financial burdens on ratepayers.</p> <p>It is noted that during Cyclone Gabrielle, the initial response phase required a large contractor base to reopen the network. As Council moves into the recovery phase, the works can be scoped, procured, and delivered with the appropriate resources.</p>	

Theme: Communication and Responsiveness	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback suggests a strong demand for improved communication regarding property responsibilities and faster responses to Requests for Service (RFS) to rebuild trust in the Council's commitment to addressing community concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters suggest that improved transparency in communication will help them to feel heard and will keep them better informed on Council's plans, particularly as they relate to future/long-term planning.
Response	<p>In recognition of this issue Community Lifelines are committing to developing a more intentional and inclusive stakeholder Management process. This will be assisted by establishing corridor and catchment groups that can effectively bring the community concerns to bear to assist engagement and to help guide decisions. They also provide a conduit for improved communication.</p> <p>To improve our capacity in this area, we are recruiting a stakeholder management specialist within the Community Lifelines hub. Given that the Hub handles the highest number of RFS, we will use this data to measure metrics and sentiment, which will help us improve our communication and responsiveness.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo - Maintains the current monitoring and evaluation practices as outlined. This approach will help address the community's concerns about communication and responsiveness, ensuring that we build trust and keep the community informed about Council's plans and actions.</p>	

5. Transport (8)

Theme: Traffic Control	
Submission Feedback	<p>Multiple submitters provided feedback on road safety initiatives, including lower speed limits and traffic diversion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community feedback indicates support for the low 40km/h speed limits. These limits are appreciated for improving road safety and reducing accidents. Submitters raised concerns about the safety of school children, with too many heavy vehicles driving through areas without safe crossings or footpaths. Suggestions include implementing safer crossings and restricting heavy vehicles in these areas to ensure the safety of children and pedestrians. Some submitters also suggested that Council should consider diverting traffic away from the CBD, city, and townships to reduce congestion, especially from trucks, to help make urban areas more pedestrian-friendly and reduce noise and air pollution. Providing risk assessment reports and enforcing speed reductions on dangerous bends on roads both in and out of the region have been suggested, to improve the overall safety of the community while many roads are still awaiting significant repairs.
Response	<p>Council recognises the importance of traffic control measures to improve road safety, reduce congestion, and enhance the liveability of urban areas. However, reduced support from central government will slow progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed Limit Reduction: Reducing speeds around schools, townships, and areas with safety concerns continues to be a priority within Council's programme of work. However, reduced support from the government may slow progress in this area. Traffic Diversion: Reducing congestion in the CBD and townships by diverting traffic or pedestrianising areas requires significant buy-in from local retailers who rely on vehicular access for their customers. Ensuring economic prosperity is a high priority for Council, so any changes to urban streets or parking will need to be thoroughly tested with the community. Risk Assessments: Business case studies on the network model, along with improved data collection methods, are being developed to better understand traffic patterns and inform decisions as population increases and land use changes.
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - maintain current measures and prioritise safety projects</p> <p>Continue with the current level of investment, focusing on reducing speeds in high-risk areas and conducting risk assessments to improve overall safety. This ensures that the most critical safety improvements are addressed within existing budget constraints and maintains a focus on areas with the highest impact on community safety and connectivity.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Increase funding through rates and seek further external funding</p> <p>Increase funding through rates to expand traffic control measures and actively seek additional funding sources to implement broader traffic diversion and pedestrian-friendly initiatives. This will enable faster and broader implementation of traffic control measures. This option will require an increase in rates, which may be unpopular with ratepayers, and securing additional funding may not be viable.</p>

Reasoning for preferred option	<p>Option 1 is preferred due to the current economic climate and funding constraints. By prioritising critical safety projects, we can ensure that the most urgent needs are met without imposing additional financial burdens on ratepayers.</p> <p>The Government Policy Statement (GPS) significantly reduces the level of support for safety and walking and cycling projects. Without this support, many of these projects will not go ahead. Guidance from NZTA over the past three months has confirmed that historic safety projects will be deprioritised in favour of recovery and resilience. While Council supports safety projects, it needs to be realistic about the likelihood of receiving government support.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Adopt option 1:</p> <p>Maintains the current measures and prioritise critical safety projects. This ensures that the most urgent needs are met within existing budget constraints while we continue to seek opportunities for additional funding to expand our traffic control measures.</p>	

Theme: Active Travel and Shared Paths	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback suggests that more investment is needed in safe crossings, shared paths, and to encourage alternative modes and travel. Ensuring safe pedestrian and cycling routes was also highlighted as a priority by multiple submitters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple submitters highlighted the importance of finishing walkways and cycleways, as these projects can be relatively inexpensive compared to road repairs and provide alternative means of transport. There is support for improving safe options for active travel within townships. Progressing projects like the Taruheru River shared path in Gisborne is seen as a way to encourage mode shifts towards walking and cycling, promote healthy lifestyles, reduce vehicle congestion, and enhance overall road safety. Submitters also encouraged Council to integrate better with other agencies, including police, mental health services, social services, schools, businesses, and volunteers to address the issues affecting transport and community wellbeing in our region.
Response	<p>Council acknowledges the strong community support for investment in active travel and shared paths, recognising their benefits for health, safety, and congestion reduction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Investment: Council is committed to increasing expenditure on footpaths and shared paths. However, 2/3rds of this funding is sourced from NZTA, which has signalled a significant reduction in national funding for these activities. Prioritisation: In light of funding constraints, we will prioritise projects that enhance safety around schools, townships, and key connections. This targeted approach ensures the most critical areas receive immediate attention, aligning with our strategic objectives. Collaboration with Agencies: The Road Safety Action Group will continue its collaborative work with police, emergency services, driver education providers, and other support networks to address high-risk areas, such as drink driving and adverse driver behaviours. This holistic approach ensures that safety improvements are comprehensive and effective.
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - maintain current funding and prioritise critical projects</p> <p>Continue with the current level of investment, focusing on high-priority areas like school zones, townships, and essential connections.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Increase funding through rates and seek further external funding</p> <p>Increase funding through rates to broaden active travel opportunities and actively seek additional funding sources from central government, noting their signal to reduce or limit this funding nationally.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>Option 1 is preferred due to the current economic climate and funding constraints. By prioritising critical safety projects, we can ensure that the most urgent needs are met without imposing additional financial burdens on ratepayers.</p> <p>The Government Policy Statement (GPS) significantly reduces the level of support for safety and walking and cycling projects. Without this support, many of these projects will not go ahead. Guidance from NZTA over the past three months has confirmed that historic safety projects will be deprioritised in favour of recovery and resilience. While Council supports safety projects, it needs to be realistic about the likelihood of receiving government support.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Adopt option 1: Maintains the current funding levels and prioritise critical safety and connectivity projects. This ensures that the most urgent needs are met within existing budget constraints while we continue to seek opportunities for additional non NZTA funding (to expand our active travel programme and infrastructure.</p>	

Additional feedback from Community Hui and Hearings

The information below provides key insights from hearings and community hui sessions. Where applicable, this feedback has been incorporated into the formal submission feedback above to allow a structured response. Other information is captured as informal feedback to provide context and reflect the community's broader concerns and suggestions.

Feedback from Hearings

Roading Infrastructure

The community consistently emphasised the need for significant improvements in roading infrastructure to ensure safe and reliable access, particularly in rural and isolated areas.

- **Better Roads, Avoid Unnecessary Cycleways:** Community members expressed a need for better road conditions and financial prudence. They suggested avoiding investments in projects such as additional cycleways and focusing on essential road maintenance and improvements instead.
- **Prioritise Safe, Reliable Access to Rural Areas:** There was an urgent call for investment in rural infrastructure. Ensuring safe and reliable access to farms, homes, and businesses in the region's rural areas was highlighted as a high priority.

Woody Debris

Addressing the issue of wood debris, which causes significant damage and flooding during adverse weather events, was a priority for many community members. There was a call for proactive measures to manage and utilise wood debris effectively.

- **Remove Bridge Debris During Floods:** The community highlighted that a major cause of flooding was the lack of removal of bridge debris. They suggested using the Port's hi-loaders to remove wood debris from bridges during floods to prevent blockages and damage.
- **Convert Wood Debris to Bio-char:** A proposal was made to convert wood debris to bio-char and set up mini-bio-char plants in townships. This would provide a sustainable solution for managing wood debris and create additional benefits such as heat for electricity production and glasshouse heating.

Feedback from Community Hui sessions

- **Potholes and Maintenance Inefficiencies:** Residents are frustrated with the proliferation of potholes and the general inadequacy of maintenance efforts on roads and pathways. These issues not only cause inconvenience but also pose significant safety hazards for commuters. There is a call for immediate action on pothole repairs and the development of a long-term road maintenance plan that includes regular assessments and timely repairs, especially on critical routes such as those used by school buses and heavy trucks.
- **Drainage and Flooding:** Many communities reported ongoing issues with inadequate drainage, which leads to localised flooding, particularly during heavy rainfall. This not only affects the quality of life but also poses risks to property and personal safety. The upgrade of drainage systems in flood-prone areas is prioritised to prevent property damage and personal risk.

- **Contractor Oversight and Accountability:** There is a notable concern regarding the efficiency and accountability of contractors hired for maintenance works. Communities feel that the lack of rigorous monitoring and management practices often leads to subpar infrastructure repair and maintenance. Implementing stricter oversight mechanisms for contractors, including performance-based evaluations and penalties for non-compliance with quality standards, is recommended.
- **Funding and Resource Allocation:** A recurring theme across the meetings was the need for more targeted funding and resource prioritisation for critical infrastructure projects, especially road repairs and drainage system enhancements. Residents emphasised the importance of prioritising investments in heavily trafficked and strategically important roads.
- **Community Resilience Planning:** The community called for Council to work closely with local communities to develop resilience plans that address potential impacts from extreme weather events and climate change.

Finance and Affordability Hub

2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP) submissions and responses relating to Finance and Affordability.

SUMMARY

The Finance & Affordability Hub manages all financial matters across Council, alongside running the Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, and Annual Reporting processes. 189 submission points relating to Finance & Affordability were received during the 3YP consultation period.

The following areas received the highest number of submission points, which can be categorised under the following main themes:

- **Focus Area:** Forestry Rate (75)
 - **Key Theme:** Accountability and Responsibility
- **Focus Area:** Budget and Cost Management (48)
 - **Key Theme:** Allocation of Funds
 - **Key Theme:** Efficient use of Financial Resources
- **Focus Area:** Rates Affordability (31)
 - **Key Theme:** Impacts of rates increases
 - **Key Theme:** Equity and Fairness
- **Focus Area:** Accountability and Transparency (18)
 - **Key Theme:** Decision-making and Prioritisation
 - **Key Theme:** Consultant Fees
- **Focus Area:** External Funding (12)
 - **Key Theme:** Commitment to seeking funding

Several submissions also highlighted the important role Council plays in supporting our region's economy and supporting local businesses (4), and another commented only on the Revenue and Financing Policy.

Alongside consultation on the 3YP, Council also asked for feedback on the following documents and policies:

- Fees and Charges for 2024/25
- Revenue and Financing Policy
- Rate Remission and Postponement Policy

Staff have analysed the submission points received and made recommendations based on this feedback for Councilors to consider.

Submission points have been grouped under the different policies, strategies or topics relating to the Finance & Affordability Hub. Due to the crossover of topics and themes, and sometimes duplication of submission points, discussion goes across multiple areas.

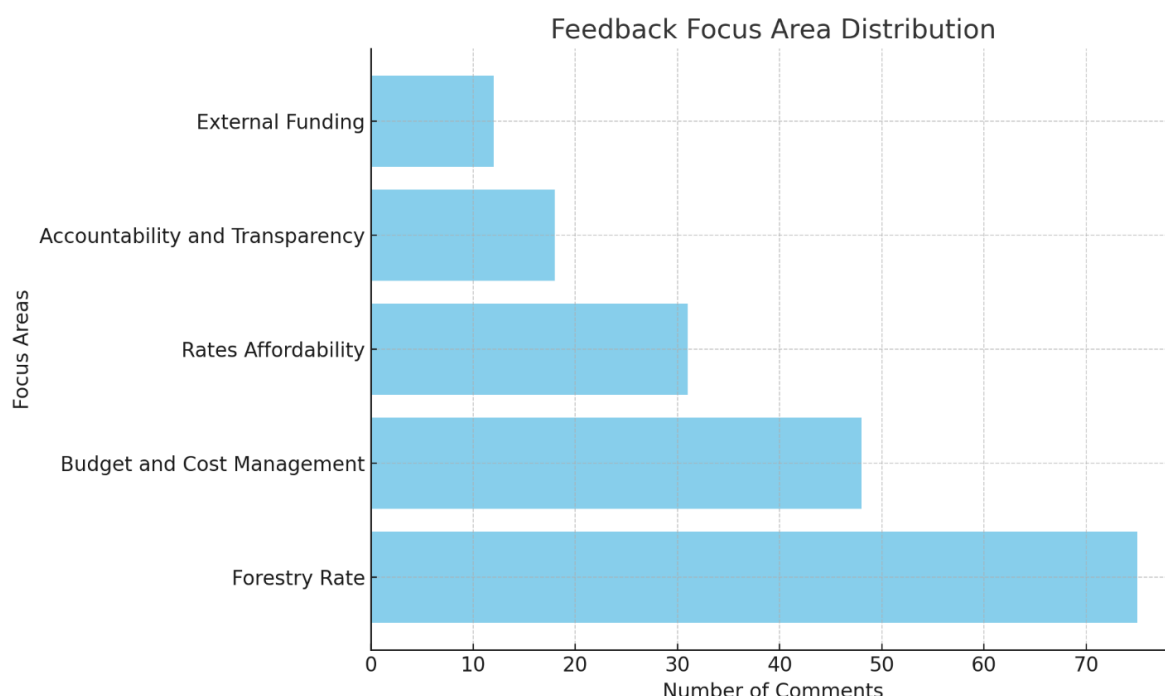
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

- 1. Approves the Financial Strategy to be included within the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.**
- 2. Approves the capital programme that was outlined within the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.**
- 3. Approves the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan based on the draft budgeted estimates, including rates to be within thresholds of 11.4%. Noting that the rates threshold is made up of 7.9% for business-as-usual costs and 3.5% for recovery costs.**
- 4. Adopts the Draft Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as final, with one additional change:**
 - **Dog Fees – Owners of more than 10 working dogs will only be charged up to a maximum of 10 dogs. Each dog owned over the 10 threshold will have nil registration fees.**
- 5. Approves the Rates Remissions and Postponement Policy to be included within the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.**
- 6. Approves the Revenue and Financing Policy with the following change:**
 - **To create a new Targeted rate for the forestry sector, for residual costs arising from forestry enforcement costs**
- 7. Instructs the Chief Executive to review and pursue localised legislation with Central Government to enable a forestry levy in Tairāwhiti.**

BACKGROUND

1. We received a total of 189 submission points relating to the Finance & Affordability Hub. As the issues of affordability and cost management were mentioned in relation to a variety of topics across the submissions received, some of the points counted in other reports have also been addressed in part through our tallies and analysis.
2. Submission points have been grouped under the different themes and topics relating to the Finance and Affordability hub, and where relevant, our policies and strategies.



Policies and Fees

3. We received 35 submissions on our financial policies, with 28 submitted online and 7 through other channels.
4. The Draft Fees & Charges policy received 16 comments, with 13 provided online and 3 by hard copy.
5. The Draft Rate Remission and Postponement Policy garnered 8 comments, all submitted online.
6. The Draft Revenue and Financing Policy received 11 comments, with 7 provided online and 4 through other channels.

Financial Strategy

7. Our Financial Strategy (the Strategy) sets our overall financial goal posts for the 2024-2027 3YP, including sources of revenue to fund capital and operational costs. In addition, it includes the impacts of our decisions on rates, debt, levels of service and investments.
8. The Strategy also guides Council's future funding decisions and along with the Infrastructure Strategy, informs the capital and operation spending within the 3YP.

9. Each preferred option presented in the 3YP Consultation Document has been considered against affordability and financial sustainability, as is set out by the key strategic principles within our Financial Strategy. These key strategic principles are as follows:
- Keep rates as affordable as practicable.
 - Focus on critical activities and infrastructure.
 - Manage debt prudently.
 - Increase alternative revenue streams.
 - Ensure beneficiaries of services pay the costs.
 - Grow and enable our rating base.
10. The Strategy's preferred key financial caps for rates increases and level of debt, were:



11. Full Draft Financial Strategy can be found on Council's website, or **Report 24-50**.

Fees and Charges

12. Fees and charges are used to fund the operation and maintenance of a variety of services provided to the community. The quantum of fees and charges that is needed to be collected for an activity is set out within the Revenue and Financing Policy.
13. The Revenue and Financing Policy sets the range of funds needed by the activity which is to be funded by fees and charges (user pay principle) and how much should be funded by rates (public good principle).
14. The fees are reviewed annually as part of the Annual Plan or Long-Term Plan process but can also be changed or updated during the year.
15. While reviewing fees and charges, several principles are considered. These include the cost of providing a service, value for money, and community expectations while considering the balance of affordability and accessibility of services. Fees and charges are set mostly on either a cost recovery or set by legislation.
16. Fees and charges have predominately increased by the rate of inflation used for year 1 of the Three year Plan, which is 2.9%. For the full draft Fees and Charges document, which contains a summary of all changes, including new fees, refer to Council's website, or **Report 24-25**.

Revenue and Financing Policy

17. The Revenue and Financing Policy (RFP) determines when debt and rates will be used as a funding source. This includes targeted rates for the cost of an activity or service that should be paid for by particular groups or ratepayers who benefit from the activity or service.
18. Under the Local Government Act 2002, Council must have a RFP (s102), in order to provide predictability and certainty about sources and levels of funding for Council's activities. Local authorities are required to review their RFP every three years.
19. The Draft Revenue and Financing Policy can be found on Council's website, or Report **24-33**.
20. Key changes of the Revenue and Financing Policy include:
 - **Soil Conservation Rate:** Updated to better reflect where the costs occur in our region. It will gradually transition from being on specific Differential Rating Areas to similarly align with other targeted rates like the Water Conservation Rate during the 2024-2027 3YP. It will be charged across the district to the Inner Zone (70%), and Outer zone (30%).
 - **Roads and Footpaths Activity:** An impact assessment was completed on the whole roading network, based on the assessment of damage caused to the roading pavements by Heavy Commercial Vehicles and the forward works programme. The roading rate sector weightings (Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Horticulture, Pastoral, and Forestry) for both subsidised and non-subsidised roads are reviewed annually. The 2024/25 Forestry rate differential is set at 13.75x, up from 12.5x, the other sector weightings have not changed.
 - **Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery:** This is a new activity which includes two new rates:
 - General Recovery Rate - applied district-wide as a fixed amount in the Uniform Annual General Charge. These costs are mainly around reducing risk to residents and our community. This incorporates the previously consulted on "FOSAL Category 3 Voluntary Property Buyout Costs" as well as the additional costs arising from sedimental removal, Category 2 Flood Projection costs and other Recovery Office costs not covered by central government funding.
 - Woody Debris Rate - this has a new targeted new rate and is separate from the business-as-usual activities of Council. The rate will cover maintenance and preemptive work to protect Council assets including our bridges and the protection of water supply assets within the Waingake area. The forestry sector will contribute 70% and Pastoral Farms sector 15%, based on a properties capital value. The community will contribute the remaining 15% public good component in the UAGC.

Rate Remission and Postponement Policy

21. Section 102(3) of the Local Government Act (LGA 02) provides that a council may adopt a rates remission policy and a rates postponement policy. This policy addresses both remission and postponement of rates.
22. Remission and postponement policies are primarily used to address any inequities as a result of setting of the rates and provide assistance to those who are affected more than others.
23. The Draft Rates Remission and Postponement Policy can be found on Council's website, or Report **24-33**.
24. The draft Rate Remission and Postponement Policy was reviewed in several workshops and meetings in 2023, where the recommendations were to:
 - Update the Remission Policy for Whenua Māori as recommended in the Strategic Review of Whenua Māori Rating Policies carried out in 2022 and 2023. As a result, five policies were amalgamated into one policy.
 - Update existing general remission policies for practical workability.

SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS and RESPONSES

1. Forestry Rate (76)

Theme: Accountability and Responsibility	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitter feedback highlights significant concerns about the financial responsibility and accountability of forestry companies for the cleanup of wood debris and road maintenance, due to the impact of heavy vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is strong consensus among submitters that forestry companies and land block owners should be held accountable for their waste. Residents believe that these companies, which profit from logging activities, should bear the costs associated with cleaning up wood debris and repairing roads. • Many submissions support the principle that those who cause the pollution should pay for the cleanup. This includes advocating for increased targeted rates for forestry companies and implementing mandatory bonds for forestry consent holders. • Some submissions suggest that forestry companies should cover a substantial portion, if not all, of the cleanup costs. For instance, proposals range from forestry companies paying 90-100% of the expenses to implementing levies and fines to ensure they contribute fairly to the costs incurred by their operations. • Submissions highlight the importance of collaborative efforts between Council, government, and forestry companies to address the challenges posed by wood debris and road maintenance. • Feedback also calls for Council to consider levying greater contributions from heavy trucks due to their impact on our roads, as ratepayers are growing frustrated with having to pay for continual repairs, on top of existing maintenance costs. • One submitter suggested that Council should amend the 3YP to reduce the ratepayer subsidy for road damage repair by engaging the government in introducing a Port Log Roothing Levy by 2026 and reviewing the road funding policy to reflect the user and beneficiary pays principle. • A group of 31 submitters have submitted against a forestry targeted rate to cover additional road upgrade costs and wood debris removal.
Response	<p>Revenue and Financing Policy</p> <p>Council's Revenue and Financing Policy considers a number of factors when deciding who should pay. By and large, the impacts caused by wood debris and who should pay are guided by the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). Fundamentally, each activity and how rates need to be raised are assessed bases on a number of factors:</p> <p>Section 101(3)(a)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The community outcome to which the activity primarily contributes. b. The distribution of benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community and individuals. c. The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur. d. The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity. e. The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability of funding the activity distinctly from other activities.

	<p>The Revenue and Finance Policy gives effect to S101(3)(a) LGA, after determining the most appropriate levels of rates funding needed for an activity.</p> <p>How Forestry is rated</p> <p>Roading has been and continues to be the Council activity most impacted by heavy forestry trucks on our roads. The approach taken is a differential rate calculated for each of the major sectors within the Tairāwhiti region (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, horticulture, pastoral and forestry) based on the estimated impact the sector has on our roading network.</p> <p>The residential sector has the lowest rate of a "1 times" differential (lowest impact) and the highest differential is forestry "13.75 times" (highest impact). The impact assessment for forestry covers the whole network, based on the assessment of damage caused to the roading pavements by Heavy Commercial Vehicles and planned forward works. The differential rate weightings may be updated annually based on actual assessed damage.</p> <p>Our road rating method is similar to that of Far North District Council.</p> <p>The new wood debris rate and who should pay follows the same principled approach as the Roothing Forestry differential rate. Large wood debris in our district has been comprehensively assessed over the last six years. Recent analysis since November 2023 from Uawa and Waimata catchments has shown that wood debris is largely exotic pine, accounting for 69% to 86% of the total wood debris count.</p> <p>After reviewing the research on the makeup of wood debris, including debris on our beaches, the wood debris rate was set to be targeted at 70% from the Forestry Sector, 15% from Pastoral farms and 15% as a public good component collected from the community (based on a UAGC rate). The percentage from Pastoral farms was based on debris on our beaches from farming (willows, fence posts). The remaining 15% was charged across the district, as there was no strong evidence to determine where the wood debris came from.</p> <p>Other Approaches</p> <p>Wairoa District Council rates their forestry sector based on a differential across all general rates charged on land value. It applies across multiple activities, not just those heavily impacted by forestry, and is based on a wellbeing approach (as opposed to assessed damage). They have determined that the Forestry sector pays 4 times differential, with residential and rural sectors having the lowest rating of "0.7 times". Wairoa also has separate uniform annual general charges and targeted rates, mostly for reticulated services.</p> <p>Wairoa District Council is the only council to date to implement a wellbeing approach when charging rates for the forestry sector. This goes beyond a direct impact assessment of costs approach. Their rating approach, based on the negative impact of forestry expansion on community wellbeing, was upheld in the Court of Appeal.</p> <p>Investigations and Legal Costs</p> <p>Currently, our Revenue and Financing Policy does not separate costs arising from residual forestry prosecutions and forestry investigations. To date, Council's costs arising from prosecution charges – forestry and non-forestry events alike – are collected generally across all ratepayers based on how an activity is rated.</p>
--	---

	<p>This is because enforcing laws in court benefits the general public rather than any specific group or individual. While prosecution costs that are ruled in favour of Council rarely result in compensation above external legal costs, this leaves residual costs that the Council must pay from general funds.</p> <p>New Targeted rate</p> <p>A new targeted rate within our Revenue and Financing Policy could be created specifically for residual forestry-related investigations and court costs. While this would be a departure from the approach for other non-forestry prosecution court costs, where everybody contributes, forestry residual costs are significant and have been increasing. As such, a separate targeted rate for these specific industry costs could be collected from the forestry sector.</p> <p>Forestry Levy</p> <p>Our current rating model is based on the principle that "rates are a tax." While the exacerbator principle has been applied so that industries damaging the roads are paying, individual ratepayers are not paying for the specific damage they cause.</p> <p>All forestry rating units, whether waiting for planting or mid-harvest, are paying a share towards today's damage. Effectively, the industry is taxed for the estimated current damage.</p> <p>A forestry levy would be a "pay as you go" or "user pay" principle. This means charges via a levy would mean individuals pay while the damage to the road is occurring.</p> <p>However, Councils ability to charge a levy is limited to two avenues – via a bylaw or legislation (via an Order in Council). Both options are problematic. To date, enforcing a levy has not been feasible.</p> <p>A bylaw change to enforce a levy is difficult and costly, as all heavy vehicles users would have to be identified, monitored and charged. Bylaws can be challenged on several grounds, so they must be carefully developed and drafted. The potential grounds for challenge (other than legality) relate to proportionality. It is necessary to have sufficiently robust evidence linking road damage and associated costs to the particular class of road transport. Forestry would not be able to be singled out; all heavy users would need to be factored into fees and charges.</p> <p>The previous government stated that there would be no new legislation regarding localised funding. The last localised legislation was for the Auckland region, based on a petrol tax. However, there may be an opportunity to pursue this with the new central government, as they have signaled a willingness to look at new funding options.</p> <p>Of the two options –bylaw or local legislation– a change in legislation to have a localised solution is the most transparent way of raising a levy in the future.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Adopt our current Revenue and Financing Policies for Forestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooding targeted differential 13.75 x. • Woody Debris targeted rate – Forestry charged 70% of the costs.
Option 2: Preferred	<p>As above, but also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a targeted rate for residual Forestry related court and prosecution costs. • Review and pursue localized legislation for forestry levy with Central Government.
Option 3:	<p>Adopt a change in approach to our Revenue and Financing Policy, based on an overall wellbeing approach.</p>

Reasoning for preferred option	<p>Option 2 considers all the current funding differentiated forestry rating, based on existing costs and impacts (i.e. option 1) but it also recognises costs such as residual forestry prosecution costs currently being borne across all ratepayers.</p> <p>Actively pursuing and advocating for a forestry levy will also be beneficial for forestry owners, as the charges will more likely align with when they receive revenue.</p> <p>Option 3 is not preferred as it would require a wholesale and significant change to our highly targeted rating system. It would require modelling of the impacts and separate additional consultation.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 2 - Creates a new Targeted rate for the forestry sector, for residual costs arising from forestry enforcement costs, and</p> <p>To review and pursue localised legislation with Central Government to enable a forestry levy in Tairāwhiti.</p>	

2. Budget and Cost Management (48)

Theme: Allocation of Funds	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback highlights concern about the Council's budget management and spending, with many submitters calling for more detailed explanations of how funds are allocated and spent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a demand for greater transparency in financial reports and budget allocations to ensure that money is being used effectively and efficiently. • Some submitters advocate for spending more on essential services like securing clean water and maintaining local roads and suggest that Council should consider reallocating funds from less critical projects to ensure the sustainability and safety of vital infrastructure. • Several submissions advocated for reducing spending on non-essential projects, such as cycleways and city centre revitalisation, in favour of focusing on core infrastructure needs. This includes proposals to drop expenses related to mode shift and active travel mode initiatives. • A suggestion was made to increase commercial water meter rates by 25 cents per cubic meter, and to add \$20 per household for future capital upgrades. The submitter noted that this could help distribute costs more fairly and ensure sustainable funding for essential services in the future.
Response	<p>Council's vision for our region is centered on:</p> <p>Oranga Wai – Healthy water Oragna tangata – Healthy people Oranga whenua – Healthy land Oranga mo āpopō – Healthy future</p> <p>Council's strategic priorities include resilient waters, building resilient transport, and enabling effective regulatory functions. We recognise that we will not achieve all our goals within next three years, but this is the first phase in rebuilding our foundations.</p> <p>We plan to live within our means and have set our budgets on a no-frills basis, focusing on what we can and must do. The majority of our planned capital expenditure over the next three years is for infrastructure (92%), which is also the reason for our debt. Total capital investment is \$431 million, with just under \$300 million allocated to recovery capital works. Roothing is the single biggest cost, amounting to \$245 million. The next largest capital spend is on Category 2 Flood Projection (\$65 million).</p> <p>Reprioritising projects</p> <p>Only a small percentage of projects within the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan are not related to recovery, infrastructure, or core services. They have been included for several reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) They were approved and committed to in previous Long Term Plans (e.g., Walking and cycling projects). b) We have contractual obligations to complete the next stage of the project (Kiwa Pools). c) Health and Safety reasons. d) Deteriorating assets (CBD).

	<p>The last time that significant work was undertaken within the city was nearly 25 years ago. Over the next year, we will work with Trust Tairāwhiti, our economic partner, to help determine what needs to be done to revitalize the city's central business district. Deferring this project risks further deterioration of the city.</p> <p>Water resilience and future saving</p> <p>The suggestion of an additional charge to commercial water meter uses for future water security and the \$20 per household for residential users follows previous Council decisions. For instance, prior to building the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Council rated for several years before starting construction.</p> <p>However, there are inherent uncertainties around water supply based on Central Government's new direction of Local Waters Done Well. Once key decisions have been made, the idea of saving for the security of our water supply could be modelled and considered.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Approve the capital programme that was outlined within the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan without reprioritization.</p> <p>PREFERRED</p>
Option 2:	<p>Approve the capital programme that was outlined within the draft 2024-2027 Three Year plans subject to Council's reprioritisation.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Approves the capital programme that was outlined within the draft 2024-2027 Three Year Plan without reprioritization.</p> <p>The capital programme that was included within the draft 3YP was consulted on with the community. While there were a few submissions that supported doing only the necessary infrastructure, there were also strong sentiments from sectors of the community for support of the projects that were consulted on. This included walking and cycling, city centre and Kiwa pools outdoor area.</p>	

3. Rates Affordability (31)

Theme: Impacts of rates increases	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback highlights significant concerns about the affordability of rates and the financial burden of proposed increases on families, households, and businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many submissions highlight the struggle of ratepayers to afford the increasing rates, especially in the current economic climate with high living costs and financial pressures. Submitters suggest that during a recession, with high costs of living, ratepayers should not be burdened with such steep rate increases. Submissions suggest exploring ways to mitigate the financial impact on ratepayers, such as combined procurement for discounts, rates rebates, and incentivising water-saving practices to reduce costs in the long run. Some submitters have also provided alternative proposals to rates increases, included suggestions of a lower rate increase (e.g., 10% instead of 19.7%) or alternative methods of funding such as targeted roading rates or incentivising water-saving measures to reduce the overall financial burden on ratepayers. Some submitters not their support for the proposed rate increases, emphasizing that they need to see the impact of these increases through active work and projects, such as through the development of township plans and infrastructure improvements.
Response	<p>Financial Strategy</p> <p>Council is conscious of the impact of rates increases on our community. We understand the community's desire to maintain or enhance levels of service while making sure we are focused on the essentials. Therefore, critical infrastructure is prioritised.</p> <p>We have approached the issue of affordability seriously within our Financial Strategy, which aims to support and balance the needs of our current community without overly burdening future generations. The Strategy highlights the costs Council faces with increased requirements to cover inflation and address our critical recovery needs, which are far beyond what our community can afford.</p> <p>Various mechanisms were used to keep rates as affordable as possible, while still enabling us to do the critical work required. Our rates setting process approach was to prioritise the most appropriate options, aiming to strike a balance between our recovery needs and ensuring the maintenance of and restoration of our assets, all the while considering what is affordable and financial sustainable for ourselves and our community.</p> <p>Rates increases to existing ratepayers are proposed to be under 11.4%. This comprises of a 7.9% increase to do our normal business and 3.5% for addressing our recovery needs. The average rates increases are set at the lowest level possible to manage our day-to-day core services, while also responding to our significant recovery issues.</p> <p>Critical infrastructure repairs and essential planning have been prioritised for this plan. Other capital projects, unless externally funded, will be delayed, or deferred to prevent massive spikes in expenditure.</p> <p>We have spread the majority of recovery response costs across the district, opting for an approach that spreads the costs rather than applying a rate based on capital value. This acknowledges that the costs and benefits (after the benefits of impacted property owners are considered) are district wide and the difficulty in easily differentiating between different groups.</p>

	<p>It also acknowledges that parts of our community, such as pastoral and horticultural areas with high capital value, faced significant damage following adverse weather events.</p> <p>For the majority of ratepayers the recovery rate represents an additional \$82 in 2024/25.</p> <p>While the uniform charge is most appropriate for the next three years, it has an unintentional consequence. The flat tax is regressive in nature and has a greater impact on lower income households.</p> <p>We also have parts of our community facing high deprivation and others who are still facing financial hardship due to the lasting impacts of the severe weather events. In order to further address the issue of affordability, which we know affects everyone differently, we have increased our provisions for rates remissions to directly address those that are facing hardship.</p> <p>The Strategy also recognises that going forward we need to continually look for external funds, to partner and explore other opportunities to make our dollars go further.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Adopt the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan based on the draft budgeted estimates, including rates to be within thresholds of 11.4%. Noting that the rates threshold is made up of 7.9% for business-as-usual costs and 3.5% for recovery costs.</p> <p>PREFERRED</p>
Option 2:	<p>Adopt the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan with a lower than 11.4% rates increase threshold to address affordability.</p>
Option 3:	<p>Adopt the 2034-2027 Three Year Plan with a higher than 11.4% rates threshold in order to deliver more services.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Option 1 – Adopts the 2024- 2027 Three Year Plan based on the draft budgeted estimates, including rates to be within thresholds of 11.4%. Noting that the rates threshold is made up of 7.9% for business-as-usual costs and 3.5% for recovery costs.</p> <p>This is the preferred option and the majority of submissions supported our approach.</p> <p>The 2024-2027 Three Year Plan recognises the higher costs that Council is facing, the focus on recovery and critical infrastructure and planning for the future.</p> <p>Reducing rates (Option 2), while needing to meet many of unavoidable costs, means that in order to fund the difference, we would either have to raise debt or take a longer time to complete the necessary work. Raising more debt means transferring costs to future generations.</p> <p>By increasing our remissions to support those facing hardship, we are addressing those in greatest need. This is a more targeted approach rather than a blanket reduction in rates under option 2.</p> <p>Option 3 considers doing more, and this was the alternative option included within our consultation document and what we consulted with our community. While some submissions supported an increase in rates, they were in the minority.</p>	

Theme: Equity and Fairness	
Submission Feedback	<p>Some submissions have called for a more equitable distribution of rates and consideration of the unique needs of different areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concerns have been raised the equity of rate increases, especially for rural and coastal communities and areas that do not benefit equally from Council services. • Submitters highlight specific issues such as the lack of water and wastewater services in certain areas, arguing that these residents should be exempt from related rate increases. • Some rural submitters felt that the three year plan were city focused. • One submitter supported the use of the UAGC (uniform fixed charge against every rateable property) to the maximum limit allow under legislation. <p>Coastal/Rural Equity concerns – rates are too expensive for those who don't directly benefit or live in urban areas.</p>
Response	<p>Equity and fairness are two important factors which we thoroughly consider when setting our rates and determining how they should be applied. Our Revenue and Financing Policy outlines how we use rates as a funding source, and how we apply targeted rates to fund specific activities or services that only benefit particular groups or ratepayers.</p> <p>Most of our rates are of a targeted nature which means that if you receive a service or you contribute to the cost of that service, you would be expected to receive a rate charge for it.</p> <p>Within the city, reticulated infrastructure (water supply and wastewater), are charged 90% against those who are reticulated to the network. 10% is charged generally across the district. The difference between the city residential rates and rural township residential is on average \$2.1k more for city ratepayers than rural residential ratepayers.</p> <p>Therefore ratepayers who are not receiving reticulated services, by and large would not be experiencing rates increases for those services. Residential city ratepayers for year 1 of the 3YP will see an increase of around \$362 over their 2023/24 rates. Within the rural townships the expected increase is around \$182.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Accepts the overall rates increase thresholds of 11.4% and to accept the draft Revenue and Financing Policy outline as discussed previously under the other themes.</p>	

4. Accountability and Transparency (18)

Theme: Decision-making and Prioritisation	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters have called for better prioritisation of projects, and increased transparency around financial decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple submissions questioned decisions Council is making to help cut costs and increase efficiency, with some raising concerns about a lack of transparency or explanation regarding efforts to reduce costs. Some feedback suggests Council should involve the community more directly in budgeting decisions. This includes forming volunteer-led, Council-supported working groups to manage certain projects and ensure that spending aligns with local priorities and needs. Submitters have expressed concerns about Council's increasing debt and the lack of dividends from ratepayer-owned holdings. Some have called for a more prudent approach to managing debt and ensuring that investments provide tangible returns.
Response	<p>Accountability and Transparency</p> <p>Under the Local Government Act 2002, Council is required to take into account all matters relating to planning, decision making and accountability (Part 6). Included within this section of the act are principles of consultation, materiality of decisions, special consultative procedures, and when and what information is needed for the community to be able to make decisions, and to have visibility over what Council does.</p> <p>In our planning process, Council consults on what it will do over the long term (Ten-year plans with Infrastructure strategy over 30 years). For our recovery focus, our plans are focused on the next three years. If there are significant departures from where we had consulted with the community, then during the Annual Plan process we would consult with the community over those changes and options for the community to consider.</p> <p>Each year, we report on how we did against our plans within our Annual Report.</p> <p>Debt and Dividends</p> <p>Debt</p> <p>Most of Council's debt when leading into the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan is based on infrastructure investment. By 2023, we acknowledge we would be entering the peak period of infrastructure investment, with the delivery of phase two of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Combined costs for the Wastewater Treatment Plant over the past ten years is over \$80m.</p> <p>We acknowledge that debt has increased due to our infrastructure investment and is forecast to increase further over the next three years. The increase is mostly due to needing to fund significant recovery costs for our roads and infrastructure. To fund the planned \$430 million capital programme, where over 90% relates to infrastructure and recovery reinstatement, our debt is forecast to increase to \$232 million (2021 Long Term Plan \$150 million). This represents 157% of our revenue and is under our new debt cap of 175% (debt to revenue).</p> <p>The forecast increase in interest costs from higher debt is managed within the new rates increase cap.</p>

	<p>Dividends</p> <p>Our Financial Strategy outlines the importance of dividends from our Council Controlled Trading Organisation and how we will approach the forecast of nil dividends.</p> <p>Council's investment strategy with GHL has shareholder focused goals, aimed at increasing the return from commercial operations assets, increasing the income stream to Council over the life of the 3YP and beyond, and increasing economic value for the community.</p> <p>Leading into the 3YP, GHL reforecast their dividends to Council and halted dividends from 2022/23 until Year 2 (2025/26) of the 3YP. The impact of not receiving a dividend while Council is facing higher costs from both recovery and from inflation, depreciation and interest, is significant.</p> <p>To smooth the impact of losing around \$6m of revenue, we have raised a loan which we anticipate will be paid for by future dividends and/or any restructures.</p> <p>GHL's Investment strategy will be critical to our overall non-rates income and will determine how quickly the loan will be repaid.</p> <p>GHL's investment strategy and the outcome of this will be reviewed by Council at the Group level. The overarching aim is to deliver Council Group services by the best vehicle in the most cost-effective and efficient way possible, while achieving sustainable and economic returns for our community.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Approves the draft Financial Strategy including the mandatory measures of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total rates revenue increases to be not more than 11.4% (excluding growth). - Debt to revenue maximum of 175%. <p>PREFERRED</p>
Option 2:	Approves the draft Financial Strategy with changes.
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Approves the draft Financial Strategy.</p> <p>This option is based on what we consulted with the community. While there are significant increases (%) to rates revenue, and to overall debt, the increases acknowledge the significant costs of recovery and the work we need to do over the next three years.</p>	

5. External Funding (12)

Theme: Commitment to Seeking Funding	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback highlights a critical need for external funding to support the region's recovery and rebuild vital infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong call from submitters for Council to work closely with Central Government and secure additional financial support, particularly for major infrastructure projects and recovery efforts, as ratepayers cannot afford to cover these costs on their own. Some submitters believe that state highways and other critical infrastructure should be primarily funded by national bodies rather than local ratepayers. • Submitters emphasised the importance of obtaining external funding to ensure the region's resilience against future crises and severe weather events. • There was also a suggestion made that additional funding be allocated towards advocating for policy changes at the national level, particularly around traffic control and infrastructure maintenance.
Response	<p>We agree that Council will need to form and maintain enduring funding partnerships with central government, especially as we start rebuilding and recovering over the next three years.</p> <p>Our roading network serves as a lifeline for our communities and economic development. Without it, our region would be completely isolated. An effective partnership with the New Zealand Transport Agency is crucial, as the costs for enhancing resilience and reinstating our roading network far surpass what our community can afford.</p> <p>The challenges that we face, especially in light of our recovery, are too large for any one Council to address. Greater connectivity with central government is needed. The draft report from the Review into the Future of Local Government emphasises the importance of "mutually reinforcing relationship that harnesses the strengths of both local and central government"¹, with a strong focus on agreed outcomes and properties.</p> <p>Fostering connectivity will require a linkage between us and central government, allowing us to break down silos between agencies, and enabling us to work together to respond to our region's complex needs.</p> <p>In addition to fostering key relationships with Central Government, a key direction within the Financial Strategy is to also increase alternative revenue streams.</p> <p>As we progress through this LTP, Council will continue to seek additional sources of funding to facilitate what we do. In the longer term, Council acknowledges within its Strategy that it will need to think beyond conventional ways to fund activities and look at leveraging community partnerships to deliver a wide range of community services.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Acknowledges that as we move through our Three Year Recovery Plan, enduring partnerships, especially with Central Government, will be critical to our recovery.</p>	

¹ [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Future-for-Local-Government/\\$file/Te-Arotake_Final-report.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Future-for-Local-Government/$file/Te-Arotake_Final-report.pdf)

6. Financial Policies and Fees

Theme: Fees and Charges	
Submission Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One submitter called for Council to fully charge for all monitoring to ensure cost recovery, while another suggested that charges should be based on actual costs. • Multiple submitters made requests for more transparency around the setting of fees, with one submitter recommending an audit of Council practices, and another requesting a clear breakdown of how fees are calculated. • Another submitter also commented on monitoring fees, highlighting a disparity between Councils Fees and Charges and guidance from MPI which does not permit Councils to charge for preparatory or office work in relation to Permitted Activities. • Feedback from one submitter also highlighted that as per legislation, Council's five-year review of alcohol licensing fees and charges is now overdue. • The same submitter encourages Council to advocate to Central Government for a review of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Fees) Regulations 2013. • A comment was received regarding the charges for water use in mixed-use buildings, advocating for separate meters to ensure that commercial rates do not unfairly apply to residential usage. • A conservative and cautious approach to fee increases for resource consents was recommended by one submitter, particularly in relation to consents required for farming activities. • The same submitter suggested that working dog registration costs should be lowered to reflect the actual demand for animal control services, and that a fee rebate scheme for farmers with multiple working dogs should be considered. • Another submitter shared that they do not want to have to pay more for other fees when they are dissatisfied with the current levels of service provided in other areas which are being paid for by their rates. • A recommendation to increase Litter Act Fees was also received, alongside a request to standardise photocopying and letter act fees across Council. • One submitter called for an increase in forestry environmental fees to reduce the ratepayer subsidy for monitoring and compliance costs. <p>Of the 16 submissions received regarding the Fees and Charges policy, only 8 directly addressed the Policy. The remaining submissions primarily focused on proposed rate increases or general issues with the consultation process. These points have been addressed alongside other feedback on those topics both above, and in the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub Report.</p>
Response	<p>Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils cost recovery policy has been reviewed alongside our Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) functions to ensure that costs are recovered where possible. • A primary funding source for Councils' CME functions is the fees and charges allowed under relevant legislation, particularly those related to compliance monitoring activities under the Resource Management Act (RMA). Council is authorised to require individuals and organisations to cover the reasonable costs incurred during the monitoring or enforcement of their compliance with the Act. This mechanism allows Council to recover costs for all compliance activities effectively.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current fees and charges relating to monitoring and compliance, including charge-out rates, are aligned with those of other Councils. • Regarding charges for permitted activities, Council has adopted a revised cost recovery approach, which will enable detailed invoice breakdowns as part of the process going forward. This approach will not affect the rates set out in the fees and charges document for 2024/25. <p>Setting of Fees and Charges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our methodology for calculating, setting and updating Fees and Charges involves an annual review to ensure alignment with legislation, current policies, and practices of other Councils nationwide. Fees are predominately adjusted based on the rate of inflation. We acknowledge however, that there is room for improvement in thoroughly and continuously reviewing all fees and charges. Moving forward, we plan to develop clearer processes to comprehensively back-up how fees and charges are set. • Feedback on our approach to fee increases is noted. Affordability and equity are always considered during our annual review of fees and charges. <p>Dog Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog fees have been adjusted for inflation to address the rising costs of providing Animal Control services. • A review of dog fees and modelling of a cost recovery, especially for rural versus urban dog, will occur. This will inform of any changes to our current dog fees structure. This will include a review also of charges in other regions. A high level review of 2024 charges, show ranges for working dogs ranges for working dogs from \$40 to \$96. Gisborne District Councils charge for a working dog is \$56 (or \$51 if desexed). One other Council charge the same rate for the first dog, but subsequent dogs were much lower. • In the absence of a full review of dog fees, in the interim a maximum charge could be set for the number of working dogs. <p>Other Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have contacted the Minister of Justice to request an urgent review of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Fees) Regulations 2013. We are currently awaiting a response from the Minister regarding this review. • Our approach to water metering in mixed-used buildings will be reviewed in the next financial year to consider how to appropriately rate buildings containing both commercial and residential dwellings. • Councils current Litter Act Fees are consistent with those of other Councils and have been deemed reasonable. While the suggestion that increased fees could help reduce littering is agreed upon, enforcement may present challenges. • Comments regarding dissatisfaction with current levels of service in other areas have been acknowledged. Performance across our service levels have been addressed in multiple hub reports.
	<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Adopts the Draft Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as final, with one additional change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dog Fees – Owners of more than 10 working dogs will only be charged up to a maximum 10 dogs. Each dog owned over the 10 threshold will have nil registration fees.

Theme: Rate Remission and Postponement Policy	
Submission Feedback	<p>Overall, feedback received highlights a need for greater fairness and flexibility in the rate remission and postponement policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters expressed concerns about the equitable distribution of rates, especially for those least able to pay, and emphasised the need for adjustments in policies to account for specific circumstances affecting ratepayers. • Submitters recommend extending rates relief to land designated as Significant Natural Areas (SNA), in line with the NPS on Indigenous Biodiversity. • One other submitter suggests that buildings with significant residential use should be classified accordingly for rate purposes. • A water remission rate based on the residential portion of mixed-use buildings to ensure fair billing has been recommended. • Other submitters noted their general support for the policy and highlighted their support for providing rates relief for land impacted by zoning changes. • Another submitter acknowledged the positive impact of the Whenua Māori rates policy.
Response	<p>The Rates Remission and Postponement Policy allows Council to fine-tune the rating system and address unintended consequences. The Rate Remission and Postponement Policy has recently been reviewed and updated to align Council objectives to Te Ture Whenua Māori Act Preamble, and to ensure the practical workability of existing general remission policies.</p> <p>Affordability and Hardship</p> <p>The budget for rate remissions has been increased in the 2024-2027 3YP. Our approach directly addresses those facing hardship, aiming to strike a balance between supporting the needs of our current communities and not overly burdening future generations. This helps us address affordability issues directly with individuals who are facing hardship and need support.</p> <p>Council has 14 Rate Remission policies which allow us to reduce rates for a variety of circumstances. This includes remission in exceptional circumstances, which has recently been applied for FOSAL Category 3 and Category 2 properties. Our approach is consistent with other Councils in the Motu and does not include rate remission for road or bridge closures.</p> <p>Relief sought for Significant Natural Areas</p> <p>District Councils throughout New Zealand are tasked through the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) with protecting significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna in their areas. Council currently offers full remission for Open Space covenants and Nga Whenua Rahui. Land not subject to a covenant but with a similar mechanism can apply for a remission set in accordance with the application's merit. Land covenanted under the Reserves Act 1977, the Conservation Act 1987 or Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 is already non rateable under the Local Government Rating Act 2002.</p> <p>Residential Use</p> <p>Rates are based on the use of the property. Factors such as the District Valuation Category are also a factor in how a property is rated. Mixed use properties such as commercial properties with residential use are rated accordingly. This is rated in line with Council's definition for separately used or inhabited parts of a property.</p>

	<p>Water Meter charges for Commercial Properties with residential use</p> <p>Where properties have commercial use (and are charged via water metering) but have residential use as well (eg commercial business in CBD which has an apartment), the total water used will be charged via water meters. However, property owners can separate commercial versus residential usage by installing an additional meter for residential use only. The residential water meter wouldn't have any charges for it use. Without a reading to gauge what is residential consumption versus commercial, estimations (or rebate apportionments) are likely to be inaccurate and inappropriate. Remission of water rates is currently limited to instances where there is a water leak. Council does provide domestic users with a free 300m³ domestic allowance as part of the Revenue and Financing Policy. Extraordinary water users have one water connection and a metered supply. This includes commercial/residential mixed-use properties.</p> <p>Water metering of all users including domestic/residential users is planned for and will include a review of water rating as part of that process.</p> <p>Zoning Changes</p> <p>Council acknowledges support for the land affected by plan changes in the Remission Policy. It has been used historically where land changed from a farming use to industrial and the value of land increased (Awapuni). In this instance, Council continued to rate the land as farmland until either the land sold, or the land use changed to industrial.</p> <p>Māori Freehold Land</p> <p>A strategic review of Māori Freehold Land (MFL) rating was recently completed. All the recommendations from this review relating to the Rate remission and Postponement Policy have been incorporated into the updated policy. The single MFL Remission Policy now incorporates the five previous remissions relating to MFL. It was also modernised to make applying for remission simpler, and to account for recent changes to the Local Government (rating) Act 2002 (LGRA). Wholly unused MFL is non-rateable, and Council continues to provide remission for parts of MFL rating units that are unused.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>To approve the Rate Remission and Postponement Policy.</p> <p>PREFERRED</p>
Option 2:	<p>To approve the Rate Remission Policy and Postponement Policy with changes.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>The Rate Remission and Postpone Policy is comprehensive and does allow for remitting of rates in a wide range of circumstances. It also addressed the majority of submitters responses.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 – Approves the Rates Remissions and Postponement Policy.</p>	

Theme: Revenue and Financing Policy	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback highlights the need for careful consideration of rate increases, especially given the economic impact on local industry and landowners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a call for more equitable approaches to rate allocation and targeted rates. • Submissions also highlight the need for transparency and fairness in the application of rates, particularly in relation to services and infrastructure. • Support was also given from some regarding the use of UAGC as a fair method to rate services providing indistinguishable benefits across ratepaying groups. • Another recommendation was to exclude rural landowners from rates for services they do not receive.
Response	<p>The Revenue and Financing Policy (RFP) outlines Council's choices in deciding the appropriate sources of funding for operating and capital expenditure. The LGA mandates that Council manage financial responsibilities prudently while promoting the current and future interests of the community. Council conducts a funding needs analysis for each activity in accordance with the LGA to ensure thorough decisions on who pays and why. A mix of general and targeted rates is used to meet the community's needs, spreading some activities to make them more affordable and equitable.</p> <p>Recovery Rates</p> <p>In light of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, the 3YP includes provisions for economic recovery, planning processes, rebuilding infrastructure, and increasing safety and resilience for people and the environment. Council acknowledges that parts of our community, such as pastoral and horticultural properties with high capital value, faced significant damage from these events. Targeted rates have been used to allocate costs fairly for certain groups and activities in light of this.</p> <p>New recovery rates have been introduced for 2024/25 onwards to fund and aid recovery, including FOSAL Category 3 Voluntary Property buyouts, Category 2 increased Flood projection across our district, increased response for sediment and wood debris removal. The Forestry sector have been targeted with 70% of recovery rates for wood debris, and their contribution for road repairs has increased from 12.5 to 13.75. Inner and Outer zone rating groups are used to apportion targeted rates to reflect costs accurately. A User-pays funding approach is applied when appropriate.</p> <p>Under Section 1 Forestry Rate discussion, a new targeted rate has been discussed.</p> <p>Uniform Rates</p> <p>Our uniform rates cap is 28.2% for 2024/25. Recovery costs have been included in the UAGC for the next three years, spreading the rates across the district. While this has a regressive impact on lower-income households, Council recognises the issue of affordability and the uneven ability to pay across the district. To address this, we have increased provisions for rates remissions to support those facing hardship.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Approves the Revenue and Financing Policy and add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates a new Targeted rate for the forestry sector, for residual costs arising from forestry enforcement costs. <p>Refer to discussion Section 1 Forestry 1.</p>	

Additional feedback from Community Hui and Hearings

The information below provides key insights from hearings and community hui sessions. Where applicable, this feedback has been incorporated into the formal submission feedback above to allow a structured response. Other information is captured as informal feedback to provide context and reflect the community's broader concerns and suggestions.

Feedback from Hearings

Rates

Fair allocation of rates to forestry owners: There is a call for a fair and equitable allocation of rates to forestry owners. This is essential for ensuring that the costs are distributed fairly and do not disproportionately impact certain sectors.

Reduce rates increase, cut high salaries in Council: There is an urge to reduce the proposed rates increase and make high-earning salary redundancies within the Council. Cutting unnecessary expenses and focusing on essential services is suggested to make the rates more affordable.

Accountability and Transparency

Need better financial prudence and debt management: The need for better financial prudence and to avoid unnecessary spending is emphasised. A focus on essential services and infrastructure is called for to ensure financial stability.

Focus on affordability, reduce spending: It is stressed that the Council should reject the current unaffordable budget and find a more sustainable plan. Reducing spending and principal debt is suggested to make the budget more manageable for the community.

Feedback from Community Hui sessions

Rates

Community Reactions: Community members have mixed reactions to the proposed rates increases. While some accept the need for higher rates, others are concerned about significant increases, especially affecting large properties and farming areas.

Return on Investment Concerns: Questions were raised about the return on investment for rates paid, particularly in rural areas. Many feel that the benefits are not equitably distributed.

Funding and Resource Allocation

Targeted Funding: There is a call for targeted funding to address essential infrastructure projects, including road repairs and drainage system upgrades. Residents seek clearer communication and transparency in how funds are allocated, particularly for road maintenance and infrastructure development.

Project Funding and Maintenance: Requests for funding clarity and equitable resource allocation were prominent, ensuring that all communities, including rural and underserved areas, benefit from infrastructure improvements. Proposals include specific projects like drainage system upgrades, road safety improvements, and the development of community facilities.

Economic Development

Sustainable Practices: Residents emphasise the importance of promoting sustainable land use practices to balance economic development with environmental conservation.

Support for Local Businesses: The need for initiatives that prioritise job creation and support local businesses is highlighted, contributing to community prosperity while maintaining environmental integrity.

Roading and Infrastructure

Urgent Investment Demand: There is an urgent demand for significant investment in roading and maintenance, addressing specific issues such as potholes, drainage problems, and the upkeep of heavily trafficked roads.

Advocacy for Funding Mechanisms: Advocacy for a reliable and transparent funding mechanism to effectively address infrastructure challenges is strong.

Community-led Initiatives and Collaboration

Greater Community Involvement: Residents call for greater community involvement in financial decision-making processes related to infrastructure development and maintenance.

Support for Community Planning: More support and collaboration from Council and other stakeholders are sought to facilitate community-led planning initiatives.

Project Funding and Maintenance

Funding Clarity and Equity: Requests for funding clarity and equitable resource allocation are prominent, ensuring that all communities, including rural and underserved areas, benefit from infrastructure improvements.

Specific Project Proposals: Proposals include specific projects like drainage system upgrades, road safety improvements, and the development of community facilities.

Financial Reporting and Communication

Increased Transparency: There is a call for increased transparency and accountability in financial decisions, particularly in the allocation of funds for road maintenance and infrastructure projects.

Regular Updates: Residents emphasise the need for regular updates and clear communication regarding financial planning and project progress.

Importance of Feedback: Highlighting the importance of community feedback in shaping financial policies and decisions.

Ensuring Voices Are Heard: Focus on ensuring that community voices are heard and valued in the budgeting process.

Collaboration with Council and Government

Investment in Infrastructure: Notable frustration with the lack of investment in outdated and failing infrastructure.

Calls for Closer Collaboration: Residents call for closer collaboration with the council and government to address infrastructure challenges effectively.

Financial Concerns In Rural and Coastal Townships

Return on Investment Concerns: Concerns about the lack of return on investment for rates paid, notably in communities like Manutuke, highlighting issues such as pothole repairs and the need for more effective contractor management.

Need for Actionable Plans: It was emphasised that there is a need for tangible and actionable plans across the region in places such as Te Puia and Waipiro, with frustrations over the lack of progress in implementing proposed solutions.

Calls for Accountability and Transparency: There were calls for greater accountability and transparency in financial decision-making processes that affect smaller townships.

Investment in Infrastructure: Notable frustrations in places like Waiapu due to the lack of investment in outdated and failing infrastructure, accompanied by calls for closer collaboration with Council and Central Government to effectively address these infrastructure challenges.

Liveable Communities Hub

2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP) submissions and responses relating to Liveable Communities.

SUMMARY

The Liveable Communities Hub provides the strategic direction for our essential Liveable Community assets to meet the future needs of our community. Responsibilities include the management and maintenance of our parks and community facilities, the operation of our aquatic facilities, the operation of our solid waste and road safety campaign portfolios, and several other large-scale land management initiatives, biodiversity projects and community facility projects.

As part of our consultation, we asked our community for feedback on multiple options, including those related to our plans for solid waste. Much of the feedback we received indicated that the community supports our plans to improve waste management in our region.

Eighty-eight (88) submission points relating to the Liveable Communities Hub were received during the 3YP consultation period.

The following areas received the highest number of submission points, which can be categorised under the following main themes:

- **Focus Area:** Solid Waste Management (47)
 - **Key Theme:** Resource Recovery Centre
 - **Key Theme:** Education and Awareness
 - **Key Theme:** Waste Disposal Practices
- **Focus Area:** Recreation/Public Spaces (31)
 - **Key Theme:** Maintenance of Recreational Facilities and Public Spaces
 - **Key Theme:** Development of New Recreational Facilities
- **Focus Area:** Supporting local (4)
 - **Key Theme:** Community-led planning
 - **Key Theme:** City Centre Revitalisation
- **Focus Area:** Catchments and kaitiakitanga (4)
 - **Key Theme:** Local Streams and Walkways
 - **Key Theme:** Collaborative Catchment Plans

One other submitter also made mention of the Waingake Transformation Project, and expressed continued support for the Programme, highlighting its significance to the region's ecological and environmental health.

Staff have analysed these submission points and made recommendations based on this feedback for Councilors to consider.

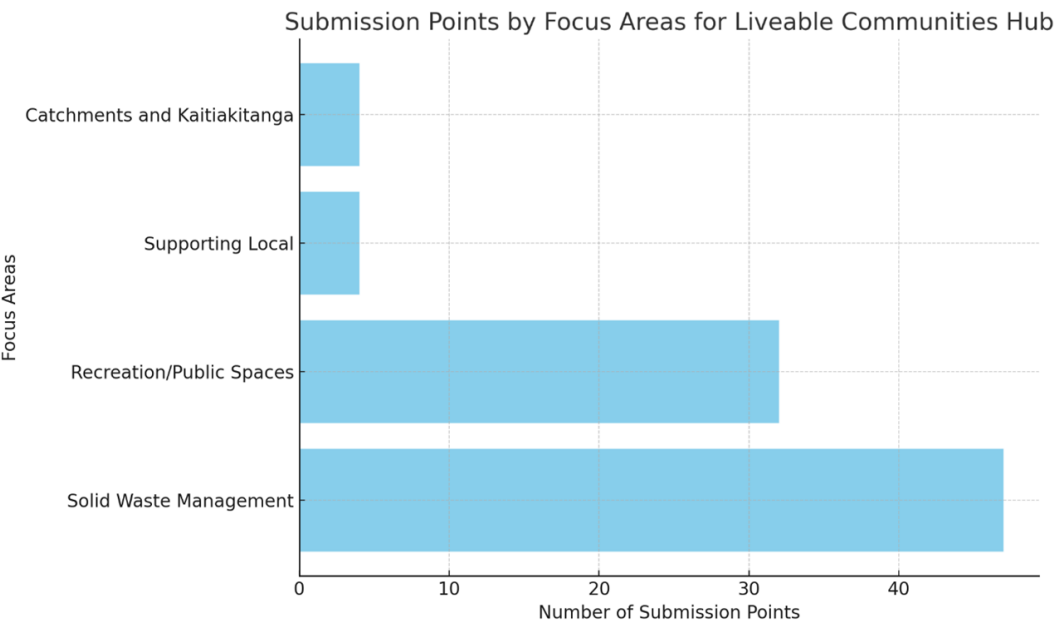
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. **Approves the carryover of funds from the Community Facilities Strategy as approved within the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, amounting to \$2.5 million.**

BACKGROUND

- 1. We received a total of 88 submission points relating to the Liveable Communities Hub. As some of these points also relate to affordability, which is being covered in the Finance and Affordability Hub report, and infrastructure asset management, which is being covered under Sustainable Futures, some of these points have also been addressed in part through the tallies and analysis in other reports. Where possible, these points have been separated out based on whether they are operational or not, to avoid duplication.
- 2. Submission points have been grouped under the different focus areas and key themes relating to the Liveable Communities Hub.



SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS and RESPONSES

1. Solid Waste Management (47)

Theme: Resource Recovery Centre	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback from submitters indicates general support for establishing a local resource recovery centre and suggests that Council should increase support to help manage waste more efficiently in rural and coastal areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters have recommended that the recovery centre should focus on reducing waste, reusing goods, and recycling materials. • Many submissions support local composting initiatives, including household and community composting schemes. These initiatives are seen to reduce the volume of waste sent to landfills and build soil resilience in local areas. • Feedback also highlights a need for better facilities to handle e-waste and other special waste types, such as soft plastics and old furniture. Suggestions include offering salvage and sales of disposed items to promote reuse.
Response	<p>Future planning for a resource recovery centre, or a network of resource recovery centres, aims to increase our region's ability to better align with the waste hierarchy, focusing on prevention or refusal, reuse, recycling, recovery, and, lastly, disposal of waste products.</p> <p>Council supports home composting with community education programmes around composting hosted at the Tairāwhiti Environment center. There are plans to roll these out across the rohe, rather than being confined to a single outlet for workshops.</p> <p>During a recent Solid Waste Analysis Protocol (SWAP), organic material, primarily food waste, was the largest single component of Council kerbside rubbish bags, comprising around 50% of the total weight.</p> <p>MfE requires Councils to implement a kerbside collection for food scraps in urban areas with populations greater than 1,000 before January 2030. In urban areas with food processing facilities already available, the requirement is to have this service in place earlier (by 1 January 2027).</p> <p>Partnership between Council and the Tairāwhiti Environment Centre has enabled a place for some special waste products to be dropped off for recycling. These include, but are not limited to, E-waste, soft plastics, and liquid paper board. For a full list of products please visit the Tairāwhiti Environment Centre Recycling Depot webpage.</p> <p>Resource recovery centres, or a network of centres, will enable expansion of these recycling services and their availability to communities.</p> <p>There are currently many outlets for unwanted goods in good condition and/or working order, such as Secondhand Sunday, various marketplace sites on social media, and secondhand outlet stores in Tairāwhiti. Future resource recovery could include the salvage of unwanted, repairable products. There is potential for community groups to be involved in various initiatives, such as repair cafes or recycling projects.</p>
RECOMMENDATION Maintain Status Quo - Submissions support the proposal to improve waste management in region.	

Theme: Education and Awareness	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback emphasises the importance of educational programs to reduce waste at the source and increasing community involvement. This includes initiatives like Para Kore and Xtreme Zero Waste, which focus on recycling, reusing, and reducing waste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback suggests that empowering local communities to manage their waste and providing education on best practices are important steps. Increased awareness and education on managing waste, illegal dumping, and expanding recycling services to be more accessible have also been suggested. Support for zero waste events and reusable packaging initiatives is noted, highlighting the need for community engagement in waste reduction efforts.
Response	<p>A resource recovery centre is an important aspect in the process and accessibility around waste disposal, increasing awareness and education. Building and enhancing education in the community about collection services and other waste product schemes is seen as crucial to enhancing our overall waste management.</p>
RECOMMENDATION Maintain Status Quo - Submissions support the proposal to improve waste management in region.	

Theme: Waste disposal practices	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback raises concerns about the efficiency and transparency of current waste disposal practices, and our kerbside collection process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances of mixed waste collection and ineffective recycling processes have been highlighted. Suggestions include having staff monitor waste stations to ensure recyclable materials are not dumped in general waste. Feedback on kerbside collection varies, with some advocating for wheelie bins to prevent littering by animals and wind, while others argue against them, suggesting they do not incentivise waste reduction.
Response	<p>Kerbside collection is a contracted service in the city. The implementation of wheelie bins and additional education around this service will help reduce waste to landfill. The introduction of food organics collection at kerbside, along with regular communication and education in the community about kerbside collection services and other waste product schemes available outside of kerbside collection service, will further enhance our waste management. This is a basic function of Council services.</p>
RECOMMENDATION Maintain Status Quo - Submissions support the proposal to improve waste management in region.	

2. Recreation/Public Spaces (32)

Theme: Maintenance of Recreational Facilities and Public Spaces	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback highlights the need for increased maintenance of footpaths and riverbanks, particularly in the CBD, where overgrown vegetation and poorly maintained footpaths pose safety risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific feedback states there has been no maintenance on the footpath and riverbank from Whitaker Street to Grant Road for over a year, with irregular mowing of the verge between the footpath and road. • Support for township upgrades was expressed, with specific mentions of Hicks Bay, Te Araroa, and the need for playgrounds and other amenities in areas like Wainui and Okitu. • Some submitters also made requests for Council to reinstall and improve playground equipment, specifically in areas like the Okitu playground, to provide better recreational options for children. • Concerns were raised about the declining maintenance standards of some local parks, including the Oneroa Car Park Reserve, where infrequent mowing and minimal edge trimming have been noted.
Response	<p>Footpaths</p> <p>Despite the Council increasing funding for footpaths, reduced support from central government for this activity means there will likely be less overall. Unless other funding can be sourced, the funding we have will need to be prioritised for safety measures around schools, townships, and key connections in accordance with the Council's strategies.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing a plan to guide improvements in the CBD including medium and small-scale projects such as new amenity gardens and facilities. Larger scale works are not yet funded in the Three-Year Plan.</p> <p>Play Space Provision</p> <p>Council is developing a Play Study and Renewal Plan which aims to support a network approach to the supply of play space and play infrastructure across Tairāwhiti. This Plan will help inform and prioritise our future play provision throughout the district. Okitu is one of many sites being considered across the City and Tairāwhiti, this includes sites that need improvements as they age to meet compliance standards. New play spaces are proposed in the Three-Year Plan for Uawa, Matawai and Waihirere Domain.</p> <p>Park Maintenance</p> <p>Council regularly monitors maintenance of its parks and open spaces and generally maintenance meets expectations. Council is currently updating its maintenance specifications for its parks and open spaces maintenance contract to ensure reserves receive expected levels of service. Any improved service will be at no additional cost to Council as it will form part of meeting the contract's outcomes.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	Deliver as outlined above, consistent with the findings of the Play Study and Renewal plan; developing a network approach to the supply of place space and infrastructure.
Option 2:	Approve additional play components for Okitu playground outside of recommended timings from Play Strategy and renewal plan.

Reasoning for preferred option	<p>The submission comments received are largely supported. Improved levels of service can be expected from current and revised contracts through increased monitoring of contract deliverables and/or new contract specifications for parks maintenance.</p> <p>Play space improvements and renewals will be delivered consistent with the Play Space and renewal plan to ensure a cost-effective and equitable delivery programme.</p>
RECOMMENDATION Maintain Status Quo – Current plans will result in improved maintenance and improvements, as highlighted by submitters.	

Theme: Development of New Recreational Facilities	
Submission Feedback	<p>Numerous submissions emphasised the need to develop new recreational facilities to enhance community well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback strongly supports the development of a multi-purpose indoor sports centre in Gisborne. Submissions emphasise the need for such a facility to cater to the growing demand for indoor sports and to host tournaments that could bring economic benefits to the community. Feedback views the Taruheru River Shared Path project as a key initiative to enhance urban mobility and community well-being. Suggestions include strategic adjustments to budget allocation to ensure the project delivers maximum benefits.
Response	<p>Funding has been set aside for the Taruheru River Shared Path, however in the Draft 3YP, funding for the proposed multi-purpose indoor sports centre was removed. Funding for this centre was previously included in the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan (LTP) and had been anticipated through the 2018 Tairāwhiti Community Facilities Strategy. Submissions refer to the importance of Council support to enable other funders to see commitment from Council for the centre.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	Preferred option: Carry over Councils contribution for the proposed multi-purpose indoor sports centre.
Option 2:	Do not include seed funding for the proposed multi-purpose indoor sports centre.
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>The Community Facilities Strategy 2018 highlighted the need for a multi-purpose indoor facility as a key priority for the region. This was further reinforced through the Business Case presented to the Central Government in 2021, which outlined the key Community Facilities initiatives required for the region.</p> <p>The current feasibility study for the multi-purpose indoor facility will reconfirm the region's needs. Having a commitment via seed funding from Council will enable momentum to continue towards this key development for the region. It is evident through the 3YP consultation process that there remains support to see this project progress, and therefore to retain the funding.</p> <p>As part of our annual process before adopting an Annual Plan or Long Term Plan, we assess projects that were committed to but not completed within the financial year. This is referred to as our carryover assessment.</p> <p>From the 2021-2031 LTP, \$2.5 million of previously committed funds are recommended to be carried over into the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.</p>
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>Option 1 - Approves the carryover of \$2.5 million for the Community Facilities 2021-2031 LTP project to be incorporated into the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.</p>	

3. Supporting Local (4)

Theme: Community-led planning	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback highlights the importance of adequately supporting communities to produce efficient and meaningful community-led plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters have highlighted the need to integrate arts and cultural initiatives, which can help foster community connection and resilience as part of these plans. • Some feedback also suggests that the information provided in the Consultation document on community-led planning is too vague. It is recommended that Council should clarify how we plan to work with communities on these plans. • It has also been suggested that the scope of plans should be expanded to include long-term climate change adaptation and resilience building.
Response	<p>Support for Community Led Recovery Plans and the need to integrate arts and cultural initiatives to support and foster community outcomes is noted. More work will be undertaken to understand how we can provide detail and support to Community Led Plans, which will include further discussions with communities. The suggestion for consideration of climate change adaptation and resilience building is also noted.</p>
RECOMMENDATION No change, continue as planned – Submitter feedback has been noted and considered for future work on Community-led Plans.	

Theme: City Centre Revitalisation	
Submission Feedback	<p>Feedback states a need for better upkeep of the city centre to address its current rundown appearance, particularly focusing on empty shops and providing support for local businesses.</p>
Response	<p>The City Centre was identified as an area with the potential to deliver numerous new homes in the Council's Future Development Strategy. A greater number of residents living in and around the centre would be a positive step in enhancing vibrancy and activity to support local businesses. Council is producing a City Centre Master Plan, as part of the review of the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan.</p> <p>These plans are not yet complete and will require community engagement.</p> <p>Trust Tairāwhiti are considering initiatives under a document called a City Centre Blueprint to support the dressing of empty business building windows and other improvements.</p> <p>Maintenance of the Central Business District (CBD) area will be assessed and provided for through Council's contract process to ensure adequate levels of service are achieved.</p> <p>Improvements for the CBD are also planned, including enhanced amenity gardens and amenity facilities.</p>
RECOMMENDATION No change, continue as planned – Current plans for the City Centre will result in changes that support the feedback received from submitters.	

4. Catchments and Kaitiakitanga (4)

Theme: Local Streams and Walkways	
Submission Feedback	<p>A few submitters raised concerns about the recent neglect of local streams and paths/walkways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some submitters expressed their capability, skills, and motivation to exercise their kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over these areas. With support from Council, communities are eager to co-plan and convene occasional community working bees to clear and maintain their streams.
Response	<p>The Biosecurity team can provide advice and guidance on how to manage or eradicate pest plants and animals, especially those species in the Regional Pest Management Plan, that may be found in and around local streams.</p> <p>The Land Rivers and Coastal team advise that they can provide technological support, guidance and advice to community groups wishing to undertake work on local streams.</p>
RECOMMENDATION No change, continue as planned – groups wanting to drive this work are greatly appreciated, and can get in touch for advice from our land management and biosecurity teams.	

Theme: Collaborative Catchment Plans	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters have called for Council to work collaboratively with communities to complete all Catchment Plans as part of current recovery work and climate change adaptation efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved freshwater management through these plans is seen as essential for sustainable land use and environmental health.
Response	<p>Fortnightly Catchment Kahui meetings are being held with the Land Management, Māori Responsiveness and Planning teams to work towards involving communities in catchment planning.</p> <p>Land Management is actively assisting communities to establish Catchment groups.</p> <p>Land Management is providing information, support, and team membership with the Policy team regarding Catchment context challenges and values (CCCV). Waipaoa and Motu catchment documentation is currently in draft form.</p>
RECOMMENDATION Maintain Status Quo – Current plans will result in more collaborative work between Council and communities in relation to Catchment plans.	

Additional feedback from Community Hui and Hearings

The information below provides key insights from hearings and community hui sessions. Where applicable, this feedback has been incorporated into the formal submission feedback above to allow a structured response. Other information is captured as informal feedback to provide context and reflect the community's broader concerns and suggestions.

Feedback from Hearings

Recreation/Public Spaces

Several community members emphasised the importance of improving recreational spaces and revitalising public areas to enhance the quality of life for residents. Specific areas have been identified as requiring attention and investment.

Clean up Palmerston Road and Botanical Gardens: There is a call for a cleanup of Palmerston Road from Peel Street to Reads Quay and the Botanical Gardens. It is suggested that funds be reallocated from other projects, such as the proposed Taruheru cycleway, to these areas to improve their condition and usability.

CBD paving tiles need re-seating/replacing: Health and safety issues related to the CBD paving tiles need to be addressed. These tiles require re-seating or replacing to prevent personal injury and improve the overall safety and aesthetics of the area.

Solid Waste

Need a long-term landfill and waste plan: The importance of having a comprehensive landfill and waste management plan was stressed. It is suggested that the wheelie bin initiative be paused until a clear and effective long-term strategy is developed.

More environmentally friendly waste systems: Advocacy for a shift towards more environmentally friendly waste and recycling management systems is highlighted. There were concerns that without significant improvements in waste management, the community's future is at risk.

Feedback from Community Hui sessions

Recycling and Disposal Challenges: Discussions revealed significant challenges in waste management, particularly with recycling and proper disposal facilities. Residents expressed concerns about the adequacy of local rubbish facilities to handle increasing volumes of waste.

Advocacy for Sustainable Practices: There is strong community support for the implementation of sustainable waste management strategies. This includes enhancing recycling programmes and initiatives aimed at reducing waste generation overall. Increasing the availability of recycling centres and introducing more comprehensive waste sorting and reduction initiatives at the community level are key actions identified.

Public Education and Involvement: There were calls to launch educational campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of recycling and effective waste management, encouraging greater public participation in sustainability efforts. This involves public education on the benefits of recycling and effective waste management practices.

Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub

2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP) submissions and responses relating to Engagement and Māori Partnership.

SUMMARY

The Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub manages our internal and external communications, community engagement, and township upgrades. It also helps develop and implement our Māori Partnership Programme and oversees our Culture Programme. Additionally, the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub handles our front line and telephone call centre customer services operations and event management.

As part of our consultation, we asked our community for feedback on multiple options, including those related to our townships. The majority of the feedback we received indicated that the community supports our recommended rate increase of 0.3% to spend on township upgrades.

Overall, 68 submission points relating to the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub were received during the 3YP consultation period.

The following areas had the highest number of submission points, which can be categorised under the following main themes:

- **Focus Area:** Coastal, Townships and Rural equity (30)
 - **Key Theme:** Equitable Distribution
 - **Key Theme:** Supporting Infrastructure
- **Focus Area:** Engagement, Communication and Consultation (29)
 - **Key Theme:** Improved Consultation process
 - **Key Theme:** Effective and Transparent Communication
- **Focus Area:** Collaboration with Iwi/hapū (9)
 - **Key Theme:** Enabling effective partnership and decision-making
 - **Key Theme:** Supporting and utilising local knowledge

Staff have analysed these submission points and have made recommendations based on this feedback for Councillors to consider.

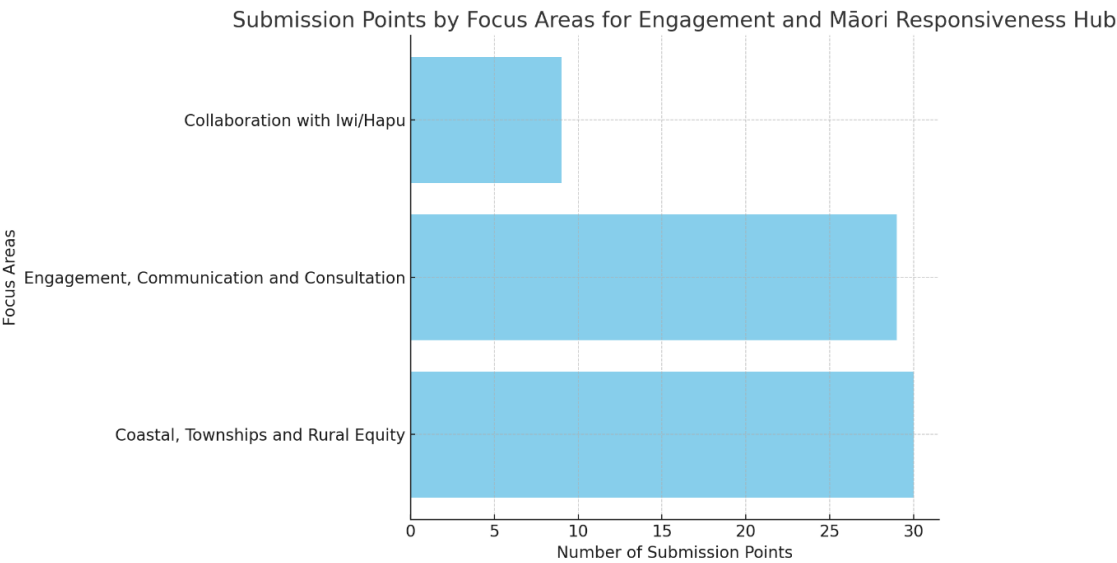
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. **Approves an increase to the Township Upgrade budget in line with the proposal in the 3 Year Plan.**

BACKGROUND

- 1. We received a total of 68 submission points relating to the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub. As some of these points also relate to affordability and infrastructure, they may have also been addressed in part through the tallies and analysis in other reports. Where possible, these points have been separated based on whether they are operational or not, to avoid duplication.
- 2. Submission points have been grouped under the different themes and topics relating to the Engagement and Māori Partnership Hub.



SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS and RESPONSES

1. Coastal/Rural Equity and Townships (30)

Theme: Equal Distribution	
Submission Feedback	<p>A significant number of submitters emphasised that Council needs to do more to ensure that rural and coastal townships receive their fair share of resources and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns were raised about some townships being neglected or not included in development plans. Feedback emphasised that ensuring rural and coastal townships are not left out of strategic planning and resource allocation is crucial for maintaining community well-being in those areas.
Response	<p>Township plans and the allocation of funding was introduced back in approximately 2014. Funding was dedicated to 13 rural communities that had existing plans.</p> <p>The rotation for township upgrades is an upgrade per township every 5 – 6yrs with two being completed in any one-year cycle.</p> <p>The purpose of the programme is for communities to identify and prioritise their aspirations for their community via a Community Led Development Approach. These Community Led Plans are seeking external funding to fast track community aspirations.</p> <p>By 2027, our next 30 year Infrastructure Strategy will be updated and revised to take into account the increased costs and needs within our Townships. Additional support through upgrades will be considered as part of this process.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Preferred option - 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Townships - This option allocates \$4million over three years, allowing us to meet the rising costs of upgrading 2 townships per year. Funding for additional upgrades will be considered as part of the 2027-2057 Infrastructure Strategy.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Increase the investment in the current 13 Townships to meet community aspirations.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>By continuing with our draft 3YP programme, it will enable us to focus on what we can achieve while we are in recovery. But noting that we will need to be planning for where we want to be, and ready for incorporation into the next 2027-2037 Long Term Plan and thirty-year infrastructure strategy.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Option 1 - Adopts the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan Consultation Document Preferred Option for Townships.</p>	

Theme: Supporting Infrastructure	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters have called for better maintenance and upgrades of infrastructure in rural and coastal areas, particularly roads, drainage, and water management systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback highlights the importance of prioritising repairs for areas affected by severe weather events and ensuring long-term solutions to prevent recurring issues. • Support for township upgrades was expressed, with specific mentions of Hicks Bay, Te Araroa, and the need for playgrounds and other amenities in areas like Wainui and Okitu.
Response	<p>Council acknowledges the call for better maintenance and increased infrastructure in these areas. To note, core infrastructure maintenance sits under Community Lifelines and has therefore been addressed as part of the Community Lifelines Hub report (Attachment 1).</p> <p>The Wharekahika upgrade was completed in the 2020 – 2021 financial year where the investment was into establishing a playground for Wharekahika based on the aspirations of the community. Wharekahika's next upgrade is during the 2026 – 2027 financial year noting that the establishment of the grounds and installation of the playground equipment and furniture utilised all of the available budget. BOF secured to install a footpath around the inside perimeter of the playground to enable young children to ride their bikes and scooters safely. Furthermore, the Liveable Communities team funded a new public convenience within the playground as per the community's aspiration.</p> <p>The Te Araroa Upgrade was planned for the 2021 – 2022 financial year however COVID-19 mandates and severe weather events delayed the installation. Council worked with the Te Araroa & District Progressive Community Group on all planning and prioritising of aspirations inclusive of the confirmation of playground equipment and a MOU for the playground and public convenience install.</p> <p>Both Wharekahika and Te Araroa are on the planned upgrade schedule. Liveable communities have responsibility for Okitu and Wainui.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo - No change to the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.</p>	

2. Engagement, Communication and Consultation (27)

Theme: Improved Consultation Process	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submitters have called for better engagement and consultation processes, especially for Māori and rural communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They emphasised the importance of being included in early decision-making stages, particularly for significant projects affecting their areas. • Several submissions noted dissatisfaction with the current consultation methods being used, describing them as manipulative or insufficiently inclusive.
Response	<p>Calls for better and more inclusive engagement and consultation processes are acknowledged. This 3YP process has seen significant community engagement through face-to-face engagements (31 in total), online platforms i.e, website and social media, radio and hard copy information.</p> <p>We understand that there are areas for improvement, particularly in relation to how we engage and communicate with the community about key projects and initiatives and / or changes that happen throughout the year.</p> <p>New methods of engagement continue to be developed to ensure targeted information is provided to communities in a timely way and in the way that communities wish to be engaged and communicated with. For example, through the TYP engagement and community led recovery planning, communities indicated that notice boards would be one effective method of communicating Council activities.</p> <p>Existing templates and tools will be enhanced to ensure understanding and consistency in our approach to communications and engagement is achieved across Council. Initiatives such as this continue to form part of the ongoing improvements to support enhanced communication and engagement practices.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo - No change to the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.</p>	

Theme: Effective and Transparent Communication	
Submission Feedback	<p>There is a strong demand for improved communication regarding project statuses, property responsibilities, and faster responses to complaints. Submitters have highlighted the need for clear and transparent communication from Council in these areas going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters note that they expect clear communication on progress and reasons for delays or incomplete projects. • Submitters have requested more transparent updates on decision-making processes and project progress to build trust in Council's commitment to addressing their concerns. • Multiple submissions also stressed the need for planning processes to start with community needs and priorities, rather than top-down decision-making.
Response	<p>We understand some of these comments relate to our RFS systems. There is a focused drive to ensure RFS responsiveness is planned for implementation over the next 12 months. This involves a reset of our vision, values and customer service promise, accountability through performance measures together with customer service initiatives (working with teams on their outstanding RFs and the provision of customer service training).</p> <p>The Engagement and Maori Partnership Hub is refreshing its communication and engagement strategy, providing more support to staff to ensure consistency in how our communications and engagement plans are developed and how and when communication and engagement occurs.</p>
RECOMMENDATION: Maintain Status Quo - No change to the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.	

3. Collaboration with Iwi/hapū

Theme: Enabling Effective Partnership and Decision-making	
Submission Feedback	<p>Submissions emphasise the importance of involving iwi and hapū in decision-making processes and ensuring their cultural heritage, knowledge and values are considered and respected across Council projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of community hubs in townships is supported as a way to enable better cohesion between Council and these communities, providing support in times of need, and facilitating the implementation of local projects.
Response	<p>We acknowledge the sentiments regarding our involvement of iwi and hapū in decision-making processes.</p> <p>We currently have established road shows that regularly engage with communities as part of a whole-of-government approach, supported by Council. Additionally, our engagement efforts on community-led recovery planning and township upgrades enable targeted conversations within these areas.</p> <p>The Te Matapihi engagement forum is Council's process to ensure that staff consider their engagement with tangata whenua in a manner that upholds our Treaty commitments and responsibilities. This supports opportunities for Tangata whenua decision-making and self-determination on Council kaupapa. As we continue to develop Te Matapihi, it will include an evaluation component to our work. This will provide a tangible baseline to determine how well the Council is doing in respecting and considering heritage, knowledge, and values of tangata whenua.</p> <p>Hapū and iwi hubs already exist. We have no challenges identifying the right relational entry point into the tangata whenua landscape in our region. We always attempt to work in a collective manner where appropriate to ensure visibility and awareness of council presence and kaupapa.</p>
RECOMMENDATION: Maintain Status Quo - No change to the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.	

Theme Supporting and Utilising Local Knowledge	
Submission Feedback	<p>Some submissions suggested that local knowledge and expertise are being under supported and underutilised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They advocate for Council to work closely with local people, particularly local iwi and hapū, who have a deep understanding of the area, to ensure decisions and actions are more aligned with the community's needs and circumstances. • Submissions from Māori groups stress the importance of involving iwi, hapū, and local kaitiaki in water management and other environmental projects to ensure culturally appropriate and effective outcomes. • Feedback also suggests that Council needs to support volunteer efforts more by providing necessary resources and making community projects engaging and enjoyable.
Response	<p>We acknowledge the importance of utilising, engaging with and incorporating local knowledge and expertise. Depending on the activity being undertaken we always attempt to enter communities via a hapū network. Emergency work conditions are a challenge to navigate but in a BAU setting this is standard practice. The purpose of that is to ensure we work in a way that is informed by local knowledge and expertise.</p> <p>The approach to freshwater planning is inclusive of catchment and place based wānanga with marae, hapū and iwi. We have adopted an approach of working through hapū and iwi first, before extending those discussions out to wider community and stakeholders. This ensures freshwater planning is guided from that perspective.</p> <p>Council has a range of environmental and community initiatives that benefit from volunteer support, with this support being valued highly by Council. Projects that offer a key volunteer contribution include major biodiversity restoration programmes such as Dune Restoration, Haumanu Tu Ora programme, and our regular beach cleanup initiatives for example. The various project leads currently (and will continue to) advocate for community volunteer initiatives as programme resources enable.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo - No change to the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan.</p>	

Additional feedback from Community Hui and Hearings

The information below provides key insights from hearings and community hui sessions. Where applicable, this feedback has been incorporated into the formal submission feedback above to allow a structured response. Other information is captured as informal feedback to provide context and reflect the community's broader concerns and suggestions.

Feedback from Hearings

Consultation process seen as window dressing: Some community members felt that the consultation process seemed superficial, with limited effort to genuinely incorporate community feedback into the decision-making process. This perception has led to feelings of scepticism and a lack of trust towards the Council. They expressed a desire for a more transparent and meaningful engagement where their input is truly valued and considered.

Need for better engagement with local communities: There is a need to enhance engagement efforts with local communities. There is a particular need to involve communities more meaningfully in the planning and decision-making processes to ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs are addressed.

Support for alternate housing options for Māori: There are request for Council to support alternative housing options for Māori residents who are experiencing housing hardship. This includes exploring innovative housing solutions and providing the necessary resources and support to implement these options effectively.

Feedback from Community Hui sessions

Trust Building and Local Input: Rebuilding trust in local governance through transparent decision-making processes was a recurring theme. The community seeks greater involvement in planning and development processes, advocating for opportunities that allow for direct public input and consultation.

Community-Led Planning and Initiatives: Support for community-led recovery plans and other initiatives that allow the community to directly inform and participate in local governance is evident. There is a call to foster a collaborative environment where community-led initiatives are integrated into broader regional planning efforts.

Job Creation and Local Business Support: Economic development initiatives that prioritise job creation and provide substantial support for local businesses were highlighted as crucial for enhancing the community's overall prosperity and resilience. Encouraging the creation of green jobs by supporting industries and businesses that prioritise environmental sustainability is a key aspect of this support.

Regular Public Meetings and Feedback Mechanisms: Community feedback indicates demand for more regular channels for community feedback, including frequent public meetings, online forums, and transparent reporting on council activities and decisions.

Sustainable Futures Hub

2024-2027 Three Year Plan Deliberations Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan (3YP) submissions and responses relating to Sustainable Futures.

SUMMARY

The Sustainable Futures Hub primarily guides the Council's strategic direction across multiple activities. These include community policy development, regional leadership, support services, environmental monitoring, and the management of building and resource consent processes. Forty three submission points relating to the Sustainable Futures Hub were received during the 3YP consultation period.

The following areas received the highest number of submission points, which can be categorised under the following main themes:

- **Focus Area:** Environmental (28)
 - **Key Theme:** Climate change and Environmental Stewardship
- **Focus Area:** Heavy Vehicles (12)
 - **Key Theme:** Planning and Prioritisation

Alongside the 3YP Consultation Document, Council also asked for feedback on the Draft Development Contributions Policy. Six submissions were received in relation to this policy, and the feedback has been included for discussion within this report.

Some other submitters mentioned our asset and infrastructure management (2), with one specifically highlighting our management of Tauwhareparae Farms, and another emphasising the importance of supporting local businesses through improved consenting processes, particularly in relation to liquor licensing (1).

Staff have analysed these submission points and made recommendations based on this feedback for Councillors to consider.

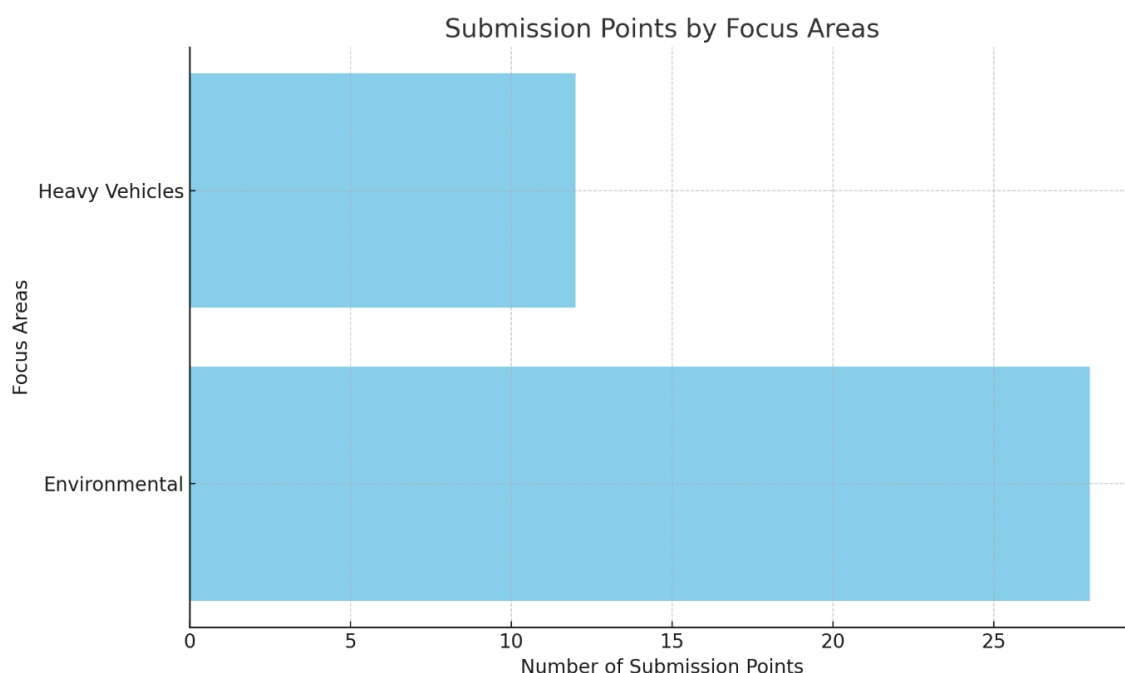
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. Approves the recommendation to maintain the status quo for Council's climate change and environmental stewardship approach as captured in the 2024-2027 Three Year Plan:
 - a. Over the next three years, aim to reduce in-house council emissions, draft climate strategies and policies, and collaborate with iwi and hapū on future community climate change goals.
 - b. Focus on implementing robust strategies to safeguard our water resources and address our current and future demands.
 - c. Continue to progress our TRMP review programme.
2. Approves the decision to maintain the status quo for heavy vehicle planning and prioritisation:
 - a. Progress low-cost, low-risk improvements on local roads to enable a safe change to the heavy vehicle route, subject to receiving NZTA co-investment through the 2024 National Land Transport Plan.
 - b. Staff and/or elected members to continue advocating with NZTA for priority upgrades.
3. Approves the decision to maintain the status quo direction of the Development Contribution Policy noting that:
 - a. A full review of the policy will be taking place in advance on the 2027 Long Term Plan.

BACKGROUND

1. A total of 43 submission points that relate to the mahi of the Sustainable Futures hub were received. Due to the wide range of topics that our hub is involved in, some of the submission points counted in the tallies of other reports have been addressed in part through our tallies and analysis.
2. Submission points have been grouped under the different themes and topics relating to the Sustainable Futures hub, and where relevant, our policies and strategies.



Infrastructure Strategy

3. An Infrastructure Strategy, covering at least 30 years, is one of two key strategies that the Local Government Act 2002 requires Council to adopt as part of its Long Term Plan (the other being a Financial Strategy). Due to the amended requirements under the Order in Council, the 2024 strategy has slightly different mandatory requirements than usual under the Act. The 2024 strategy is only three years in duration, this length of time captures the bulk of the recovery programme as well as some key future ready and BAU projects and programmes of work.
4. The Draft Strategy was included as supporting information during community consultation on the 3YP and includes a commitment to balancing our recovery and future needs. The Strategy plans to achieve this by:
 - Investing more in water supply resilience so we can recover more quickly after severe weather events until the land stability in the area has improved.
 - Repairing and replacing assets across all infrastructure areas due to the cumulative impacts of severe weather events in recent years.
 - Completing projects to enable residential growth out at the Taruheru block and starting other projects to enable other areas of our city to grow further.

- Expanding the delivery of the Waipaoa River Flood Control project to provide greater protection to our community and more resilience against floods and climate change, which safeguards both economic development and wellbeing. This will increase the current level of service.
 - Investigating and implementing further flood protection options for our rural communities and the city.
 - Protecting our water supply, restoring cultural values, and enhancing biodiversity by progressing the Waingake Transformation programme.
 - Taking a more proactive role in managing historic landfills and progressing a regional resource recovery service.
5. For specific matters relating to the operation and management of our infrastructure and infrastructure projects please refer to the Community Lifelines Report (**Attachment 1**) and Liveable Communities Report (**Attachment 3**), which respond to comments on the management and operation of our infrastructure network and assets. The final content of the Strategy will also be informed by decisions made on the submission points discussed in these reports.
 6. For the full Draft Infrastructure Strategy please see Council's website or refer to Report **24-14**.

Development Contributions Policy

7. The Development Contributions policy (the Policy) identifies growth-related infrastructure work as well as the charges that expect to be recovered from developers to support that work. The Policy sets out the reasons, locations, and processes for developers to help fund the costs of new Council infrastructure that enable new development to be possible.
8. The changes in the draft Policy are focused on updated growth numbers and forecast budget required to undertake projects included in the policy, and minor edits to the policy. These changes ensure that the Policy continues to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.
9. The Draft Development Contributions Policy can be found on Council's website, or Report **24-15**.

SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS and RESPONSES

1. Environmental

Theme: Climate change and Environmental Stewardship	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback highlights the need for new and improved approaches to climate change adaptation, environmental stewardship, and infrastructure management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback highlights concerns about the long-term viability of current infrastructure, especially given the region's geology and the impacts of climate change. • Some submitters noted their concerns that essential regional council functions, such as biodiversity, biosecurity, freshwater management, and erosion control, might be overshadowed by urgent infrastructure repairs. • Feedback received emphasised the importance of maintaining freshwater management and erosion control on pastoral land for both environmental and agricultural reasons. • Submitters called for strategies that address climate change to include incentives for water-saving measures and disincentives for water waste. • The prevalence of noxious weeds, such as Woolly Nightshade on Council berms was highlighted as a significant concern by one submitter. • Submitters highlighted that better long-term Environmental Planning is important to ensure we can effectively mitigate climate change impacts and find lasting solutions to issues such as erosion control and limited natural resources. • Feedback from the community suggests that pines are not a long-term solution to erosion problems in our region and that a comprehensive review is needed to find more effective solutions. • There is support for nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration, to help improve water quality and enhance our regions biodiversity. • Community feedback strongly suggests Council avoids allowing building developments in areas historically identified as high risk, such as swamp lands, exposed hilltops, and coastal dunes.
Response	<p>Our strategic planning and science work programmes prioritise the review of our Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP), including biodiversity, biosecurity, freshwater management, and erosion control through adaptive strategies.</p> <p>As a unitary authority, Council is required by the RMA to have a Regional Policy Statement (RPS), a Regional Coastal Plan, and a District Plan. Other regional plans may also be prepared where they assist the Council in performing its RMA functions.</p> <p>The role of the TRMP is to assist Council in making decisions on plan provisions and resource consent applications that deal with the sustainable management of the region's natural and physical resources. Council has committed to undertaking a full review of the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP).</p> <p>We are collaborating closely with local iwi, hapū, and the community to ensure effective delivery within an eight-year timeframe.</p> <p>The TRMP programme can adapt to central government directives, which allows us to incorporate these changes into our strategies and plans.</p>

	<p>We are developing a risk-based approach to natural hazards, ensuring that higher-risk areas face more stringent development controls. This approach will be integrated into the regional and district plan provisions through the TRMP review. Key natural hazard layers under review include slope stability, coastal hazards, flooding, and liquefaction, which will inform the conditions under which development can occur.</p> <p>Nature-based solutions are being considered through the TRMP review, exploring how biodiversity and natural systems can serve as blue-green infrastructure, providing alternatives to hard (grey) infrastructure. Council is currently reviewing the TRMP in two phases. In the first phase (2020-2025), relevant to the Ūawa Catchment, we are undertaking a Forestry Plan Change to regulate forestry harvest activities in the catchments.</p> <p>Accelerating additional components of the plan review would be challenging given our resources and capacity. An updated programme budget for the next three years was part of the draft 3YP estimates received by Council. Staff are not proposing any additional changes at this stage.</p> <p>To support our work programme, we actively seek external funding opportunities when they arise, in line with Council's Financial Strategy.</p> <p>The climate change work programme has not progressed as originally planned due to the regional recovery efforts and resourcing challenges following Cyclone Hale and Cyclone Gabrielle. The focus has been on supporting adaptation projects, recovery, and rebuilding efforts. A reset of the programme and next steps will be brought to a future Sustainable Tairāwhiti meeting once the final 3YP has been adopted.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Status quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the next three years, we aim to reduce in-house council emissions, draft climate strategies and policies, and collaborate with iwi and hapū on future community climate change goals. Our water security focus will be on implementing robust strategies to safeguard our water resources and address our current and future demands. Continue to progress our TRMP review programme. Provide additional funding to enable further work on climate planning and initiatives, and water security mahi.
Option 2:	No alternative option provided.
Reasoning for preferred option	Our current work programme is at full capacity due to resource constraints, and additional projects would be difficult to manage given the heavy workloads and recovery focus over the next three years.
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Maintain status quo – our work programme is already at capacity of implementation due to resourcing. Projects rely on other teams also being resourced and able to participate throughout a project. Given the heavily workloads across Council and a focus on recovery matters for this next three years it would be challenging to progress additional mahi.</p>	

2. Heavy Vehicles

Theme: Planning and Prioritisation	
Submission Feedback	<p>Community feedback has highlighted significant concerns regarding the impacts of heavy vehicles, with many emphasising the need for proper planning, prioritising road maintenance, and exploring ways to charge industry directly for the damage that is being caused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters have highlighted that the use of residential streets and roads not designed for heavy vehicles exacerbates road damage and increases maintenance costs. Feedback calls for designated specific roads and routes for heavy vehicles, to ensure these routes can be appropriately managed. • The community expressed frustration that a survey on whether to have one or two designated heavy traffic routes into the city from the west was ignored by Council. This was seen as a missed opportunity to undertake effective planning and prioritisation based on the community feedback provided.
Response	<p>Staff have been working on heavy vehicle route identification and operationalisation since 2017. Heavy vehicles are currently only able to transit the city using State Highway 35, Ormond Road, Esplanade, Hirini Street, Rakaiatane Road, and Kaiti Beach Road.</p> <p>Key work undertaken to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017/18 – First phase of Network Operating Framework (NOF) completed; identified strategic objectives and road use hierarchy maps. • 2019 – Council 100% funded and progressed the NOF second phase. Heavy vehicle route/s identified as a priority to progress. • 2019 onwards – The NOF was used to inform the development of the 2021 Long Term Plan and Regional Transport Plan. • 2020-2021 – Community consultation on preferred heavy vehicle routes and the Traffic & Parking Bylaw. • December 2021 – Traffic and Parking Bylaw made; prohibits heavy vehicles from using local roads other than the outlined route/s without prior written consent. <p>The policy mechanism for implementing a set route is available through the bylaw. No further policy work is needed; operationalising the route is the current focus of the project. There are safety concerns with the preferred route at specific parts and intersections along the route. This includes work on specified local roads and state highways; no budget was available for any state highway upgrades or work in the 2021-2024 National Land Transport Plan. The upgrade of Harper Road had originally received PGF funding, which was later withdrawn and did not progress.</p> <p>Advice from NZTA staff in preparing the 2024 Regional Land Transport Plan was to include the potential upgrades required in a hybrid way in the funding bid, including a programme business case and low cost/low risk improvements.</p> <p>Council has included their parts of the potential upgrades needed in the Network Transport Model and in the low cost/low risk local road improvements. Staff provided NZTA with a list of potential state highway upgrades for inclusion in the State Highway programme alongside the business case/model.</p>

OPTION ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	<p>Status quo</p> <p>Progress low cost, low risk improvements on local roads to enable a safe change to the heavy vehicle route, subject to receiving NZTA co-investment through the 2024 National Land Transport Plan.</p> <p>Note that there are no guaranteed plans regarding any state highway upgrades. Staff and/or elected members can continue to work with NZTA and advocate around the priority.</p>
Option 2:	<p>Council could consider 100% funding any additional planning work and the necessary upgrades to the network to enable the preferred heavy vehicle route to become operational. The total estimated cost of this is unknown, as the focus has been on progressing recovery roading priorities.</p> <p>Unless an agreement is put in place, Council would not have the authority to progress any required works on the state highway corridors.</p>
Reasoning for preferred option	<p>Option One: Status quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that there are no guaranteed plans regarding any potential state highway upgrades. • Staff and/or elected members can continue to work with NZTA and advocate for this priority.
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Maintain status quo - option one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that there are no guaranteed plans regarding any potential state highway upgrades. • Staff and/or elected members can continue to work with NZTA and advocate around the priority. 	

3. Development Contributions Policy

Theme: Development Contributions	
Submission Feedback	Community feedback supports having a Development Contributions Policy, including its revision and the positive impact of appropriately applied contributions and endorsement for a draft Contributions Policy was highlighted. However, a critical analysis is that the socio-economic modelling underlying the policy would be based on business as usual without highlighting economic downturns.
Response	<p>The methodology for calculating development contributions is quite prescriptive in legislation. It is based on the anticipated growth units (HUE) over the period of the policy (seven years for this review) and the anticipated costs associated with the growth of specified infrastructure projects.</p> <p>The growth modelling is based on the best information available at the time of the calculation. A variety of factors influence the forecast, including economic growth. Forecasting is not an exact science – it is a best guess based on trends and available information. Staff could redo the forecast to see if it alters the predicted HUE, but this requires additional time and, given our smaller growth numbers, may result in little change (depending on the data available).</p> <p>Any changes to the HUE would impact the final DC charge. If there are fewer HUE, the amount required across the programme would be divided across a smaller number of HUE, resulting in a higher per HUE charge without any change to the actual amount required across the programme for specified projects.</p> <p>Similarly, if Council makes changes to the costs or growth allocation for projects in the programme, this will impact the final DC charge.</p>
OPTIONS ANALYSIS	
Option 1:	Status quo
Option 2:	Redoing the HUE forecast with any newer data sources could reflect any impact the economic downturn has had on potential HUE. However, it is unlikely that this will result in significant differences from previous outcomes.
Reasoning for preferred option	Status quo – additional modelling has not been budgeted for. A full review of the policy will be taking place in advance on the 2027 Long Term Plan.
RECOMMENDATION Maintain status quo – additional modelling has not been budgeted for. A full review of the policy will be taking place in advance on the 2027 Long Term Plan.	

10. Reports of the Chief Executive and Staff for INFORMATION



24-169

Title: 24-169 Supplementary to Report 24-159 Three Year Plan Consultation
Section: Communications & Engagement
Prepared by: Anita Reedy-Holthausen - Director Engagement & Maori Partnerships
Meeting Date: Tuesday 11 June 2024

Legal: No

Financial: No

Significance: **Low**

Report to COUNCIL/TE KAUNIHERA for information

PURPOSE - TE TAKE

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the findings from Councillor Cranston on the Three-Year consultation process.

SUMMARY – HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

Formal consultation on the Three-Year Plan (special consultative procedure) ran from Wednesday 20 March to Friday 19 April 2024. The campaign consisted of:

- Hard copy and online tools for presenting the Three-Year Plan Consultation Document “Healing our region for our future” to the community and for gathering online and handwritten submissions.
- Advertising and promotion through local print, radio, social media and digital channels.
- 31 Community conversations and events (21 community conversation sessions, 4 community groups, 5 community events and 1 drop-in session) **led by councillors and supported by staff** with approximately 700 attendees.

One hundred and seventy-three formal submissions were received, by hand online and by email.

Following the end of the consultation process, Councillor Cranston submitted a paper providing his perspective on the Three-Year consultation process. This paper identified a number of key issues raised through consultation, such as the RfS (Request for Service) system, roading, drains and culverts, communications, environmental responsibility, rural wards, fluoride, townships, parks and reserves, rubbish and walkways and cycleways. All these issues will be considered through the deliberation process of the Three-Year Plan.

In Councillor Cranston's report he also concluded and acknowledged the complexities faced by Council, the need for better awareness and communication, with an emphasis on engaging communities as part of the solution and maintaining regular, relevant communication.

This paper responds to the engagement and communication issues raised. It notes Councillor Cranston's findings and provides information on work underway that will support and enhance our future engagement and communication.

The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **Low** significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS - NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

- 1. Notes the contents of this report.**

Authorised by:

Anita Reedy-Holthausen - Director Engagement & Māori Partnerships

Keywords: councillor, Cranston, comments, consultation, three-year plan, response

BACKGROUND - HE WHAKAMĀRAMA

1. Consultation on the Three-Year Plan concluded on the 19 April 2024. The consultation process followed a no-frills process which reflected the current economic and budget realities facing our region while also recognising that our district and our people have been significantly impacted and are still impacted through our recovery.
2. The no-frills approach did not diminish the extent of the communication and consultation that was undertaken with:
3. 31 community conversations and events (21 community conversation sessions, 4 community groups, 5 community events and 1 drop-in session) throughout the district with approximately 700 attendees.
 - 1,350 printed consultation documents.
 - 11 advertisements in the Gisborne Herald.
 - 895 radio ads across 11 stations.
 - 2,243 views to our dedicated Three-Year Plan webpage and 263 eBook views.
 - Total reach of over 48,000 on Facebook.
 - Two editions of He Pānui eNews.
4. Councillor Cranston has provided "A Councillor Perspective" (**Report 24-159**) in which the following key points and observations were made:

RfS (Request for Service) System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback highlights the need for more effective responses and realistic expectations.• Suggests that staff and contractors should proactively identify issues like potholes.
Roading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural communities' express disappointment with the quality of work and processes.• Recommends better auditing of work quality and community involvement in maintenance.• Highlights the need to address funding model inefficiencies.
Drains and Culverts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls for clear assignment of responsibilities and potential for community involvement in maintenance.• Suggests making equipment available for community use in culvert clearing.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive feedback on specific catchment group networks.• Emphasises the importance of regular communication, even if there is no new information.
Environmental Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns over slash and environmental impacts from infill developments.• Community interest in participating in environmental monitoring and maintenance.
Rural Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some communities feel the absence of a dedicated rural councillor.• Criticism of footpath quality in both rural and city areas.

Fluoride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some community members question the fluoridation of water, which is mandated by the Department of Health.
Townships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities desire more investment and improvements. Some frustration with perceived neglect despite recent investments.
Parks and Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for upgrades, but some communities feel neglected, particularly in Wainui where play infrastructure was removed with no consultation.
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Play Study and Renewal Plan provides for cost effective and equitable distribution of play infrastructure across the district. This work is in its final stages and once complete will inform the play infrastructure delivery programme. Confirmed sites for play investment includes Waihirere, Matawai and Uawa.
Rubbish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criticism of waste disposal costs and rural transfer station hours. Concerns over proposed relocations of disposal sites.
Walkways and Cycleways:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support noted for these workstreams in associated transport consultations. Council has recently created an additional area of focus on walking and cycling outcomes through the development of a programme manager role, to lead and deliver walking and cycling outcomes, with an initial focus on the Taruheru project.

5. In his conclusion Councillor Cranston recognises the complexities faced by Council and the need for better awareness and communication. He also placed emphasis on engaging communities as part of the solution and maintaining regular, relevant communication.

DISCUSSION and OPTIONS - WHAKAWHITINGA KŌRERO me ngā KŌWHIRINGA

6. The Engagement and Māori Partnerships (EMP) Hub consists of:
- Māori Partnerships
 - Customer Experience
 - Communications and Engagement
 - Democracy and Support
 - Culture and Development
 - Township Upgrades
7. With the addition of functions to the Hub such as Democracy and Support Services, the EMP Hub provides the leadership for engagement and communication, on behalf of Council, has recently undertaken a review to achieve:
- Alignment and clarity of the Hub's purpose.
 - Alignment between the EMP hub and the Sustainable Futures Hub.
 - Awareness of and participation of the community in Council's democratic processes; and
 - Informing a communication and engagement strategy refresh.

8. When the Hub review was commissioned earlier this year, a number of elected members and staff were interviewed to provide input. Some of the quotes from that review include many similar to Cr Cranston's observations.

"We say we want to hear from the community but use processes that are designed to close down a conversation."

"We need to ask what matters to people instead of focusing on what's the matter with them."

"We shouldn't treat people as if they are the same. The Council needs to remember that every person is local to somewhere different in our district."

"Councillors are not enabled to be effective conduits for communities."

"If people are being asked to participate in an easy process like the RfS, and they don't get a response, why would they participate in hard processes?"

"Opportunities to participate are there for the taking but people don't take them – that's our fault – not theirs."

"We need to learn to work with the community to identify what good looks like - before we tell them what the Council thinks good looks like – and then co-design to get there (take a draft, strip it right back to the skeleton, and then start with that.)"

"We need to reach out and be present in our communities if we want to involve them in future plans. Not using ways that suit us, but in ways that suit them."

"We would love to be involved in more community engagement but unclear about our role."

9. Issues identified in that review are supported by Cr Cranston's observations and an action plan is currently being progressed. Broadly, some of the actions include:

- proactive support/guidance for elected members when it comes to connecting with their communities (specifically around information provision, communication, and engagement)
- supporting greater clarity around the different governance roles of elected members (advocate, representative, facilitator, listener, decision-maker)
- addressing the Request for Service (RfS) system challenges
- involving communities more in the decision-making processes of Council
- greater flexibility around the way Council 'does' democracy
- being more "visible" and targeted with our communication across the district
- creation of a future focused, joined-up work programme tool
- templates/toolkits/guidelines for improved communication and engagement delivery.

10. In addition, a further piece of work is currently in progress that seeks to provide a refresh of our communication strategy (as outlined above) with the objective of:
- Establishing a more empathetic and responsive communication approach - enabling improved connections between Council and the communities we serve.
 - Be more proactive and engaging with our communication.
 - Enhance the visibility of what we do and who we are, as well as providing greater accessibility to the democratic processes of Council.
 - Use our platforms and channels to support this shift, including a new approach to our social media, more tailored engagement with media and a strategic focus on print media and community channels.
11. Through some of the combined recommendations of the reviews a number of high-level actions/initiatives are proposed which align with the findings of Councillor Cranston. These include:

Responsiveness

- Re-ignite the Quality Improvement Circle to address outstanding Requests for Services.
- Establish streamlined processes for responding to Requests for Service.
- Better performance monitoring of Requests for Service.

Improving Engagement

12. Create a plan to connect better with the community and improve communication.
- Develop a strategy to communicate more effectively with the community (community connectedness strategy).
 - Provide clear guidelines and tools and broadening the capability of the organisation to deliver on engagement activities.
 - More regularly update the community on ongoing projects and progress.
 - Organise more local conversations led by the community for example through Community Led Recovery Planning.
 - Develop tools to keep the community informed about upcoming decisions (community noticeboards).
 - Help councillors communicate better with the community by providing regular updates and more tailored mechanism for engagement and communication.

Keeping Communication Regular, Targeted and Relevant

13. Be transparent and keep the community updated regularly:
- Tailor messages for different communities and provide regular updates.
 - Use different mechanism for communicating with communities
 - Improve the website and digital platforms to be more personal and engaging.
 - Be honest about timeframes and limitations, and address mistakes openly.

14. While this is a high-level summary of part of the findings from the work currently being undertaken by the EMP Hub, it does provide guidance in terms of a proposed planned approach to how we improve and support better engagement and communication practices.

ASSESSMENT of SIGNIFICANCE - AROTAKENGA o NGĀ HIRANGA

15. The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **Low** significance in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

TANGATA WHENUA/MĀORI ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA TANGATA WHENUA

16. The process of engagement and communications with tangata whenua continues to be enhanced as the environment changes. Any engagement and communications plan will be assessed against Te Tiriti Compass.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA HAPORI

17. As part of the consultation on the Three-Year Plan, feedback will be incorporated into the review process. For example, as outlined, through consultation on the Three-Year Plan and also the Community Led Recovery Planning process, community notice boards will be implemented, together with a process to keep the information regular and relevant.

CLIMATE CHANGE – Impacts / Implications - NGĀ REREKĒTANGA ĀHUARANGI – ngā whakaaweawe / ngā ritenga

18. There are no climate change implications.

CONSIDERATIONS - HEI WHAKAARO

Financial/Budget

19. There are no financial implications.

Legal

20. There are no legal implications.

POLICY and PLANNING IMPLICATIONS - KAUPAPA HERE me ngā RITENGA WHAKAMAHERE

21. There are no policy implications.

RISKS - NGĀ TŪRARU

22. There are risks associated in having a misalignment of communications and engagement with community expectations. While engagement processes change as the community changes, not continuing to align with our community will present ongoing reputational risks.

NEXT STEPS - NGĀ MAHI E WHAI AKE

Date	Action/Milestone	Comments
Identify and implement quick wins.	June 2024	This is an ongoing process as we remain agile and engaged with the community.
Sign off to the review and communication strategy refresh.	June 2024	Currently in draft and out for feedback from the team.
Prioritise and develop project plans for implementation.	From July 2024	The programme of work that supports the objectives from the reviews will be a longer-term exercise.

11. Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Elected Members Reports for INFORMATION



24-159

Title: 24-159 Three Year Plan Consultation
Section: District Councillor
Prepared by: Andy Cranston – District Councillor
Meeting Date: Thursday 30 May 2024

Legal: No

Financial: No

Significance: **Low**

Report to COUNCIL/TE KAUNIHERA for information

SUMMARY – HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

While the three year planning consultation had a very mixed response in terms of attendance, there was still immense value in the process. I was only able to attend fourteen so may not have picked up all points, but I am sure there were common issues.

As Councillors we are usually the first point of call and criticism. I would want to be seen as honest to the stated intention, ie “We are here to listen”. Now the communities will be questioning, were they heard? Following are points I have picked up from memory.

Request for Service

The Request for Service (RFS) system received much criticism. Much of this would seem to be aligned to the content of our responses. The standard content I heard was either no reply or simply “Thanks, but we have no money”! There is a danger of setting expectations we cannot meet. Though not intended, the dialogue I heard often, from staff and governors, seemed to imply putting in an RFS would see the issue sorted. We all know this to be unrealistic. Even when issues are within budgeting restraints, the practicality of immediate response has real challenges. With the enormity of our region there are serious impracticalities to dealing to issues ad hoc. There was some interesting criticism of the RFS: “Your staff and contractors are driving these roads virtually daily; are they blind, why do you need us to tell you where the potholes are!” I think there may be something in that.

ROADING

It was no surprise that this was a primary focus. All of our rural communities spoke in a single voice of disappointment. The standard of work and inefficiency of processes received considerable noise. Auditing of quality of work came through loud and clear. The huge monies paid out for work which then becomes only a very temporary fix was frequently and justifiably challenged. Why are we paying for work which has such a short term solution, if in fact any solution? Many of our farming community stated a commitment to being part of the solution. An example was potholes and the placement of material which they could access and then have a part in maintaining their own roads by pothole filling. Admittedly not long term solution but in the current circumstances the initiative could enable a higher level of maintenance and road usability than they currently have.

“Bring back the roadmen” was another catch-cry which we have been hearing since they lost them. While I understand the rationale why they have gone, there could be some new iteration or modus operandi based on a more regular maintenance model which should be investigated. “A stitch in time” thinking.

The funding models were explained as the inefficiency, ie working on a funded issue but not dealing with an issue ten feet away simply because of the funding model. This has to be addressed as it is demonstrating huge inefficiencies. Not the least of these is the extra costs.

DRAINS and CULVERTS

It is unrealistic to believe that the impacts of a Hale or Gabriel will not be seen should culverts and drains be fully free flowing. The enormous volume of water cannot be contained. However, damage from heavy rainfall events may be appreciably lessened. I know this is a work on but there is heaps of confusion about drain and culvert responsibility. Many owners of private assets believe them to be a Council responsibility. Responsibility should be clearly assigned ASAP. Culvert clearing was also indicated as something the rural community may be able to undertake in their proximity and there were questions as to the availability of equipment which could be made available e.g. culvert grinders could be run from their tractors and moved around the community. I did feel through the at meeting responses that certain specific issues may be looked at, however we need to progress with caution as squeaky wheel solutions could be at the expense of the whole.

COMMUNICATION

I was very heartened by the communication conversations. The extending out specific catchment groups network is great. Being all things to all people individually doesn't work. Having a communication conduit direct to each community is the answer. All the rural communities liked the idea and are up for it. There is a challenge with a couple of the communities being split so having the appropriate group representation needs to be well considered. The make-up of the group is their community decision. Once established regular (monthly) contact and communication is a must. As someone said, “Keep us in the loop, even if nothing is happening, tell us!”

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

It's a given that slash is public enemy number 1. There were also concerns put forward in the Wainui meeting stating that the intensity of the infill happening out there is not consistent with our environmental obligations as an unreticulated community. The staff discretion permitting conditions such as site coverage exceedances was queried.

There was also concern expressed over the deteriorating condition of Wainui and Haumanatua Streams. I again noted an interest for the community to be part of the solution in any cleaning, monitoring and tidying initiatives.

RURAL WARDS

Some rural wards stated they were feeling the loss of a rural councillor "go to". This is on we councillors. When the Wards were lost to help enable the Maori Wards there was lots of dialogue around the fact that we all represent everyone. Sadly, this was not evident at most of the rural meetings. Within the meetings it was difficult to ease their concern. The townships of Tokomaru, Tolaga, Ruatoria, Manutuke and Muriwai (and possibly others) all criticised the quality of their footpaths. NB: This also came through the City consultations with particular concern from Aged and Disability.

FLORIDE

Four of the meetings had participants wanting to challenge our right to fluoridate our water. It was pointed out that this was Department of Health mandated.

TOWNSHIPS

All townships articulated they wanted more. Being aware of the allocated budgets, work done and work ongoing in this area I don't feel that message was heard. An example was the Muriwai meeting where we were criticised as not having spent any money for over a decade or so. This feedback is frustrating knowing that they were a very recent recipient of township upgrade money and in fact a huge investment into their new township water supply. As the meetings did seem to have a non-combative focus (understandably), the suggested upgraded comms will be helpful here to have more informed communities.

PARKS AND RESERVES

In general, there was gratitude expressed by communities who have had recreational upgrades. However, the Wainui meeting expressed the opposite where they have had their play infrastructure removed seemingly overnight at no community consideration. This was almost three years ago and at that time the word was "removed for replacement". All recent RFS's are now met with "there is no money". It was stated that the community served by this asset is considerable.

RUBBISH

The cost of waste disposal was criticised as were the hours of business in rural transfer stations. The hours were stated to be not worker friendly, ie middle of their workdays. It was stated that many farmers are reluctantly going back to a hole in the ground due to those factors; perhaps illegally and certainly not a satisfactory situation. The Tokomaru Bay community challenged the proposed relocation of their site as being still very highly vulnerable to events.

WALKWAYS and CYCLEWAYS

With the inclusion of this as one of the elements of the work in progress, there was not a lot of discussion specific to walkways and cycleways. However, with the associated Transport Plan consultation there were several submissions which supported walkway /cycle way workstreams.

CONCLUSION

The complexities of Council are understood, and this summary is not a fix it all request, simply my view on what was heard. As Councillors we are the front line of attack and as such it is only fair that we have a stronger awareness. With the new comms strategies which may emerge it is crucial that we are part of it. I would expect there will be a monthly newsletter type arrangement. This could be made up of general information relevant to the Gisborne District Council rohe with an addendum of relevance to each specific community/township. My expectation is that Councillors are a recipient party to those comms.

I firmly believe the engaging of the communities in their willingness to be “part of the solution” should be energised. This is actually largely how we got to where we are today. Though we did hear the “Do this, do that; but don't put our rates up” call, I believe the majority were understanding of the situation and our/their fiscal restraints. I also believe the desire to be part of the solution is genuine. All that may be required of us is to be enablers.

There were “moments” in the meetings and some unreasonableness demonstrated. However, I would like to congratulate and thank all those involved in the process. Staff demonstrated professionalism and an over and beyond commitment to the task. I did see staff note-taking and I am sure most of this was captured but wanted to offer my perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS - NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Council/Te Kaunihera:

1. Notes the contents of this report.

Authorised by:

Andy Cranston - District Councillor

Keywords: RFS, Roading, Drains and Culverts, Communication, Environmental Responsibility, Rural Wards, Floride, Townships, Parks and Reserves, Rubbish Walkways and Cycleways,

12. Public Excluded Business

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Section 48, LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION and MEETINGS ACT 1987

That:

1. The public be excluded from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS

Item 12.1 24-197 Appointment of Commissioners for Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan Committee

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

	7(2)(a)	Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.
Item 12.1	7(2)(b)(ii)	Protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.